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*Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA*

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Statements by Members**

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

Admit strangers.

I'd like to welcome all the Members back to the House of Assembly.

I'd also like to welcome in our various galleries today, starting with the Speaker's gallery: Mr. Wayne Lucas, the past president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees for Newfoundland and Labrador and his partner, Patricia Lucas; Ms. Sherry Hillier, who's now the president of CUPE NL; Mr. Brian Farewell, national rep and chief negotiator with CUPE; Ms. Dawn Lahey, secretary and treasurer of CUPE NL; and Mr. Toby Sanger, senior economist with CUPE national. Mr. Lucas will be mentioned in a Member's statement this afternoon.

A very great welcome to you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** In the public gallery today, I would like to recognize: Ms. Diana Gibbons, she's the assistant superintendent of Her Majesty's Penitentiary; Captain Fred Cumby is the manager responsible for Occupational Health and Safety; Mr. Steve Donahue, correctional officer and president of NAPE Local 7701; and Mr. Ken Nagle, correctional officer and vice-president of NAPE Local 7701. They are here today in association with a Ministerial Statement.

Welcome to you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I see some of my neighbours from Labrador at the other side of it. I would like to welcome Mr. Ron Thomas with the United Steel Workers 5795 from Labrador City, and with him is Mr. Fabian Benoit, Deputy Mayor of the Town of Labrador City.

Welcome.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** For Members' statements today, we will hear from the hon. Members for the Districts of St. George's - Humber; St. John's Centre; Fogo Island - Cape Freels; Windsor Lake; and Lewisporte - Twillingate.

The hon. the Member for St. George's - Humber.

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

I rise today to help celebrate the recent 100th birthday of Lillian Butler who was born in Sandy Point in Bay St. George on the provinces beautiful West Coast.

When she was 20, Lillian visited New York City for six months and upon her return she was engaged and later married on Sandy Point. Her husband, Bill Butler, served in World War II and was overseas from July 1940 to July 1945.

After the War, Lillian and Bill owned a sawmill at Barachois Brook and they built a farmhouse at nearby Black Bank.

Sandy Point, where Lillian was born, is now an abandoned community, but during her early years it was a thriving port. She still tells many stories about battleships which would stop at the harbour, and the dancing and brass bands on the deck of the ship.

Lillian is still active and engaged with her many friends and family. She wants everyone to know how she made it to be 100. I know her advice will be welcomed by many; she says her secret is eating desserts and sweets.

I ask all Members of the House to rise with me in wishing Lillian Butler a very happy 100th birthday.

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, what an honour to celebrate Mr. Wayne Lucas here in the people's House. After 26 years serving as President of

CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador and Labrador, Wayne has retired.

Throughout his leadership, he worked for the rights of our working people – work also benefiting the general population. He championed issues such as affordable child care, a fair minimum wage, secure pensions, support for women victims of violence, LGBTQ2-Spirited rights and so much more.

Wayne was a CUPE member for 40 years, starting his career as a school board worker in 1978. He loves Newfoundland and Labrador and our people; he gave much and served well. For that, people around the province are extremely grateful. As someone so wonderfully stated, “Wayne Lucas is a once-in-a-generation, straight up working class hero.”

I ask all Members to join me in thanking Mr. Wayne Lucas for his years of excellent service to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Bravo!

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

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

**MR. BRAGG:** Mr. Speaker, the 2018 grade 12 graduation season is upon us. I’ve had the opportunity to attend several grads this far, but one sticks out.

A couple of weeks ago, MP Scott Simms and I attended the graduation on Change Islands at A.R. Scammell Academy. The lone graduate had the day and night of her life. The gym was decorated lavishly and over 100 people were in attendance.

It started with a church service then there was mid-afternoon tea, followed by a hot meal, all clueing up with a dance. There was such an amazing feeling of happiness and joy in the room.

The amazing thing: The lone graduate fundraised and paid for the full event. She made a calendar, using pictures of her hometown, and sold them. This effort received outstanding

support. Sales were well beyond all expectations.

I would like to acknowledge Ms. Kimberley Reid for her determination and dedication in making her dreams of having an elaborate graduation come true.

While I wish all graduates the best of luck for their future, I throw a bouquet to Ms. Reid and look forward to her future endeavours.

Well done, Kimberley.

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

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

**MS. C. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, it’s with great pride that I stand to recognize the efforts of parents, staff, students and community who came out to support MacDonald Drive Elementary, in the District of Windsor Lake, this past Friday evening.

The school community is raising funds to add an outdoor classroom space for the children at the school. Ongoing fundraising efforts have been underway for several years. Lead by a passionate principal, Mr. Matthew Smith, and the school council – of which I’m a proud member – this year’s committee planned a well-attended dinner and auction to raise money.

From the donations of items for the live and silent auction to the enthusiastic ticket sellers and the marvelous entertainment, the evening was a success. The pinnacle for all was undoubtedly the artwork completed by each class pod which was handmade, literally and figuratively, and demonstrated the talent of the students and the guidance of the teachers.

Community members, neighbours and school alumni can still join the efforts to build the outdoor classroom by contacting the school office and making a legacy donation, small or large, to support this important project for the incredibly innovative MacDonald Drive Elementary school.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Lewisporte - Twillingate.

**MR. D. BENNETT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On May 5, I had the opportunity to share in the celebration of the 65th anniversary of the Twillingate Lions Club.

The 37-member club undertakes many projects within the community, nationally and internationally. Over the past year, the club has been active in collecting used eyeglasses to send to other countries, contributing to the Dog Guide Program, helping with the local Kids Eat Smart chapter and organizing the annual Santa Claus Parade, in addition to numerous other activities.

During the evening, I had the opportunity to recognize Lion Mike Johnson for being appointed to the Leo Club Program Advisory Panel and the great work he has done to develop the 21-member Leo Club in Twillingate.

Long-service awards were presented to Lion Howard Butt for 50 years of service and the current longest-serving member, Ted Boyd, who is into his 53rd year of dedicated service.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members to join me in congratulating the Twillingate Lions Club members as they celebrate their 65th anniversary and all the great work they do to contribute to our communities.

Thank you.

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

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

#### Statements by Ministers

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

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

I am fortunate today to work with amazing people in the Department of Justice and Public Safety. Today I would like to recognize the

important work of a key group within our justice system – our correctional staff.

May 6 to 12 was recognized as Corrections Week. The theme of the week is ‘Serving with Excellence,’ and it’s meant to acknowledge the contribution of correctional staff in promoting rehabilitation and making communities safe.

Mr. Speaker, last year I had the privilege of getting just a glimpse of what the job of correctional officer entails as I job shadowed at Her Majesty’s Penitentiary. This group has an incredibly difficult job and they do it with tremendous integrity. They play a crucial role in the justice system and in their communities.

In March, I spoke to the newest group of graduates who were starting their careers in corrections, seven women and six men. I emphasized the need for them to have empathy and compassion as they do their jobs and work with those in our facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I can honestly say, we should all be very proud of the quality of people we have working in our correctional facilities. They show their commitment not only on the job, but in the many contributions they make to their communities through various fundraising and community initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in thanking our correctional staff for their service and contribution to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I thank the minister, first of all, for an advance copy of his statement today. We join with him in congratulating and acknowledging last week being Corrections Week in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I can also speak, as the minister can, to the significant contribution made by the people who work in our corrections. Sometimes working in very, very difficult and challenging circumstances; yet, I know first-hand of corrections officers who offer leadership and mentorship within corrections and with the people who they work with and live with every day. Not only inside facilities, Mr. Speaker, but corrections officers also provide leadership and mentorship outside facilities in their own communities.

So we join with the government, we thank them for this today, and wish all the very best to corrections officers throughout our province.

Thank you.

**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. I, too, have visited many of our facilities and have seen first-hand the work they do with passion and compassion. Their work is complex and difficult but also rewarding. It is my hope that working together we can ensure they have all the resources and support they need as they perform their duties.

To all our corrections workers, on behalf of those people you have worked with directly and the people of the province, thank you for your service. This week we shine a light on you and celebrate you. Bravo!

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

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

The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, today I was pleased to join the province's business, start-up and technology communities as well as

representatives from the federal government to launch the fifth annual Innovation Week.

With more than 20 events, Innovation Week brings together businesses, communities, investors, partners, students and others to help promote opportunities for innovation across all sectors in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, through *The Way Forward*, our government has made innovation a priority. Through our Business Innovation Agenda we are helping local innovation and growth-focused firms accelerate business growth. We are helping businesses identify and seize new opportunities, to enable them to be more productive, competitive and international. The Business Innovation Agenda is playing a major part in our government's commitment to create economic opportunities in all regions of our province.

The agenda is also playing an important role in achieving the development targets outlined in the Technology Sector Work Plan – one of which is to support the scaling of 20 firms in the technology sector per year.

In an effort to create a single window for a more efficient delivery of provincial innovation programs and services, our government created InnovateNL. Members of the Innovation Council continue to work with the provincial government and its partners to continue to implement the Business Innovation Agenda as well as advancing other priorities, such as coding in schools.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in recognizing Innovation Week in our province by celebrating the success of our partners, and continuing to work together to foster continued growth.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. On behalf of the Official Opposition, I wish the business community, start-ups, innovators and all entrepreneurs a successful fifth annual Innovation Week.

This week is a time to look at the bright spots in our province and to inspire each other to think big and act boldly. I am personally inspired by Bennett Newhook, Justin Elliott, Sonya Killam and Draco Dunphy, four Memorial University students who won the 2018 Social Innovation Challenge this past weekend. Their innovative idea to use shipping containers as community-based farms is the solution to many of the province's food supply concerns. I look forward to hearing more stories of innovation throughout the week.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I, too, thank the minister. The minister can say his government is helping businesses to seize new opportunities, yet he just gave away most of the opportunities in cannabis production and sales in this province to a non-local corporate giant. People here were getting ready to step up to these opportunities which would have combined the government's target areas of agriculture and innovation, but that window has been closed.

It's time for this government to give priority and opportunities to our own people instead of taking this easy way out. Congratulations to our innovators who are going ahead regardless.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

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

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

It's been weeks since multiple harassment allegations have been raised against ministers in this government.

I say to the Premier, while separate investigations to particular issues are necessary, it does not address the systemic issues. What are you doing to fix the system rather than simply addressing the symptoms?

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

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

I think as everyone in the province would have known that we've taken this issue very seriously. We've been proactive and made decisions very quickly once the charges – the allegations, I should say, came to my attention. We've addressed the current situation, Mr. Speaker.

I understand now there are certain reviews that will be done, with references to the House Management Commission. Mr. Speaker, the Green report quite clearly speaks to how you respond and the decisions that will be taken. We've made harassment training within for all Members of the House of Assembly, Members on this side of the House of Assembly.

I understand some of the Opposition Members as well have partaken in those training sessions. We encourage this. This is the system – this issue is the House of Assembly issue. I have taken leadership within our own party. I've asked, as I invite the leader of the Opposition to his new role today, what is he doing –

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

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

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

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

The investigation should be independent of the Premier's office.

Premier, if you put yourself in the middle of the complaints process, how is that going to address the systemic issue you have identified?

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

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

This independent process is outlined in the Green report, which was really one of the critical and turning points, I would say, as the Member opposite and the leader of the Opposition would know. Based on the review process that's been in place, and one that a PMR was put forward to by the leader of the Opposition, by his own party just a few weeks ago, referring to one in Nova Scotia – well, I would assure the Member opposite that what your party asked for last week, what you endorsed last week, what's happening in Newfoundland and Labrador is a much better process from what we're currently seeing exercised in Nova Scotia.

As you also know, and the review commissioner has spoken out publicly about this, he has the resources, or his office has the resources to review and get outside expertise as required.

Mr. Speaker, any reviews that have went to the Commissioner has done so under (inaudible).

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The leader of the Official Opposition.

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

The Premier has inserted himself into this process. He is part of the very system that appears broken.

Will you now do the right and appropriate thing and remove yourself, giving the complaints review the independence it rightfully deserves?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Opposition is picking up right where the old leader of the Opposition was on this. Number one, I did not – and I want to be very clear in all of this – insert myself in this. The leader of the Opposition is wrong and that isn't factual. I did not insert myself in this situation.

What happened, Mr. Speaker, as I said quite clearly, when the allegations came to me there were a number of options that anyone who had allegations, as they came forward, there are a number of options that's outlined within the jurisdiction of the commission. The Commissioner himself could come in, independently of anyone asking. Any MHA who would have an allegation could go directly to the review commissioner himself, go directly to that office, without going through the Premier at all. That exists. The ones that came to me, Mr. Speaker, they were given all those choices.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

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

But I need to clarify for the Premier, too: He took the referral process and put it through the system. You have now inserted yourself right in the middle of it.

Can you come up with a different system that works more appropriately, as has been outlined by a number of the people and Members of the House of Assembly? Please outline how you're going to rectify that.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Once again, Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify the comments of the leader of the Opposition. He's dead wrong – dead wrong. I did not insert myself. What I said to all Members of this House of Assembly, if you have an issue, come forward – come forward. The ones that came forward to me, there was a discussion outlining the three options that exist in the legislation.

It is the leader of the Opposition and the party that he represents, as all Members of this House

of Assembly quite clearly endorse the Commissioner for Legislative Standards – they said that he’s qualified to do this, as a resolution of this House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the proposal that was put forward by the Nova Scotia model goes to the ombudsman, and then the information would come to their House of Assembly. It is my desire to get as much information out there publicly as possible; it deserves to be there. But I will guarantee you I did not insert myself or assert any jurisdiction from the Premier’s office into this situation.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

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

Mr. Speaker, media is reporting that Husky Energy has asked the federal court to block the release of daily oil production reports from the SeaRose during the period that the operations were suspended due to a near miss with an iceberg.

Is the Premier concerned that Husky Energy has gone to the federal court to block information related to the handling of this near miss with an iceberg in 2017?

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

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

This is an important issue for the people of the province; it is an important issue for this government and an important issue for C-NLOPB – Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board.

Mr. Speaker, I think what we have to understand here is that C-NLOPB wanted to be transparent. The government wants to be transparent. It is now before the courts. The matter is before the courts. That is Husky’s right to do that. The C-NLOPB is looking at its options. It’s investigating what it can do around this scenario.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

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

I ask the Premier: Are you concerned about the processes being used here to block information that the general public should have access to?

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

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

As I said previously, we support transparency. C-NLOPB is looking at how it can release the information that has been requested. However, C-NLOPB, as is its right, has petitioned the federal court. It’s under the federal ATIPP, access to information system, Mr. Speaker, and it is before that court at this point in time.

I have indicated that Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board is looking to what it can do, Mr. Speaker. If it has anything to do with safety or any impact on the environment, it certainly would be bringing it forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

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

The C-NLOPB does have the ability to release that information. Will you not lobby them to have that information released so the general public can have an understanding of exactly what happened on that near miss?

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

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

If he wants to have more information on what happened in that near miss, there is information available through C-NLOPB. This particular



information is on production, and that is before the federal court at the moment. C-NLOPB is looking at what it can do to release further information but, as I said, it is through the federal access to information legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

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

The information was asked for so that the public could be assured that Husky followed the 10-day suspension order.

I ask the Premier: What was the status of the production vessel for the 10 days of the suspension?

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

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board have been clear to Husky and clear to the people of the province with regard to its actions around this issue. It did have a stop-production order put in place, and they would have been monitoring that situation at that time. It did take some time to wind down, but C-NLOPB is charged with that task under the accord act legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Again, this is around production levels during that time. C-NLOPB wished to release that information but it is now before the federal court – I'll say that again – for federal access to information legislation.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

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

I ask the minister: Can you confirm that the 10-day suspension rule was put in play and no

production took place during that period of time?

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

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

Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board is responsible for ensuring the action that is required under their responsibility – they issued that requirement to shut down production. They were the ones monitoring the situation. They have indicated that they have been reviewing that situation. They had Husky in to discuss the scenario around this whole investigation, Mr. Speaker, and they would have ensured that Husky was compliant with their order.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

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

Because of the severity, and this was a life-threatening situation, I would have thought the minister would have gone back and asked if the suspension had put in play to send a valuable message to the oil industry that processes have to be followed around safety.

I just ask: Were you aware of it? Did they follow the 10-day suspension program?

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

**MR. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, I can acknowledge on behalf of the Member – and I would have thought he would have understood that the multiple times I've answered this question.

Mr. Speaker, of course, we are very much engaged in this process. Of course, we've made every support to the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board in their actions, which are pretty severe actions. They've taken this very, very seriously. The investigation is continuing. They did issue the stop-work order. It was followed, Mr. Speaker. C-NLOPB

would have ensured that it was. They are back in production now, but C-NLOPB continues to investigate the scenario because, of course, Mr. Speaker, it is so important to the people of this Province.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

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

I ask the Minister: Do you have any intentions of penalizing Husky for their inaction on the ice management plan?

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

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite must know the rules around the ice management plan. He must understand the regulations, the Atlantic Accord act, who is responsible for monitoring and who is responsible for investigating and that is the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board.

If he wants a specific section he can look it up, section 13.8-5. He can look that up, Mr. Speaker. It is the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board. They've taken this very seriously. They continue to work on behalf of the people of the province to ensure the safety is there, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

**MR. BRAZIL:** I want to make the minister aware that we're very confident over here in understanding the C-NLOPB's responsibility. The government appoints people to that board to ensure that the regulations are followed and that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians working offshore work in a safe environment. That's what we're asking the minister ensure happens here.

Has the C-NLOPB concluded their investigation, and why is it taking so long?

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

**MS. COADY:** Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite is exactly correct. This government does take its roles and responsibility very seriously when it comes to the C-NLOPB and ensuring the safety of our offshore workers. That is paramount to this government. I'm sure it's paramount to everybody in this House, Mr. Speaker, everyone in this province.

We do appoint qualified board members. As a matter of fact, we are right now seeking another board member for the board of C-NLOPB and it is through the independent appointments process.

With regard to C-NLOPB's investigation, there has been an interim report. It was put in place in January where they released some details around this incident. They did do a stop-work order. I understand they're near concluding the finalized report. Then it will go to Husky first and then to the people of the province.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

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

While speaking at an event at Memorial University about the legalization of marijuana, NLC Vice-President Sean Ryan said they are still operating from a go date of July, but he quickly added: I hope we're wrong.

I ask the Premier: Do you share the NLC vice-president's concern that more time is needed and government will, in fact, not be ready for July 1?

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

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

I'm certainly happy to stand here and respond to this question. Again, what I can say from a government perspective is we're like any other provincial government in that we have always

been preparing for a July implementation of cannabis legalization. However, we do know this bill currently is in the Senate and with the impending vote that will happen, there will be some time where this may be delayed.

I don't think anybody has an issue with thinking that the more time for anything may allow you to take your time, but the fact remains we will be ready for July. We are preparing for July and we will be ready, as a province, with legislation and policy, no matter when the legalization happens.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

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

The general public and those involved in the industry would like to know: When do you expect a definite date with regard to the legalization date for Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

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

I'm sure we'd all like a definite date. In fact, there are probably a number of Conservative senators that I could call and ask if they would give us that date. Maybe we could talk to Senator Manning or Senator Wells.

Again, I haven't spoken to these individuals. Maybe the folks on the other side could give them a call and find some information. They talk about these relationships with the federal government.

The fact remains this is a federal decision. This will come down from the feds and we, like every other province, are making legislation and policy that's best suited for our citizens. Whenever the date comes, we will be ready.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

**MR. BRAZIL:** I'm glad the minister plans to be ready.

I ask this question: When is the proposed legislation related to the marijuana coming to the House of Assembly? Is it this spring?

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I can confirm that we will have legislation relating to the legalization of cannabis here in this House during this session.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The leader of the Official Opposition.

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

I ask the Premier: How did the NLC choose the 24 successful licensed marijuana retailers? Was proper due diligence done?

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

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

Yes, I have confidence in the NLC and the process they followed. They put out a request for proposals; they had some 86 respondents, Mr. Speaker. Of that, they chose 24 to proceed to the next level.

I understand that one of those dropped out today, Mr. Speaker. So there are 23, in addition to the four that will be going to Canopy. There are 27 stores throughout the province as of today.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The leader of the Official Opposition.

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

As the Minister of Finance had noted, one had dropped out.

I ask the question: Can you give us an outline as to why that particular business dropped out of the marijuana licensing process?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** I didn't speak to the particular business owner, Mr. Speaker, so, no, I can't tell you why they dropped out.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The leader of the Official Opposition.

**MR. BRAZIL:** Many had hoped that local businesses would benefit from such a selection process; however, we see this is not indeed the case with 10 of the 24 – now, 10 out of 23 – going to one national grocery chain.

Why was the focus on this site rather than on local companies and entrepreneurs?

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

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

It was a very comprehensive process. It was based on a point rating system. NLC chose the people through a merit-based program, Mr. Speaker, that they believe would be the most successful in providing retail cannabis to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The leader of the Official Opposition.

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

The provincial branch of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business criticized government over their decisions regarding retailers in this province as a missed opportunity for small business owners.

Minister, it's now evident the marijuana industry here will be run by the provincial government and big business. Why wasn't growing and investing in our local business community your focus?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

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

Certainly, growing an industry here in Newfoundland and Labrador has been our priority from the very beginning. That's why as the only province in Canada not having a licensed producer, we were able to secure Canopy to set up a production facility and create 145 jobs to be operating for 20 years. Then also there are other people who are interested in production.

On the retailing side, we are one of the only provinces – one of the very few provinces in the country – that's actually opened up for a private model that allows for small business and other businesses to be able to retail cannabis. We're also investing in R & D.

We're doing something that other provinces are not doing. When it comes to being able to develop that industry, we're creating jobs and opportunities right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

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

So \$40 million of taxpayers' money and a guaranteed four outlets to sell is not a bad deal.

What permitting is required by municipalities where a licensed cannabis retailer has been approved?

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

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

Certainly, this was a topic of a discussion at the MNL symposium that was held in Gander a few weeks back. As the level of government that's closest to the people in our communities they're acutely aware. In fact, I listened to a good interview with Mr. Keats recently on CBC where he discussed it.

Right now, we know there's federal legislation that we're waiting for. There's also provincial legislation that's not even been entered into this House yet. We will continue to work with municipalities and everybody else as we move forward with this huge policy decision that's going to affect every province in this country.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

**MR. BRAZIL:** Mr. Speaker, do municipalities have any input into the process, and what consultation has occurred?

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** I apologize, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Member to repeat the question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

**MR. BRAZIL:** Do municipalities have any input into the process, and what consultations have occurred to date?

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

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

Thank you for the question. This, actually, I'm very happy to say, had one of the largest consultation projects in the history of this province when it came to public engagement.

As the Member is aware, in June of last year we put this out there to everybody in the province. There was not a single individual in this

province who did not have the opportunity to contribute to this and provide us their thoughts on this project whether it came to ages, regulations, rules, their opinions on this.

We took the advice of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians as we went forward, as we also took the evidence of other jurisdictions, of experts, professionals, businesses. I can guarantee you, we will also, as we've done, and it was repeated to me when I was in Gander, they like the fact that this government works closely with municipalities. We'll continue to do so.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

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

That's not what we're understanding or hearing from municipalities.

Was there any consideration given to avoid locating these marijuana retailers near schools and daycares? Was that part of the due diligence?

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

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

It's not too long ago we passed legislation in the House of Assembly and those parameters are in the current legislation that the Members opposite actually voted on.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

**MR. BRAZIL:** The Premier met with the Prime Minister on April 10.

I ask the Premier: Did you make representation to the Prime Minister on the unfair awarding of the bid for surf clam quota?

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

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

Well, as you know, the surf clam quota and the allocation is something we took great exception to. I've had many meetings with the Prime Minister on many issues. The surf clam issue was certainly one of them.

As a matter of fact, I remember a meeting I had with the Prime Minister just last year, as the leader of the Opposition just talked about attracting business to Newfoundland and Labrador, one of the meetings I had with him: Could you please take care of the tariffs of the vessels and the ferries you had built in Romania, Mr. Speaker. So we admit he did that.

With the arctic surf clams, Mr. Speaker, that is something we did not agree with, how that transaction happened, and we have made that quite clear. Just like we did the ferries being built in Romania and the tariffs that we had to go after and collect on your behalf because of your decision.

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

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

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

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

Obviously, the Premier had no conversation about surf clams with the Prime Minister.

The Minister of Fisheries has made a mess of the surf clam quota. First he expropriated it; then he gave it to a Liberal MP brother. A former Liberal MP got included in the proposed fact, after the fact, and last week we learned the cousin of the federal minister's wife has ties to the bid.

Minister: How many kinds of Liberal schemes have been benefiting from the process? What action are you taking about this unfair awarding of the bid for the surf clam quota?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, I don't think this side of the House has been shy at all about expressing our point of view, our opinion not only about the surf clam decision but a number of other decisions.

On the surf clam decision itself, the Member for Grand Bank has stood and stood proud and tall for her community. We have stood as a caucus to reinforce the issue of adjacency, but, Mr. Speaker, engagement is important, and engagement is what we do over on this side.

I'll ask the hon. Member a question. The *Fisheries Act* has recently come forward as a major issue, which this side has expressed a point of view to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. I have tabled a brief to the Standing Committee. Would the hon. Member like to table his brief that he has filed to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans and explain ...?

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

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

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

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, the minister's off on another tantrum. We're talking about the surf clams with people in Grand Bank. Answer the question.

What have you done with the allocation of surf clams, this unfair allocation that was given to Nova Scotia and not Newfoundlanders and Labradorians benefit? What have you done? Nothing.

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

**MR. BYRNE:** See, Mr. Speaker, this is where the hon. Member gets his role a little confused and gets the issue confused, because the *Fisheries Act* does play a critical role in these kinds of decisions. The *Fisheries Act* does guide the federal minister on allocation decisions, or should, and that's why this side of the House wanted the inclusion of adjacency.

The Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans just concluded a major review of the *Fisheries Act* as amended by the federal government. This side of the House put forward a brief to the Standing Committee on inclusion of adjacency so that issues like the surf clam allocation can be decided from a rules-based approach.

What, Mr. Speaker, did the other side include ...

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for Cape St. Francis, and I remind him to direct his remarks to the Speaker, please.

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Okay, no sweat, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is the same minister that said adjacency when the *Fisheries Act* came down, the same minister said adjacency is there, it's always been there. Well, it's not there now and it has never been there. That's what you're supposed to be fighting for, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I ask you again: What have you done for the people on Grand Bank that have lost 25 per cent of the quotas for surf clams? Nothing again.

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

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

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources for a quick response, please.

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, in September the federal minister and I spoke about this when we engaged the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans to express our concern about the process they had initiated. We spoke again in October. We spoke again in November. We outlined all of those concerns in December. We met; Minister LeBlanc and I met where I expressed the point of view of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador through this Legislature. Then, again, we met as well in January.

So, yes, Mr. Speaker, not only did we engage the federal government directly – without necessarily the right answer we did, but we engaged.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I met with the federal minister on three separate occasions on surf clam. How many times has he even reached out to the federal government (inaudible)?

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

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, because Liberal caucus Members publicly complained of intimidation and harassment by two of the Premier's Cabinet ministers, he removed the Minister of Education, and Municipal Affairs and Environment, and doubled up these crucial portfolios on ministers with already complicated business. It will be months before this is sorted out.

Rising unemployment, a bad cannabis deal, soaring electric bills, a crumbling Memorial University and serious labour disputes, the people have lost confidence in the Premier's ability to manage his own caucus, let alone govern the province.

I ask the Premier: What is he going to do to ensure these critical ministerial portfolios are covered and the crucial work of the people is properly undertaken?

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

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

I was quite ready to get up and stand up.

Basically, I take the question as an insult from the Member opposite, questioning my ability to do the role that the Premier has put on me. What I can tell you is that in seven years in this job there is no phone call or email that has gone unanswered from any constituent or person who wanted to talk about the business of these departments. We have opened up the

departments to talk about any issue that they want to be briefed on, and I extend the same offer right now.

The fact remains that I've met with stakeholders already in Municipal Affairs and Environment, and I continue to have the same meetings with individuals as it relates to Justice and Public Safety – will continue to do that. But if she has any specific issue, I look forward to briefing her or anybody else at any time.

Thank you.

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, these are only stop-gap measures.

Tensions are rising on the Lab West picket line as IOC starts to use intimidation on strikers; the DJ-Composites lockout in Gander drags on to 17 months.

I ask the Premier: Will he order a review of our *Labour Relations Act* and employment standards legislation to strengthen them to ensure that all workers in our province can depend on those laws to protect their rights?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, we (inaudible). When a labour dispute occurs it not only impacts the workers, but the community at large, it affects the economy. But we encourage – we use the tools that are available to both sides, both the employers, the members of the collective bargaining units, as well, the employer, to settle the dispute. We use our conciliation officers as well.

No one has stood more firmly and more tall for those workers than the Member for Gander, the Member for Labrador West on these two specific issues. We always strive for a labour relations environment that respects both sides of the bargaining table. That allows for rules to be able to create a successful conclusion. Mr.

Speaker, we're always open to improving that process.

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

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

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

Government's budget speech committed to a long overdue independent review of the province's public post-secondary education system. The College of the North Atlantic is halfway through its own review that won't be finished until 2019.

I ask the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour: Why would 14 permanent and six contract faculty positions be cut before these reviews are completed?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, the College of the North Atlantic has led internally with its own review of its own systems, its own programs and has produced a report that was tabled last year that really, really upped the game of the College of the North Atlantic. That process is still underway; we are in phase two. This is the college's own plan.

We also know that Memorial University of Newfoundland has recognized and applauded the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for working with them in a review of our university.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is always timely, it's always relevant and it's always valuable to ensure that our post-secondary institutions are meeting the needs of today and tomorrow, and that's exactly what's happening right now.

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

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

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



Yes, Memorial has had a squeeze put on it by the cuts by this government, Mr. Speaker. That's what's happened with Memorial.

I ask the Premier: How can he expect MUN to continue to produce quality graduates under the financial pressure his government is putting on it?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources for a quick response, please.

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, Memorial University of Newfoundland is working very well with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador because we are not only – when we look at infrastructure, a \$500 million investment. We have a new core science facility that's being constructed. We have the facilities down at the Battery. We also have the animal science centre. We're expanding the square footage of Memorial University of Newfoundland now by over 500,000 square feet.

Memorial University is a true gem within our overall economy and our social well-being. We are supporting our university.

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

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

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

### Tabling of Documents

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

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

Pursuant to section 26(5)(a) of the *Financial Administration Act*, I am tabling one order-in-council relating to a funding pre-commitment for the fiscal years 2018-19, '19-'20 and '20-'21.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Further tabling of documents?

The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MS. GAMBIN-WALSH:** In accordance with section 56 of the *Automobile Insurance Act*, I hereby table the annual report of the Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities On Operations Carried Out Under The *Automobile Insurance Act* Chapter A-22, RSNL 1990, As Amended For The Period April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Further documents to be tabled?

Notices of Motion.

### Notices of Motion

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

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

I move, seconded by the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port:

Be it resolved that the House of Assembly urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to begin consultations with unions and employers to identify measures that would support the collective bargaining process thereby avoiding prolonged work stoppages, while respecting the rights of both the unionized and non-unionized employees, such that the long-term sustainability of various industries is preserved to the benefit of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

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

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

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

The private Member's resolution just read by the Member for Lab West is the private Member's resolution that will be debated this Wednesday.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Further notices of motion: I move, pursuant to Standing Order 11(1) that

this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 15.

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

The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MS. GAMBIN-WALSH:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting Tenancies Of Residential Premises, Bill 15.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

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

Once again, I rise to represent the individuals who have affected by the removal of the Adult Dental Program.

The Adult Dental Program coverage for clients of the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program under the Access and 65Plus Plans were eliminated in *Budget 2016*.

Many low-income individuals and families can no longer access basic dental care; and those same individuals can no longer access dentures, leading to many other digestive and medical issues.

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

We, the undersigned, call on the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to reinstate the Adult Dental Program to cover low-income individuals and families to better ensure oral health and quality of life and dignity.

Mr. Speaker, this is my fifth time presenting this petition. The undersigned, which happen to be different individuals every time, would really appreciate a response from the minister. The minister is very familiar with his portfolio and I'm sure he could attest to the benefits of good oral health, not only from a medical perspective but also a psychological effect that this is just a primary disrespect to the individuals' dignity who cannot afford dental care and equipment. This would go far to being proactive when it comes to individuals' quality of life and long-term medical health.

I, therefore, present this petition to the House.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

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 petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS a year has passed since the tragic event of January 17, 2017 where our school was completely destroyed; and

WHEREAS we have 250 people in a building which is only equipped to handle 150; and

WHEREAS we do not have a science lab, library/resource room, cafeteria, computer room, student support suite, no wheelchair accessibility washrooms and no multi-purpose room; and

WHEREAS we have classrooms which require co-programming but this cannot happen because of space issues in the building; and

WHEREAS government has a legal responsibility to ensure our students have access to the best education;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to commit to a new state-of-the-art K to 12 school for the students of Bay d'Espoir, announce

funding in 2018-2019 to begin the design and tender process and we would like the construction to be expedited.

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

Mr. Speaker, I didn't present –

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

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

I'm having trouble hearing the remarks from the Member identified.

Thank you.

**MS. PERRY:** I didn't present the petition in its entirety prior to the budget, in the event that we would still need to raise concerns on behalf of the area. I'm almost finished now. We'll soon have them all tabled.

Mr. Speaker, we're certainly very, very pleased to be receiving a new school, which we feel is crucial for the children of Bay d'Espoir. Right now, we're in a situation where the inadequate lab facilities is posing a real problem with having our children ready and prepared to go off to university, particularly for those who are in grade nine, 10, 11 and 12 who may never see the inside of the new school.

In that regard, I certainly speak on behalf of my constituents to advocate for a temporary, portable classroom that can be added to the school, a modular unit that can at least be able to provide them with a proper science lab so that can get the required curriculum and education they require so they can go on and pursue studies at university.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition on behalf of the people of my district. It relates to

an ambulance service application to the Public Utilities Board.

The Public Utilities Board has approved a licence of an ambulance owner to operate in the area of Bay Bulls to Bauline. This area is one of the fastest growing areas of the province. There have been many concerns from residents, even firefighting brigades, regarding possible response times.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to support the position of this service provider and ensure the residents of Bay Bulls to Bauline have access to the appropriate ambulance services.

The past number of years in regard to response times because of residential growth and other industrial activity in the region, there have been concerns in overall response times and some exceeding an hour when calls go out, response times handling those emergency calls and getting into acute care facilities in the metro region. In some cases, there's response coming from father south on the Southern Avalon, as well from the metro area it's coming in from the Health Sciences Centre. There are concerns, as I say, in regard to servicing that region.

We've seen a lot of growth certainly in the past number of years in industrial and commercial activity, as well as residential growth. As we know, Statistics Canada has indicated just recently in some of the work they've done, it's one of the fastest growing areas in the province. As well, when you look at things like routine calls for ambulance services, it causes a strain then because if emergencies do happen, it's a routine transfer or something like that, it does affect response times.

The region has certainly spoken to me on it. I've spoken, actually, to the minister. We've discussed it with the proponent who has garnered the licence from the PUB. I know the minister indicated they were doing some review in regard to the actual allocations that currently exist. He has indicated that they're seeing some areas where there are pockets where service may not be delivered. We think this is one of them.

As I said, I've talked to the minister with it. In the next number of weeks, he hopes to decide on this particular issue in regard to a funding envelope for this possible operator. So we advocate for him to look at this. We think it's very much needed. The region needs it, the growing region, so we look forward to a positive response to this petition.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Further petitions?

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

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

These are the reasons for this petition: Our licensed child care system is a patchwork of private for-profit centres – 70 per cent of all centres – non-profit community-based centres and family daycare, plus a small number of education and workplace-based centres.

It is nowhere near meeting the child care needs in our province. Affordable licensed child care is often in short supply in rural parts of the province. Even in St. John's, there are long wait-lists for quality child care programs.

Child care programs have both social and financial benefits for society. Studies show that high-quality child care and early childhood education programs result in better cognitive, language and numeracy skills. They help economically disadvantaged children transition to school on the same level as other children.

For every \$1 spent on early childhood education, the benefits range from \$1.50 to \$2.78 – many studies including the TD Economics.

Investing in child care creates jobs: \$1 million invested in child care would create 40 jobs, more than in any other centre.

A gender-based analysis of provincial budget would have indicated the need for a public child care program as a key way to close the wage gap between women and men in this province.

Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to take immediate steps to put in place a plan for a gradual transition to a universal, regulated, publicly funded and fully accessible child care and after-school care program.

Mr. Speaker, I have no idea what it will take to do this. Governments throughout the country, both on provincial and federal levels, talk about evidence-based decision making. Yet still there is so much scientific evidence, there is so much anecdotal evidence, there is so much experiential evidence that points to the benefit and the need of universal child care and affordable child care, a publicly administered, a publicly delivered, a publicly managed child care program.

There is no longer any viable reason not to do this. We know it's an investment that reaps economic benefits, both for individual working families but also for government.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what it will take. It is so reasonable and there's no reason to proceed on this. Again, when we look at the benefits for everyone, there is no reason not to move forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

We call Orders of the Day.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Orders of the day, Sir.

#### Orders of the Day

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration

Act, Bill 7, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act, Bill 7, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against?

The motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act," carried. (Bill 7)

**CLERK (Barnes):** A bill, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act. (Bill 7)

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000, Bill 8, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board shall have leave to introduce a

bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000, Bill 8, and that the said bill should now be read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

This motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000," carried. (Bill 8)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000. (Bill 8)

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

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

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 2, Bill 9, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 2, Bill 9, and that the said bill shall now be read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

This motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 2," carried. (Bill 9)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 2. (Bill 9)

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 9 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Schools Act, 1997, Bill 10, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Schools Act, 1997, Bill 10, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

This motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Schools Act, 1997," carried. (Bill 10)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Schools Act, 1997. (Bill 10)

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 10 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Jury Act, 1991, Bill 13, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Jury Act, 1991, Bill 13, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

This motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety to introduce a bill, "An Act to Amend The Jury Act, 1991," carried. (Bill 13)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Jury Act, 1991. (Bill 13)

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 13 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting Children, Youth And Families, Bill 14, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting Children, Youth And Families, Bill 14, and that the said bill shall now be read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

This motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development to introduce a bill, "An Act Respecting Children, Youth And Families," carried. (Bill 14)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act Respecting Children, Youth And Families. (Bill 14)

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 14 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 4, second reading of Bill 11.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, that Bill 11, An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act, be now read a second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 11 be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act." (Bill 11)

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

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

This bill is primarily a housekeeping bill. The Explanatory Notes says that the "Bill would amend the *Financial Administration Act* to reflect changes made during pension plan reform which established joint trusteeship for the Public Service Pension Plan and the Teachers' Pension Plan."

Mr. Speaker, the amendments being forwarded today are needed to reflect changes that were made during pension reform in 2014 and 2015.

In 2014, the provincial government of the day announced that it had reached an agreement with five unions representing employees of the Public Service Pension Plan on pension reform. In 2015, the government of the day announced an agreement with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association on teachers' pension reform.

Mr. Speaker, these agreements established joint trusteeship for both groups and joint sponsor bodies, whereby government and unions held equal representation and made joint decisions on the sponsorship and administration of these pension plans for their members and public service employees.

Mr. Speaker, in implementing pension reform, government introduced bills to amend the *Pensions Funding Act* and An Act to Modify Eligibility for Other Post-Employment Benefits.

The *Financial Administration Act* gives government the authority to issue payments to reduce unfunded liabilities in the provincial pension plans through such means as borrowing or by issuing a debenture, but the thing is that an unforeseen consequence –

(Sneeze.) Excuse me. That was unforeseen as well, Mr. Speaker.

That an unforeseen consequence of the changes to the Public Service Pension Plan and the Teachers' Pension Plan is that borrowing for pension plans under the authority of the *Financial Administration Act* excludes them as it is currently written. Pension reform changed the original intention of the *Financial Administration Act* as it relates to pension plan funding.

Mr. Speaker, the changes proposed today are being made in the spirit and intent of the *Financial Administration Act* and will re-establish government's authority and ability to fund its pension plans as the act was intended. Government has become aware of these issues with authority under the *Financial Administration Act* and today we're making the changes that are necessary to re-establish the intent of the act as it relates to pension plan funding.

As I said, these are primarily housekeeping changes that are nonetheless very important, Mr. Speaker, if we're going to continue to provide funding for teachers' pensions and the public service pension and give government the flexibility that it once had and was always supposed to have to fund the pensions.

So, Mr. Speaker, essentially under subsection 2(1) of the act, it's being amended –

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

I remind the Member that during second reading you're not to address the content of the clauses. We do that in Committee of the Whole. You should stick with the principle of the bill.

**MR. OSBORNE:** You got it, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** I was just making sure you were paying attention, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, again, these amendments are housekeeping. It's purely intended to allow government and give government the flexibility to provide funding to these pension plans which inadvertently was taken away when the changes were made in 2014 and again in 2015 with the Teachers' Pension Plan.

Mr. Speaker, if we're going to continue as a government to provide the funding so that the joint sponsorship of these plans by unions and government can continue and these plans can be funded, these changes today are necessary.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

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

I'm glad to rise to speak to Bill 11, just outlined by the minister, in a general sense what the bill is, An Act to Amend the *Financial Administration Act*. I spoke to that particularly



in regard to amending the act to reflect the changes made during pension plan reform which established joint trusteeship for the Public Service Pension Plan and the Teachers' Pension Plan.

That dealt at the time – of my time in government under our administration – looking at dealing with an unfunded pension plan and laying out the means, through a joint trusteeship, of those involved, the government and the particular unions in regard to managing that pension fund to make sure it was fully solvent. I believe it was over a 30-year period. To address those shortfalls that had been accumulating over decades and making a strategic partnership and the direction to make sure that the fund would be solvent and those that have paid into the fund, those that would pay in the future would have a return on that pension and it would be guaranteed for them.

That's what when the minister referenced prior pension reform for those two pension plans, the Public Service and the Teachers' Pension Plan, that we look at actually laying out a plan. Legislation was put in place and corporate entities were put in place to deal with both of those pension plans. I understand this particular bill, while the minister mentioned the little bit of housekeeping with this, it looks at changing particular terms within the old pension plan and within the two funds that it now serves particularly today, and looking at modifying some of the language in that regard related to the previous pension reform process.

That process, as I said, looked at the Teachers' plan, the Public Service Pension Plan. They were separated out what's called the Pooled Pension Fund which took in all of those Public Service Pension Plans, either core or outside that people would be paid from the public service. That Pooled Pension Fund had everybody in it. The reforms took place I think it was in 2015, 2014 those were broken out, two of them were broken out, the Teachers' Pension Plan and the Public Service plan.

Others – that's still the MHAs, judges and the Uniformed Services Pension Plan – are still in that Pooled Pension Fund. What we're talking about, those two at the time related to pension

reforms that were taken out and some amendments need to be made in that regard.

Particular points of the act reference Pooled Pension Funds. These sections have not been changed since the two funds I talked about, the Teachers' Pension fund and the Public Service Pension fund, have been separated out of that pooled plan that I spoke of. So these two changes when applied to the Public Service Pension Plan and to the Teachers' Pension Plan.

The addition of the pension administrator definition, which is really the significant change here, encompasses all the pension plans, and this terminology replaces the Pooled Pension Plan in the other areas of the change.

It's just recognizing, I guess, when the original bill was put together and reference was made to the pension fund, that's changed now to pension administrator. That will deal with the particulars of the funds and how they are broken out, and the funds I've listed, and how they will be viewed in the bill, which is An Act to Amend the Financial Act, and how these particular funds are referenced.

Really it is, as the minister says, housekeeping. It's good to see that reform was done in 2014. There are three others that are left today. I'm sure government is working diligently to deal with that to ensure we have stability in those pension funds that we've moved forward for those who have paid in, much like was done with the current two that have been taken out of the Pooled Pension Fund and now has a clear strategy and direction of joint partnership to manage those funds to see that they certainly are there and the funds are available within that 30-year period that I talked about earlier.

That's my comments for Bill 11, Mr. Speaker, and we certainly look forward to further debate and supporting this bill.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

I'm glad that this is a housekeeping bill because I don't want to inflict my voice too long on Members of the House and the public. But I am happy to stand and support this bill. It's a necessary housekeeping bill, as the Minister of Finance has pointed out. I think the history that he has explained, the history of what started in 2014 when the Public Service Pension Plan and the Teachers' Pension Plan were put together under – they weren't put together, that they were now put under joint trusteeships was a significant moment, I think, here in this House. I was very proud of us that we did that, because it means that the unions get an equal voice in administering their pensions, along with government. I think that's extremely important.

As the minister has pointed out, when the amendments were made to the *Financial Administration Act* to do that, there was one little thing that wasn't put in the *Financial Administration Act*. I say it's little; in one way it's big – and that is we didn't have added to the amendment the fact that government also needs the power to borrow to maintain its responsibilities for maintaining the pension plan, along with those individuals who pay into their plan.

It wasn't drastic in the sense that the money to fund the plans could be borrowed under the *Loan Act*, but it's important, for clarity, that along with the amendments that created the two joint trusteeships that the *Financial Administration Act* does mention that government has the power under that act to borrow for those two joint plans, as well as the plans that government still has under what's called the Pooled plan, as the Member for Ferryland talked about. The Pooled Pension Plan includes the MHA pension plan, the Judges' Pension plan and the Uniformed Services Pension Plan. Government, while they aren't part of a joint trusteeship like the other two, still has responsibility for those pension plans.

This bill makes sure that everything is neat and tidy. I think that we should be proud of the fact that we have maintained a defined benefits pension plan for all of these unions and the workers – that's the important thing: the

members, the workers, do have defined benefit pension plans. I think that we should be proud of the fact that we have maintained that here in this province, and I'm glad to support this bill to make sure that the *Financial Administration Act* is clear with regard to government's responsibility to maintain the funds that are necessary for both the Public Service Pension Plan and the Teachers' Pension Plan.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I'm not going to take long either. As has been said, this is really a housekeeping bill, Bill 11. I will be supporting the bill.

Without being repetitive, obviously I think we've all heard stories from former government employees and so on, a lot of our public sector pensioners, whether they be teachers, police officers or someone who worked here at the Confederation Building, whatever, health care and so on and the grievances they've had over the years.

I know I've had numerous people in my district who are public sector pensioners who felt they had been done wrong by over the years in terms of their pensions and the increases that they used to get at one point time that got cut out. They always point to the fact that we had this pension liability and the fact that successive governments over the years, of all – I was going to say all stripes but of two stripes I guess. Various administrations spent their pension money on roads and paving and stuff like that, or they added people to the pension plan that never paid into the pension plan, various groups over the years.

That's what created this unfunded liability. Had the money been invested the way it should have been and not taken out and spent for, whether it be political reasons or maybe necessity – because there was no money to spend on roads and things like that that needed to be spent. But, if the ability hadn't been there to take that money out and spend it and had it been invested, perhaps we would have had a healthy pension

plan today and we never would have had to go down this road to begin with. I guess that's sort of ancient history now. We are where we are.

I will give credit to the former administration under – I believe it was Premier Marshall at the time that did take on this task. As well as the other stakeholders, the unions and so on who – Mr. Lucas who was recognized here today was involved, I believe. They did sit down and they did iron out an agreement to make the pension plan sustainable on an ongoing basis.

Yes, as a result of that, there were people who were impacted, people who had to work extra time. I know numerous people who had to work – I think it went from 55, early retirement, up to 58. Now they have to work an extra three years to get the pension they would have gotten when these changes were made. There were a lot of people, a lot of current public servants who had to pay the price, I suppose, for the pension liability. The government of the day did invest some money, committed to invest money as well to make them solvent.

Really, as has been said, what's happening here now is the legislation is just catching up and recognizing the new pension regime if you will and the joint management by not just the government but by employees as well. Now, thankfully, when money goes in it will be invested; it will be invested properly. There will no longer be the ability of any government to go in and raid the pension fund to spend on other things other than pensions. That's the way it should be. This legislation is just recognizing that change that was made.

I'm glad to support the bill. Again, it's important to give credit where credit is due and to recognize Premier Marshall at the time who did take on the task and did a good job, I might add, certainly on this particular issue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** If the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board speaks now he will close debate.

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

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

Just to thank everybody for their contribution to the debate on this particular bill. It is housekeeping, Mr. Speaker. It's a necessary amendment to the bill in order for government to continue to make payments into the pension plans.

Again, just to thank Members for their contributions. I look forward to Committee.

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

The motion is that Bill 11 be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against?

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act. (Bill 11)

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

When shall this bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole House?

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 11)

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the House

resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 11.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the said bill.

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

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against?

The motion is carried.

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

**Committee of the Whole**

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

We are now considering Bill 11, An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act.

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act.” (Bill 11)

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Those against?

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

**CLERK:** Clauses 2, 3 and 4.

**CHAIR:** Shall clauses 2, 3 and 4 carry?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Those against?

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 4 carried.

**CLERK:** Be it enacted by the Lieutenant-Governor and House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows.

**CHAIR:** Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Those against?

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

**CLERK:** An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act.

**CHAIR:** Shall the title carry?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Those against?

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

**CHAIR:** Shall I report Bill 11 without amendment?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Those against?

Carried.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** I move, Mr. Chair, that the Committee rise and report Bill 11.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 11.

Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again, the Speaker returned to the Chair.

**MR. SPEAKER (Trimper):** The hon. the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

**MR. WARR:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 11 without amendment.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 11 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

When shall the said bill be read a third time?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

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

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

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

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

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

It's my honour to be able to stand in the House today to speak to the budget and to thank the good people of St. John's West for allowing me the opportunity to represent them here in this hon. House and to represent them in matters and affairs that have great impact, I say, on how they live and how they are educated here in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. So it is a distinct honour, I think for all of us here in this House, to have that opportunity, and I do want to thank the good people of St. John's West.

I will say, Mr. Speaker, when we first were elected the end of November, early December of 2015 and became government, it was certainly evident to us, who had the opportunity to sit on the government side of the House, that there were really a lot of large and complex issues facing the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Not only were we in the midst of a downturn in oil and gas and a downturn in commodities, we were also having major problems with our fiscal situation here in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I'll start to talk about the fiscal situation here in this province a little bit as I get into discussions around the budget, but I will say that we shouldn't have been in the situation that we found ourselves in, in December of 2015. I said this last year in my budget speech, Mr. Speaker, so I won't repeat myself. The Auditor General had been for the 10 years, 12 years previous speaking regularly, year after year after year, advising government and the people of this province how serious the fiscal situation and pleading with the government of the day, the former Progressive Conservative government, to take it seriously and put its fiscal house in order.

I will say that this was during the heady times of high commodity prices, the heady times of high oil and gas, the best production that we had seen in our offshore oil and gas. Certainly there was additional money available for the provincial

government of the day, the Progressive Conservative government, to really address the fiscal situation. I will say it was with a great deal of disappointment that you saw year after year that, really, that focus was not there. That focus of fiscal responsibility and that focus of discipline were not there.

Mr. Speaker, as we came into government in December of 2015, it became clear to our Members of this House of Assembly just how serious the fiscal situation was. We now know that the deficit at the time, not the debt – and I will say this to people who may be tuning in, the difference between what a deficit and debt is. The deficit is what is in addition to what you're spending year over year. If you have a budget of \$100 for the year and you spent \$110, your deficit is \$10. Your debt, of course, is longer term.

When we first came in to government we focused on this fiscal situation, and the people of the province were made aware that our deficit was close on \$2.7 billion for one year. That means the former administration had been overspending in one year by \$2.7 billion. That's a horrific amount of money for, what, 520,000 of us to make up. And that's just the deficit; that's not the debt.

Mr. Speaker, that was the first thing that this government had to do was really focus in on that fiscal situation. In the last couple of years, we have had to make some very difficult decisions, no doubt. None that any of us would want to make in normal circumstance, but I am pleased to say that we are on a path and a plan now to reach back to balanced budgets by 2022-2023.

I think that we need to continue with that fiscal discipline and we need to ensure that as commodity prices, and as we really address some of the concerns in our economy, and as more money flows into the coffers of the provincial government that we have to really make sure that we don't reach into that money and continue to overspend, which is easy to do, Mr. Speaker.

When times are really, really good I know governments – past governments – really did overspend. Mr. Speaker, while we all want to have many of the things that are fun to have,

good to have or a pleasure to have in our province, we also have to have fiscal discipline. We have to make sure that we're leaving a legacy, a solid legacy, for our children and our grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, when I speak about that, I do want to say I fully support the idea of a legacy fund. I know this government has said repeatedly if we did reach an opportunity where we were starting to collect more monies, we would do an offshore oil and gas legacy fund and really focus in, I think, on ensuring that we have the monies available to us to ride the ups – the highs and the lows.

Oftentimes, we know in our economy, in our commodity cycles and the global world cycles, Mr. Speaker, there are highs and there are lows. When the time of the highs comes, it's a heady experience, but we know that the lows come as well and we have to expect that.

We have to continue – and I like the theme of this year's budget, which is *Building on our Future*, and that's what we have to do. I said in this House the last time I spoke – I think it was a week or so ago. I talked about our forefathers and do always reflect back on my family. I know that many people in this hon. House and around the province do reflect on their families, both in the past, in the present and into the future. I know that I want to ensure my legacy as a human being living in Newfoundland and Labrador – I want to make sure that my legacy is having that fiscal discipline and leaving something for our future generations.

There is an expression, of course – I think it's an indigenous expression. It was we only borrow mother earth and we have to always remember our responsibility to our future generations.

I'm pleased to see, in this year's budget, that continued discipline. We continue to make sure that while overspending may feel good, the effect of it certainly isn't. We have to continue to focus in – and while we have a deficit this year, again, I think the focus is on bringing us back to a balanced budget. I commend this House, this government on making sure that we have that discipline to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I started today by talking about my district, and it is a wonderful urban district: St. John's West. We're surrounded on one side, of course, by Kenmount Road and we stretch all the way to Topsail Road. It certainly is a great residential area and a wonderful community that's made up of several communities within this residential area – great people who are engaged in a lot of the activities of our city. They take part in a lot of the activities of the city, and it's wonderful to see. We have, of course, two schools in my district: St. Matthew's and Cowan Heights Elementary. They do a great deal of work with the youth of our city, and a great deal of work with youth of our community.

Mr. Speaker, one of the big things that are going impact my community in this coming year, of course, is the continued development of the Team Gushue Highway, and it really is a highway that surfaces through my district. It's been underway and under development, causing a lot of people in my district dust and noise problems over the many, many years. But this year we have committed \$13.7 million to complete Team Gushue Highway – to complete Team Gushue Highway.

It will be a great effort. It will connect up a great many of districts, right out to Mount Pearl and then onwards to Goulds, and then bringing you up to the Outer Ring Road. I'm glad to see it. I think it'll be a great highway throughout our city that will connect up our city.

But I had the opportunity, through Transportation and Works – and I thank them for it – to take a truck and go over the highway – supervised, of course, I don't recommend it to people without that supervision. It was really, really interesting to see the geology. I'm looking forward – I'm hopeful that when the highway is open that there will be some note of some of some of the geological anomalies that are on this highway, because I didn't realize. I'll use one example, because we're hearing of lots of volcanoes in Hawaii, of course. But there is what they consider a volcanic ash along the highway. You can see it when it's pointed out by geologists, of course. You can see the river, what they call the river of ash.

I was intrigued, Mr. Speaker, to hear that out near Bell Island and those areas – a millennia

ago, I guess – there was a volcano that did have that ash. You can see the river along the way. It's not actually water; it is a river of ash and, of course, lava.

There are some really interesting geological aspects along the highway, but the key thing is the people of my district have been – you know the development of a highway is never easy. Of course, there's dust and noise and impacts on their backyards and things of that nature. So we'll be very, very happy in my district to have that completed.

Mr. Speaker, I also note that in this year's budget there is some monies, \$3,000 grants towards the purchase or building of a new home. There's a lot of home construction going on in my community, in my district. I'm glad to see some assistance, to ensure that people can build new homes, towards the purchase or building of a new home. I'm glad to see that and I know that's helping to generate some extra building in our city. I think that's good for our economy but it's also good for young families. We welcome them to St. John's West and are encouraged by that.

Mr. Speaker, I often say in my district we have both the young – and I think that \$3,000 grant really does well for the people of my district – but also we have a lot of seniors. I'm very pleased when I meet up with seniors who tell me not just about the history of St. John's West, the history of the beautiful City of St. John's, but also about our province. I'm very, very happy that we have \$121 million allocated for the Senior's Benefit and Income Supplement benefiting thousands of individuals and families. I think that's an important investment in our seniors, some of whom are struggling.

We all know the cost of living continues to rise and we all know how some people have had difficulties. I'm always pleased to see there is focus on ensuring that there is assistance for those that do need additional revenues to help them with their living costs.

I'm also really pleased – and my district is a fairly educated district. We have, as I said earlier, two schools but we also are close to the university. So we have a lot of university students. We are also close to St. Teresa's

school when you look at proximity, and Waterford Valley High; great schools all around, either in or around the District of St. John's West.

I was really pleased, very pleased to see the investments being made in the Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes, Mr. Speaker. I think that's commendable. I personally think the future opportunity in any community, in any province really lies with education. I am committed to ensuring that we continue to invest in education, but even more important, we have to continue to realize that education, innovation are the cornerstones of an evolved society.

So I was really happy when I saw, first of all, that the Premier said we should have a task force on education. Then with the \$6.9 million in new funding, things like \$3.1 million for reading specialists and learning resource teachers. How important is that? How important is literacy? How important is numeracy? Mr. Speaker, as our society evolves, that continues to ensure our advancement and development.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very, very happy we have \$1.9 million to support professional learning for teachers and almost \$2 million provided for each of the subsequent three years. I think that is very, very important.

There are a lot of very good initiatives in this budget. I know from my Department of Natural Resources there investments in oil and gas. There are investments in mining. For example, in oil and gas we directed Nalcor to make sure they continue to make investments in seismic. All of this, of course, under *Advance 2030* and making sure that we are maximizing our opportunity in the oil and gas industry.

For mining; the backbone of mining for us here in this province is discovery. Just as it is in oil and gas and making sure we're making the investments in the geological survey. For example, we have approximately \$5 million for the geological survey, Mr. Speaker. So making sure we understand the prospectivity.

We have about 11 commodities that are mined here in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I've said many times in this House

that we have about 6,000 people working in mining in this province. This year, shipments are going to total about \$3.4 billion.

So we know there is great opportunity. The world is looking for our minerals. We want to be able to supply them because it supplies the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, not only with great jobs but great opportunity as well.

Mr. Speaker, there's also money allocated in my department – I spoke about it last week – for the Mineral Incentive Program. That's, again, another foundational program that helps to ensure we have major discoveries.

A few weeks ago in this House I recognized Al Chislett and his work. Mr. Chislett passed away recently, but I recognized he was the first person in this province to receive a mineral incentive grant. Look at what happened, the discovery he made in Voisey's Bay and all the benefits that have accrued to the great Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to speak today very quickly, I guess, because 20 minutes does go by rather fast. I wanted to say, again, focusing on the economy, focusing on ensuring our fiscal discipline are two of the most important things I see in this budget. Again, for the great District of St. John's West, I see some good investments to ensure their continued growth and development, their continued opportunities as well.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak very highly on this budget today.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Reid):** The hon. the Premier.

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

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

I take great pleasure today in rising and standing and speaking to *Budget 2018*, the budget that was announced by this government just a few weeks ago. As always, I've listened to considerable amounts of debate from the



Opposition and got some feedback, obviously, from people outside.

Mr. Speaker, I will say from a public's point of view, given where we are today, where we were in 2016, I will say that most people are saying we have made significant progress in getting this province back on track. Mr. Speaker, no matter where we are today, I think we always need to remind ourselves where we started from.

For a few minutes I want to go back to 2016 and what that looked like coming into office in December of 2015, I will say, right after the election and what it is this government inherited, what it is this caucus inherited from the previous administration, the PC administration, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say this first-hand; to think this was actually news to everybody in our province is simply not the fact. This was not news to everyone in the province because the PC administration had known for quite some time the dire situation this province was in. Except, Mr. Speaker, they made a very conscious decision deliberately not to inform the stakeholders, not to inform Newfoundlanders and Labradorians exactly what the financial situation was of their province.

Mr. Speaker, I would say today as I stand here, in retrospect and reflecting on all the information that was available to a former administration, to the PCs at the time, not sharing that with the people of this province was a mistake. They had no right to do that, Mr. Speaker, but doing it deliberately is exactly what happened.

I know this – I know this now because I've spoken to many people early on, early into the administration, Mr. Speaker, and it was very clear to me that notes that we had seen were notes that were shared with the previous administration. This information was available. Some of it was available in the spring of 2015.

An example of what I'm talking about would be at Muskrat Falls, what the Astaldi situation was, what the risks were, what potential claims would be coming to the people of this province. Yet, they did not disclose this to the people of this province going into the election of 2015.

Mr. Speaker, also what they did know, yet continued to say their plan for the future, based on the election platform that they had put out, they were projecting a \$1.1 billion deficit going into 2016 – simply not true, and they knew it. They knew that that wasn't right and they knew that they were not on target, Mr. Speaker.

This \$1.1 billion deficit at that time, when you look at the preparation going into *Budget 2016* was \$2.7 billion. Now, let's put that into context of where other provinces would be in this Confederation. You compare where we were as Newfoundland and Labrador to all other provinces, no one was even close to that situation, given the population that we had in our province at the time.

Mr. Speaker, let me make it very clear, that administration had that information and they knew it. They did not want to tell the people of the province of what the situation was in the province.

Mr. Speaker, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in all the communities, you have to ask yourself: Why is it that someone had access to this information and just deliberately refused not to let them know? Why would they not want to tell the people of what the situation was of the finances in our province? Why would they deliberately withhold that information? It could only be one reason. They were ashamed of their record. That is the only reason why you would hold onto that information and not tell the people what the situation was in our province.

That gives everyone in this province the insight and little bit of visibility of what that first month looked like. Added to that, Mr. Speaker, we knew very early that there would be borrowing that needed to be done to continue to provide service to the people of our province.

What they ignored to do for many years, Mr. Speaker, was put in place a borrowing plan. Going out and letting people, letting investors in the province, letting the financial institutions in the province or outside the province, the people who would supply the funds to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, loan the money to the province, letting them know where we were and setting up a long-term borrowing strategy.

To replace that, Mr. Speaker, what they did is put in short-term policies to borrow. All of us would know – not to suggest that it's like living on a credit card but that's the idea – that you do not put in long-term financing options, making those options available for our province, rather than just put it in 60- and 90-day options.

We had to take aggressive action. I think many people looked at the situation of the province as we became aware of it and as we disclosed this information publicly – and I'll get to the Muskrat Falls situation a little later on and the impact that was having, even when all of this was ongoing.

Mr. Speaker, here we were, a new government, and within days finally realizing what the truth of the situation was about this province. It was discouraging, but what was most discouraging was we would have leaders who were running an election and they had refused to put this information out there publicly.

We took exception to that, Mr. Speaker. We quickly gave updates to the people of the province – where it is their province stood. We didn't like it, but you know going into *Budget 2016* there were a number of decisions that we knew would be impactful on the people of our province, but we needed to get a foundation.

I'll get into, in a few minutes, the vision that we laid out, which came in November 2016, of what this province would look like in the long term. Mr. Speaker, 2016, I will say, was a budget where some very tough decisions had to be made. We knew that when those decisions were made. They were tough on people; we understand that. But as we work our way through this, we put a seven-year forecast in place. I can say that with our third budget now, we are on forecast to get to surplus in 2022-2023.

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

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

Also, Mr. Speaker, we took on a significant amount of public engagement, which was important for us. What we clearly got from speaking to the people was that, over time, people understood the situation that we were

into. What was ironic about that, in the 2016 budget, the very crowd, the PC administration in this particular case, knowing exactly where we were, what they decided to do is still not stand up and take responsibility for their decisions, still not stand up and take responsibility for their actions, still not stand up and take the responsibility for what they left this province in, Mr. Speaker.

I've often told stories. It kind of reminded me of showing up at the scene of an accident or a fire somewhere and the very people that lit the match were throwing rocks at you because you were there trying to put the fire out. That's exactly what was going on, Mr. Speaker. Instead of taking the responsibility for their own actions, they stood there and criticized those that were trying to fix the things that they had created. How ironic is that? Someone there trying to save the future of this province and we have a crowd there that was criticizing exactly what was going on.

They were indeed tough times, Mr. Speaker, but we took those measures early on and put in place borrowing programs establishing long-term debt. I will say that it was as a result of the work of a lot of the great staff that we have that worked within government at the time.

Once the foundation was put in place and we were able to secure the situation of the province, Mr. Speaker, in November of 2016 we put in place a vision for the future of Newfoundland and Labrador, for sustainability and growth in Newfoundland and Labrador. It was built really on four key focus areas. Four areas that we really needed to focus on was the economy, efficiencies, services and how we improve outcomes, given the resources that we had to deal with.

First of all, that would have been Phase 01. We did that very quickly. That would have been within the first six-month window. We put a report card out making sure that from the beginning to the end people would understand that this is a government that would be accountable and that we would share this information with the people of our province.

Phase 02 was about how we realize the potential that we have here. When you look at the

significant amount of assets, the natural resources that we have within our province, we always felt that we had a lot that we could build and rebuild this province on.

Phase 03, still dealing with the economy, the efficiency, services and better outcomes – Phase 03, which we just recently announced, was building for our future. This is a big focus on services and outcomes I would say for people all across our province.

Mr. Speaker, that is *The Way Forward*. Added to this is we needed to know that this would take time. When you listen to the debate of those in this House of Assembly, the new leader and some other leaders, there's always a bunch of information that comes forward.

We hear Members of the PC Party saying: Why are you kicking this down the road? Let me make this very clear: That is code for this. That means layoff the public service. Kicking it down the road to restore or balance budgets. In their words, when they say that, that means reduce the public sector. That is code for that.

It could only be that, Mr. Speaker, because when you look at having over 10 years, \$20 billion in oil royalties, another \$4.6 billion in Atlantic Accord money, and they had all kinds of options if they really, truly were interested in diversifying the economy and really didn't do it.

Let's face it, let's be very clear. They managed the government very clearly on the price of oil. That's what happened. That's what gave them the surpluses. It wasn't because they diversified the economy. It wasn't that at all, because that did not happen. It was purely on the price of oil. So we made sure we put in place a multi-year plan to restore fiscal balance and doing so, keeping in mind that large reduction in the public service at the time would have meant that the economy would have lost more jobs.

Why this needs to be considered is there is no doubt we had three megaprojects that were ongoing within the province. Muskrat Falls being one, where a few thousand Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and others were working on that project. We had Vale, the work that was ongoing at Long Harbour, and we had Hebron. Three megaprojects that were

creating significant employment for people of the province, but as with any megaproject they wind down, and people in primarily trades are left out of work. The service sector is impacted by this as well.

So taking thousands of people, as the PC administration would suggest when they say kicking it down the road. That is exactly what they're suggesting because that is the only option. That is the only option when they say this, Mr. Speaker. So for us, we wanted to take an approach to make sure that we methodically do this through attrition. I think both Finance Ministers that I've had the privilege of working with have made this quite clear, that that would be the best option.

Of all the debate we've listened to around budget time over the last few weeks, not just this budget, but *Budget 2016*, *Budget 2017* and now *Budget 2018*, there's one thing that has been glaringly missing. When I listen to the debate of the Opposition Members, of all parties, I would say, Mr. Speaker, there's one thing that is glaringly missing. Do you know what that is, Mr. Speaker? People tell me this all the time. Not only did they nearly bankrupt the province but they're bankrupt of ideas. They have come with nothing, no solutions that have been offered. Nothing at all.

They went out of their way to destroy their relationship with federal governments, with other provinces. We know that as a small province of just over 500,000 people, relationship building, both inside the province and outside the province, is critically important.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind people. Just listen to the comments and the words from the Opposition. Tell me and remind them of the group that nearly bankrupt the place: where are the ideas they're coming forward with? They have no ideas at all.

Thankfully for us, we did not rely on them to come forward with ideas. We relied on the people that live in this province, that live in all of our communities, Mr. Speaker, to put in place a public engagement system where the ideas would come from. That is what is so unique and so special about *The Way Forward* which we

launched in 2016. It is about the future of our province.

Once we got the foundation in place, the financial foundation in place for our province in 2016, in 2017 things started to change a bit. The bond rating agencies looked at our province – even, though, understanding where we were – they did acknowledge the fact that some of the tough decisions we had to make, that we did make them, Mr. Speaker.

We put in place a way to get this province back to restoring fiscal balance within this province. That is what *The Way Forward* was all about. We put in place what I would consider to be some of the most unprecedented consultations that we saw at any point in time in our history.

Mr. Speaker, I get the privilege often to speak to premiers in other provinces, former premiers in our province and to a person, everyone has often said this, they have never seen a province that was in the type of financial situation that this province was in, in 2016. It was unheard of for any province anywhere in this confederation.

Mr. Speaker, as we started to build on the relationships with people in Newfoundland and Labrador, public engagement, as I said, was a big part of it. We knew the problems could only be solved when people worked together in our province. When we restored those relationships that were critically important, working together we saw something that was very fundamental.

If I go back to phase one and the decisions we had to make that we made, Mr. Speaker, around improving efficiencies and so on, if you look at the value of that exercise, that was about \$105 million very early and very quickly in annualized savings from that first budget that we were able to use for other services, or to support and get that budget down.

That was a remarkable piece of work. Keeping in mind, that going into the preparation of *Budget 2016* it was \$2.7 billion in deficit, Mr. Speaker. We were able to get that down and continue to take that down to where we are today to between \$600 million and \$700 million in the budget. Which is still a big number, but we must continue to do so and make the progress that's required to restore the balance

but do it methodically, Mr. Speaker, without shocking the system that went through some considerable changes in 2016.

Another example of what we did is when we came into government in 2015 and we did some of our own analysis within the department – this was something when you look at growing the administration, we had an administration that had been built up. When you look at the PC Party and you think that as a government what they did was took – as an example, the number of deputy ministers in Newfoundland and Labrador. When you compared that in 2016, one of the first analyses we did, we were right at an Ontario number. An Ontario number to run the same administration right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Speaker, we started reducing that to the size that would be comparable to Nova Scotia. Something that was a better fit for the people of our province. It made it more nimble, there is no doubt about that.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I want to say just in zero-based budgeting, which was something that was almost a new term that had to be introduced to the budgeting system in our province, that meant people had to be accountable within their departments – by doing so, no different than you would run your household. Every single Newfoundlander and Labradorian as they run their household today, they go in and they say how much money do I have to spend? What is it that I need to purchase? They build their budget in their own households based on zero-based budgeting.

Why is it that something that was occurring in households in Newfoundland and Labrador was new to government? It should not have been new to government. In the past what would have happened, people were given this base budget and you build your budgets on top of that.

We've heard stories of when people have brought initiatives to the budget system, when they said, no, we can do all of that without considering this, Mr. Speaker, which is very important because once you make a decision to pay for something, the next thing, before you make that final decision, you need to know if indeed it's sustainable. Will I have the revenue in one year's time, two years' time, five years'

time or in 20 years' time so that this revenue is sustainable?

Mr. Speaker, there were lots of programs that were put in place that were not sustainable. Tax reductions were put in place that were not sustainable, as an example. Because even coming through the nearly \$20 billion in royalty money from our offshore, seven out of those 10 years they were still posting, believe it or not, from the best revenue generating times in our province, the best revenue generating times in our province, the PC Government was still posting deficits. Hard to believe, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the price of oil when they were in place and still posting deficits.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask them today to even, when they get up and they get the opportunity to speak, to try and defend their decisions. Rather than trying to place the blame and not accept their own responsibility, let the people of the province know why is it they ignored all of this and went ahead and made the decisions that put this province in the place that it is.

Mr. Speaker, when I look back at all of this, we started a plan. One of the first things that associations – we talked about infrastructure because when you go through those challenging times, one of the things you must never forget is the fact that you have a lot of old and aging infrastructure that you have to continue to deal with. Industry leaders, no matter where you go in the province, made it quite clear to us that we need a long-term plan, just not where we're going to be this year, but we need a long-term plan. Other provinces had attempted this and had done it and had it in place, but the PC administration in this province wanted no part of that. They refused to go down that road of a long-term plan for investment within our province.

Mr. Speaker, we saw this as a real opportunity to work with people in our province, work with communities and work with local industries. We did two; one was the infrastructure plan which put in place a five-year plan so that people and communities would know what the level of infrastructure would be in their community, wanted to let them know in advance.

That is the reason why I can't imagine that some Members of the Opposition will vote against this budget. There are major and significant infrastructure projects they've been asking for that will occur within their own district. I can only think of a school in St. Alban's and that area as a prime example. I can't imagine that someone that sits in this Assembly is going to vote against the school in St. Alban's as an example, Mr. Speaker, or a school in Paradise or some roadwork that will occur anywhere in other parts of the province.

We're quite happily investing in people in Newfoundland and Labrador. We don't look at this as the government's money; this is the money of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. When we make investments into infrastructure, we are making investments in people in this province and we're making investments in the future of this province, Mr. Speaker.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** When I look at investments in the future of the province, Mr. Speaker, I think I have to just remind people of the Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes and the great work that was done by a group of individuals that went around this province collecting data of what an education system should look like. They put in place and recommended some 82 vital recommendations. We've been able to support that with implementation in *Budget 2018*.

When you look at preparing for the future, there's no more powerful tool that you can do and that is within the education system. We've been able to do that. The Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes – I remember this day because when the report was presented to me, I was actually in the school I graduated from. Many of the teachers that came up to me, had taught me and taught other people as well, they were very proud of the work that was done. I was very pleased to be able to take this task force, the recommendations, all 82 of them, with the report itself and share this with educators and with families, and even with students and people that are in post-secondary education right now.

I just want to just touch on some of the highlights of this report. Because, Mr. Speaker, many of the things that happen within our society really gets embedded, and in order to create effective change, must happen within the K to 12 system – things like mental health and addictions and wellness, how that fits into the education system. Well, Mr. Speaker, those that did the work and those that spoke to community leaders all across our province, they recognize this as well; and embedded in the K to 12 system is how we teach and how we educate and inform our students in the K to 12 system what mental health and what wellness is all about.

Inclusive education, too, Mr. Speaker, is something that's been discussed for a long, long time, and how we make sure that with all the diversity that we have in the system that we make sure inclusive education is a big part of it.

We also want to highlight and really strategically make investments that within the K to 12 system many of our students were not doing as well as we would have liked them to be. Mathematics was an example; reading; literacy is an example; technology and coding. You imagine, Mr. Speaker, in our society today not allowing coding to be in our education system, which was something that was ignored by the previous administration – did not put in place technology and coding so that people would understand that their very future when you look at using technology, that they understood what the very basics were. This is kind of like teaching reading and mathematics as you prepare the students in the K to 12 system. So coding was something that was important to us.

Also, Mr. Speaker, as being the minister responsible for Indigenous Affairs, it was also important that our K to 12 system know about the history of indigenous education and indigenous groups within our province, where that hits. I think it's important when you look at the history of any province, you must look at all those people that live in the province and the indigenous groups and communities that we have so that we get a better understanding within the K to 12 system of the impact and how we connect and interact with each other.

But when I talk about indigenous education, it doesn't end there. Because as we, as a province, put a big focus on immigration, realizing that we have to grow our population, which would be good for our economy, multicultural education is a big part of that as well. I think it's very important for all of us that we have the multicultural education and we include that in the K to 12 system. This was some of the highlights that came out of the task force's recommendations.

Co-operative education was another example. I think all of us when we look back at our own education, co-op education was something that all of us took great pride in. I know in my own situation, being an entrepreneur in our own community, that there were many health care professionals who wanted to get some example of what it would look like working in a health care setting or working in a setting if this was a career that they were thinking about for their future. We see engineering students, we see people who went on to be future teachers, we've seen people who went on to be accountants and lawyers and so on, through a co-op education program, had the opportunity to go into what was really a classroom outside of the school structure itself but go in and get a sense and feel for what it would look like if this was your career choice.

Before those 82 recommendations can be properly implemented – and we know that this will take some years because this is really about a transition. We had to make sure that we put a big focus and invest in teacher and professional development. It is extremely important that everyone would understand the impact of those 82 recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, I also think it's a good opportunity to talk about the full-day kindergarten because going into *Budget 2016* a lot of people questioned the investment that we made in full-day kindergarten. As one of the last provinces to be able to do so, we felt it was important that we take students and the future students in our province and give them the opportunity for full-day kindergarten and we were able to do that, even in those tough economic times.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you right now the feedback that I am getting from parents, and

teachers too, are saying that this has been a major success. So this is all part and parcel of the investment that we've made in education.

A lot of people from time to time will look at all of us as politicians and when you look at where the priorities would be. Well, I will tell you that people on this side of the House, this government, we are a government that is taking action on a lot of things that people opposite said they would do; made announcements, said it was a priority for them but never delivered on them. There's no bigger example that I would say to the people of this province, no bigger example today where there was a lot of talk and very little action. I'll tell you what I mean.

It was very clear, and going into the election of 2015 we made it quite clear that we would put a mechanism in place and we would start the replacement of the Waterford Hospital. In every room we went into, no matter where we were, that was an issue, to replace the Waterford Hospital, but not just to replace the building that was opened in 1855 – and at the announcement when we talked about what the mechanism would look like for the replacement of the Waterford, I made a comment that Canada wasn't even a country when the current Waterford, that is providing the services for those who need support with mental illness in our province, Canada wasn't even a country at that time in 1855.

Thing about that, Mr. Speaker. If that was a hospital where we had to go into for some other physical problem or if it was a cardiovascular problem or if it was cancer treatment or ophthalmology and so on, and someone said that this building was opened in 1855, it would be very hard to believe. That is the emphasis and that is how the previous administration felt about that particular hospital. Now, we made it quite clear we would put in a provincial plan on how we deal with mental health and addictions. We put in a plan *Towards Recovery*, and I will say there was an all-party committee that did some work on all of this.

Mr. Speaker, it's one thing to do the work, it's another thing to take action. We took that action, Mr. Speaker. *Towards Recovery* was an action plan on how we transform mental health and addictions care in our province. That's been led

by our Minister of Health and Community Services. We have been very proud to put in place a mechanism to replace that hospital, but already, too, I wanted to just build on and remind people, the successes we're already seeing as we go around the province.

When I look at wait-lists; just a few months ago we went to the Burin Peninsula and we put in place one of the first in the country, Roots for Hope program. That was put in place on the Burin Peninsula because of some specific needs that were occurring there, making sure we work with the community that already had a mechanism in place to provide support for families and young people, adults, that were being challenged around mental health and addictions issues.

Mr. Speaker, this is really what is different about the work of this government since we came into power in 2015. It's about working very closely with people in our province. It's about taking those issues seriously and not just making announcements, Mr. Speaker, but taking action.

We did the same thing in Lab West with the mental health programs that were done in Lab West and throughout Labrador. We're seeing the same thing on the West Coast.

People are coming forward. I've had many conversations with families, both young and old, that have had to deal with this within their children, within their adults, and, in some cases, within the senior population within our province. That is how working together makes a difference.

As I talk about health care in particular, I do want to talk about long-term care. I want to talk about a hospital on the West Coast. I just want to go back to 2007, 11 years ago when we stood in a room in Corner Brook and I listened to the former administration announce a new hospital for Corner Brook; 2007. That place got announced, I couldn't tell you, countless times. Countless times it got announced. Seven times being announced at speaking engagements, at board of trades and at Rotary Clubs, saying: we're going to do this. This is something that we are going to do.

In all that time, Mr. Speaker, when they were saying we are going to do it, the infrastructure that existed in that particular community was starting to crumble.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will say that since we took –

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Yeah, there were lots of (inaudible).

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Not too many of those stones that you put into a corner, though, those nameplates.

Mr. Speaker, these are not the important things. The important things are those recipients and those people who need those services. In 2017 when the hospital in Corner Brook was announced, that's all they ever did with it. They did some clearing of land. We took affirmative action just a few months ago when we announced a plan to replace the Corner Brook hospital. That plan is now progressing. I think last week I saw some media reports, Mr. Speaker, some of the work has already begun out there.

This is the way it would have to be. First of all, it had to be the long-term care because right now in many of the hospitals we have within our province they will house 25 per cent, up to 30 per cent of people that are in the acute care centre that really belong into a long-term care site. It's important to get the long-term care sites established first so they would have a facility to go to and then you would start the hospital.

This is all staged over a multi-year project that will begin. It's already started. Mr. Speaker, what is equally important to all of this is we're doing the same thing in Gander; we're doing the same thing in Grand Falls-Windsor. We've opened up extra rooms in Carbonear. We know the Springdale hospital – which, as I understand, the last of the old cottage hospitals in this province – is being replaced.

My colleague reminded me of the Twomey Centre opening up a protective care unit in

Botwood. What's key to that and important to all of this, and just as a reminder, this is just not about a protective care unit. This is also a training centre that comes from our future physicians that are being trained at Memorial University. Mr. Speaker, all of this is integrated in how we improve health outcomes for people in our province.

I want to go back, Mr. Speaker, to *The Way Forward*. In Phase 02, which was really important for us – because no matter where you go in our province, given the comment that I made a few minutes ago about the megaprojects coming to an end, jobs are critically important. Right now when you look at the unemployment rates of where we are, they're too high.

There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker; we need to find work for people of our province. We're currently around the 2009 numbers, so this is not foreign. When Members opposite ask about this, they're essentially back to 2009 numbers. When you listen to the Members opposite and they ask questions about the economic indicators in our province, I just want to remind everyone in this province that are listening today to go back to the economic indicators that the PC administration put out there in 2015. They were the ones that predicted all of this, Mr. Speaker, because guess what? They're the ones that caused the situation we were in. They knew it the best.

We started taking it sector by sector by sector, thinking about rural Newfoundland and Labrador, thinking about the larger centres in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, knowing that investment in the infrastructure would create considerable amounts of employment for people in our province. We laid out our long-term infrastructure plan, five-year infrastructure plan. Added to that, we put in place a five-year roads program, Mr. Speaker, so that people in this province would understand when the improvements would be made to the transportation systems in their area.

Mr. Speaker, early on we carved out areas like aquaculture, agriculture, technology and so on realizing that they would have a major impact in rural areas, rural communities in our province. Not only did we just make the announcements



that came with consultations with the industry leaders knowing that this would create jobs.

I had the pleasure just last week in attracting at an event where we introduced a new entrant into the farming sector in our province. It all starts with – just like you would restore fiscal balance to our province, making sure that we put in place a firm foundation. If you want to develop a farm, if you want to be successful in the agriculture industry and, Mr. Speaker, you'd be quite aware of this given the impact it would have on areas that you represent. You must have land available to use.

We carved out huge areas of our land, some 64,000 hectares of land in the province. We would identify that for farming development in the future. We know that food security – a story that I like to tell, Mr. Speaker, quite often is this one: In the 1930s, as a province we were self-sufficient in food – 1930s. With the change of government in 2015, we were 10 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Just imagine, in the 1930s we could feed ourselves but, in 2016, we could only do it to the tune of 10 per cent.

It was important for us to use all the land that we have available to us to get it into agricultural use. It was critically important for us. It created jobs and there were things that you could do today using research; our college system using research, within Memorial University; things that you could not grow here years ago but you can do that. You need to go no farther than places like Central Newfoundland. When you go in there, I will tell you people are growing and selling things like corn now. Can you imagine telling somebody back in the '60s that you could actually buy local corn and it would be some of the best? You can do that in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, and it's already being done.

That was a big part of *The Way Forward*: agriculture, technology, aquaculture. But it didn't end there. We also know – as the Minister of Natural Resources just mentioned a few minutes ago – *Advance 2030* was critically important for us as well. We often said that oil wouldn't define our future but oil will always be a critical part of the economy and a big piece of what happens in our province – currently,

around \$1 billion a year in royalties that would come into Newfoundland and Labrador.

It was important for us that we use those offshore resources to create jobs for our province, to create investment in our province. I don't think it's lost on anyone when you look at where we were as a jurisdiction and how quickly we moved up to one of the best jurisdictions; that we were measured, by the Fraser Institute, fourth, moving up to what was, I think, 25th the year before. That is as a result of we were listening to people, willing to work with people and putting in place goals.

This wasn't about going to some NOIA event, like the PC administration did a few years ago; showing up to an event, announcing a project and the company sitting in the room and saying: A surprise to me; I didn't know that. Well, that was the administration prior to 2015. These are the kind of things that they were doing, making announcements, yet the very companies that was supposed to be partners and owners of these projects, sitting the room and knew nothing about it, Mr. Speaker. That is the way things were done in the past and we quickly want to change that. One way of changing that was through *Advance 2030*.

We know we need new exploration wells drilled. If you're going to have a substantial development, if you're going to have extraction of those natural resources, you will need exploration to be done. We believe the potential is there to nearly triple where we are into the number of barrels of oil that we could extract per day. An interesting note that I read this morning was that even into 2040, as much of the world now is suggesting that we move from fossil fuels, that in 2040 the prediction is that we will still have a world that is dependent on things like oil.

Mr. Speaker, the world uses over 90 million barrels a day and they're looking for jurisdictions that are safe, that they can go in a predictable, certain, political environment that they can do business. We work very closely with those industries. We're working very closely with the supply sector that we have within our province right now, and they are considerable. We have some world-class organizations that Newfoundland and Labrador is home to them.

As I speak about the ocean and the riches of the ocean, Mr. Speaker, I've got to talk about just the supercluster itself, where we've seen industry leaders within our province that have come forward and they've made significant private investment into the oceans program. This will mean more jobs for the oil and gas sector, it will mean more jobs for the fisheries in our province and just research, energy and on and on it goes.

Mr. Speaker, we have made great progress in how we use our oceans to help us to where we are today and make sure we do it in a very environmentally sustainable fashion to create jobs for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I just want to get down to some of the things in *Budget 2018* that are really having a meaningful impact on people in our province. I've talked about education, our K to 12 system. I talked about full-day kindergarten, but there's one area that I want to spend some time on. It's kind of a neat, little discussion to have because it's about the senior support and low-income program that we have in our province – some \$121 million for some seniors and those on low incomes in our province right now. This can potentially mean up to \$1,300 that they would get simply as a result of this program. This is a program that is putting money back into the very pockets of seniors.

Any time you make an investment into seniors in our province, literally what we are doing is we are saying thank you for the work that they have done in the past.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** If there is any group of our population, Mr. Speaker, that have understood the challenges that this province has faced, you need look no further than our senior population. They know and they understand what those challenges were like; many of them will share stories. We were, as a government, very proud to be able to put back and support seniors, not just through this initiative but through many of the other initiatives that we put in place as well. It could be around home care; how we treat dementia; long-term care that I've just mentioned. This is a very tangible way of

putting money back into the seniors in our province.

Mr. Speaker, when I speak of seniors, there's probably not much more that would put a smile on the face of seniors than taking care of some of the younger people. I think of those people that are looking forward to purchasing their first home and so on.

We put in place a Home Purchase Program right now. This will mean that people who are about to purchase their home that has not been lived in before, there's about \$3,000 that will be available to them. Added to the fact we also know that some of those young people that are putting in place – they need support for a down payment program.

Some of those, yeah, you're right, Mr. Speaker, it actually stimulates new home construction, all of this realizing that this is meant to be a stimulus for home construction within our province. I tell you real estate agents and developers have often come to me in the last few weeks and talk about even this decision that we have made is stimulating home construction within our province. We're doing the same thing with down payments for those that are looking to be able to buy their first home, increasing the thresholds of those that could qualify for a home less than \$400,000.

Mr. Speaker, I've talked about many sectors. I've talked about the agriculture, the aquaculture, the technology sector and mining sector. My colleague there in Natural Resources, when you see what's occurring right now in the Labrador Trough, we see significant opportunities both in Labrador and on the Island portion of the province. People are looking at this province to invest their money.

There is one other group that I want to talk about as I talked about all those sectors. We need to talk about the volunteer sector that we have in our province.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, I encourage anyone, when you look at job creation in our province and when you look at the role that volunteers in our province are doing on a daily

basis, they're there. We're very happy to invest in many of the associations where those volunteers are actively involved.

Doing so not just going in and saying that these are the supports and so on, but one group that I want to single out would be the search and rescue volunteers that we have. We have known for quite some time that our volunteer fire departments would get a tax credit. In this budget we've been able to extend that \$3,000 to the search and rescue volunteers as well. They will get a tax credit of up to \$3,000 which will mean there will be more money at tax time that will go back into those volunteers that provide a very valuable service within our province.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** I will say, too, Mr. Speaker, that we will be completing a comprehensive tax review that was started a few months ago, just to let the people of our province know where we are as you compare us to other jurisdictions, when you look at Ontario, when you look at Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick.

I can tell you right now, when you look at the tax burden in those other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, we are in pretty good shape when you compare us. This comprehensive tax review is something we were looking forward to. What will happen there, we will use some of the results and some of the recommendations that are coming out of that to support future decisions that we see.

Mr. Speaker, all of this is really about making sure we put the plan that we've put in place over a seven-year window; a seven-year plan that will bring this province back to surplus. It's important for us. We're our third year in and we're able to do that. But we will do that very mindful that we must continue to work very hard on creating jobs for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in a number of industries that we have available to us.

Just last night, I had a call from an individual, a man I didn't really know. I had only met him once before in my life, and he talked about the future in the technology industry. He's already up to 25 employees in the province right now, and is really on track to be employing another 25

people, Mr. Speaker. That's the kind of creativity and innovative people we have in our province. They see hope and they're optimistic about the future of our province – like we are, Mr. Speaker, like we are.

I will guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, when you look at where we are today, in just really less than three years that we've been in government, I will guarantee you we have made significant progress on behalf of the people in this province. We will continue to invest, regardless of what Members opposite ask for or are saying. We will continue to invest in Newfoundland and Labrador and we will do so using the evidence that we have available to us.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on one of the things that we've also announced in our *Way Forward* just a few weeks ago, and that's diversity in leadership and how we promote more women to step up and be part of leadership roles. Inside of this government, right now if you do the analysis, we are about 50/50. When you look at our deputy ministers and those that are in key strategic positions within our government, it's about 50/50.

When you look at the labour force in a general sense, it's about 49 per cent; yet, outside of government it's only about 38 per cent of females that are in those leadership roles. So we know there's work that has to be done here. We would expect that companies would take the role that we would see inside of government right now where it's a 50/50 split.

I've covered a lot of ground here today, Mr. Speaker, based on the budget of 2018 that we had introduced to the people of our province just a few weeks ago.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak, just for a few minutes, about some of the things we've been able to do in how we look at asset management and so on. This was one of the things that came out in phase one, but we wanted to really look at the lease space we have available for us.

Mr. Speaker, that is already now generating millions of dollars to the Treasury, putting back into other services. We started out looking at a goal of 90,000 square feet. Well, Mr. Speaker, we weren't long achieving that when you look at

empty spaces we had; yet, the previous administration had not done any work in getting in and doing the analysis. Empty spaces they were continuing to pay for, yet there was no one there.

Mr. Speaker, we quickly took out 90,000 square feet. We've set a new goal now, one that we know we can achieve, and that would be at 133,000 square feet. All of this, Mr. Speaker, because if there's anything that anyone – no matter where we go, there's one thing they make loud and clear, they do not want to see their money wasted. They do not want to see their money going to pay for empty office spaces, empty telephone lines.

As people opposite are looking and saying, almost shaking their heads, it could not have been us who were doing that. Well, I'm going to tell you right now, it was you. It was those Members of the PC prior government, Mr. Speaker, the PC government that signed those leases. In some cases offices they never did use. We saw the same thing with – never used at all.

We've seen people with a number of vehicles we have in the province right now, nearly 1,100 vehicles, and some of them sit idle. If there's one thing that I will say is we'd go into our offices that were in Corner Brook and there was one vehicle that stood in the left side of that parking lot. I can tell you, going in there it just didn't move for the full year. It was just there parked and parked. It didn't move. We've all seen examples of that. So it makes you wonder who would actually go out and sign a lease on a vehicle that would take up space in the corner of a parking lot. That just doesn't make sense, but they were the kinds of decisions that were being made.

Today, when the new leader of the Opposition was asking questions about attracting businesses to Newfoundland and Labrador, I couldn't help but remind him that it was the tariffs in Romania – we had to go and work with the federal government to get some-\$27 million back because they did not factor that in, into building the new vessels in Romania.

Mr. Speaker, it gets a little worse than that. They didn't factor in that those new vessels would need a wharf, and it was extra millions of dollars

that had to go into. These are the kinds of decisions that were being made by the PC administration, Mr. Speaker.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** I don't find this a laughing matter, to be quite frank with you, Mr. Speaker, because these are serious decisions. Behind every single one of those decisions was an \$8 million or \$9 million or \$10 million cost to the people of this province. And you wonder why they couldn't build a Waterford Hospital or replace the Waterford Hospital when they couldn't even get a vessel, a new ferry that would come over without a wharf for it to dock up to, and ignoring the fact that the tariffs were attached to this.

These are the kinds of things, Mr. Speaker. I say this very passionately, we've had to fix and clean up, given the situation we inherited back in 2015, how we look at the services we provide to our people. It wasn't just the Bell Island and the Portugal Cove ferry, it was the same thing that we saw in Central Newfoundland as well. I only heard this story just a few weeks ago, that a similar problem had been happening out there.

Mr. Speaker, designing ferries for a community of 130, 140 people that could carry 80 people. Think about it. A ferry that could carry about – designed to build – 80 people and on the receiving end there were about 130, 140 people. That would mean that everybody who goes over there could literally – half the population could get on that boat and leave. They were the kinds of decisions the prior administration – these were the kinds of decisions that were being made. That is what we've had to deal with and that is what we are fixing up now on behalf of, not just the current Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, but those in the future as well.

I want to talk a little bit about digital-by-design and how important it is to start laying the framework, how people access services within our province. We know society is moving in to the use of more technology as they get services and how they access services within our society. Making sure that we put digital-by-design, making sure it is making it easier to access some basic services to programs, to applications, to motor registration, and on and on it goes. Built

into the program we're putting in place are reminders of other programs that people can access.

Mr. Speaker, there's been a lot of work done. I will tell you, when I look around our government right now, how we build relationships with our Atlantic provinces, we work very closely with our three Atlantic provinces making sure that where we can find the synergies, taking out red tape within all our provinces so that we actually open up and make Newfoundland and Labrador a very attractive place to do business, doing so in all of Atlantic Canada, whether it's for tourism, whether it's for immigration. I had the privilege, as I said last week during an agriculture announcement, to look in the room and to see two immigrants that have moved into the province. They've been here for six years now, Mr. Speaker, making Newfoundland and Labrador their home and very, very proud to do so.

We realize that working very closely with our Atlantic Canadian provinces that things like immigration, things like this region as a place to visit – there's no better place, Mr. Speaker. You go wherever you want – I had the opportunity to speak to a number of people over the weekend and look at tourism operations that we see in our province. We have some of the best scenery that you would see anywhere, but to a person they will tell you this: We come for the scenery, we come for the great ads, but what really creates the memory of when we visit Newfoundland and Labrador – the memories are created by the people they speak to, the people they interact with. That is what makes the difference when you come to Newfoundland and Labrador.

I will share the story of what happened to a young couple as they went into a small community in a rural Newfoundland area. Their car was broken down; they needed a repair. Guess what the young person that was supplying that service did for them that day? Realizing that their stop would be delayed by five to six hours, they said you can't wait in my garage; you can't wait in my service station for five or six hours – guess what? You take my vehicle because you're here on vacation. Mr. Speaker, I got that email from a couple in BC and said that is the reason why we're coming back.

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

**PREMIER BALL:** They saw some beautiful scenery, Mr. Speaker, but that is why they're coming back.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to conclude my remarks today and talk about building the relationships. I will finish and I will make a commitment to the people of this province: the prior administration, the biggest legacy, the biggest gift that they left for you in 2015 was the doubling of electricity rates.

Even to this day when I hear Members opposite speak about the Muskrat Falls Project and they continue to support and defend the decision that they made with Muskrat Falls, keep this mind what they are defending is that the PC administration agrees that it's okay to double electricity rates. Mr. Speaker, I will guarantee you it is not okay to see doubling electricity rates.

This government will not stand for it. We will put in mitigation efforts to make sure that doesn't happen. Regardless of the legacy, regardless of the project that they have supported, this government will not stand for it. I want to keep –

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, as I conclude my remarks, I'm going to ask every single Member of this House of Assembly to support this budget. Do something that some of you have never done in your life before. Realizing the situation that this province is facing, realizing what you have left, at least accept the responsibility for what you've left this province in. Stand on your feet when it's time to vote for this budget and do the right thing, do the right thing for the people of this province and get up and support this budget, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I'll conclude my remarks. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity that I've had to speak to this year's budget, talking and speaking about the progress that we've able to make in the last three years, talking about the relationships that we've been able to do and able to strengthen over the last three years.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you that courage is here, the work ethic is here to continue on the path we're on, getting this province back on track and getting us back to surplus in 2022-23.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Trimper):** If the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board speaks now, he will close the debate.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to talk a little bit about where we started in 2015 because we often hear Members on the opposite side talk about the fact that the unemployment rate is going up, or the number of jobs are less than it was a couple of years ago. Those things are true, Mr. Speaker, but what they don't tell you is that in the Estimates book of 2015, they actually had that in there that these things were going to happen.

They knew it. We knew it – we didn't know everything that was happening in 2015, but they knew that the unemployment numbers were going to go up. There were three megaprojects in this province and those three megaprojects – in 2016, there were still 16,000 people working on those three megaprojects. In 2017, because one had concluded, one was just about to wind up, and the other, Muskrat Falls, is in the process of starting to wind up, we down from 16,000 people in 2016 working on the three megaprojects to in, 2017, 17,000 people working on those megaprojects.

So in the 2015 Estimates book, which was part of the previous administration's government, they predicted that employment rates were going to drop because these megaprojects were coming to a close. In fact, they even outlined that that was the reason employment numbers were going to drop. They also predicted the unemployment rate would go up because of this. They projected the gross domestic product in the province was

going to start to slow because oil production was slowing. And they also projected that capital investment in the province would go down, all because of the close-down of three megaprojects that we all knew about.

Now, what was in the budget of 2015, Mr. Speaker, to try and beef those numbers up a little bit, what was in the budget of 2015 was two projects – one called Alderon and the other Bay du Nord. They projected, in 2015, that between Alderon and Bay du Nord there'd be 12,000 people employed, and that would start in 2016. By 2017-2018 we'd have 12,000 people employed on those two projects.

So when you look at the Estimates of 2015, Mr. Speaker, and look at where the employment numbers are, based on the Estimate of 2015, and where they are today, if you look at the 12,000 people they projected would be working at Alderon and Bay du Nord, we're actually doing much better than they projected, much better employment numbers. The unemployment rate is not nearly as bad as they projected. Because those 12,000 jobs that they promised in 2015, they didn't deliver on. Bay du Nord didn't happen; Alderon didn't happen.

There was \$6.8 billion in capital investment as a result of those two projects. Well, Mr. Speaker, those projects didn't happen. But I can tell you what did happen, because we realized that the previous administration managed by chequebook – they managed by chequebook. And whenever there was something that needed to be addressed, they'd pull out the chequebook, write a cheque, go away and be happy.

Mr. Speaker, they didn't diversify the economy. They relied on the fact that oil prices were high. And by the way, talking about oil prices, in 2015 they projected that oil prices would rise by about \$8 per year per barrel. Well, that didn't happen either. Mr. Speaker, what they also projected in 2015 is that we'd only have to put \$3.1 billion into Muskrat Falls, that we'd have our money completely repaid to this province in eight years and, in fact, we'd make about \$12 billion return on Muskrat Falls. That didn't happen either.

When you look at what they based the Estimates of 2015 on and their projections, and telling the people of the province that the deficit was only

\$1.1 billion when in fact it was actually \$2.7 billion – now that’s something they didn’t project in the Estimates book, Mr. Speaker. When you look at all of the facts and what this government had to deal with when we came to power, it’s incredible that we’ve been able to overcome that. That is the resilience of the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, that is the determination of the people of this province. We’ve been able to diversify the economy so that even though the 12,000 jobs that were promised through Alderon and Bay du Nord did not happen by the previous administration, we’ve looked at the aquaculture industry. I can tell you this province, the future is bright. The future in this province is bright, Mr. Speaker, and we are optimistic on this side of the House.

There is still work to be done; there are still challenges to overcome. You can’t fix the mess they left behind in two years, but we’re getting there and things are getting better. We are optimistic that things are improving in this province and that we are headed in the right direction.

You look at things like the aquaculture industry and the fact that we are determined, through *The Way Forward* and through the leadership of our Premier, that we’re going to double the number of people working in the aquaculture industry in this province. Mr. Speaker, we are determined that’s going to happen. You look at the agriculture industry. We are going to grow the agriculture industry in this province.

The Premier just spoke and talked about the fact that in the 1930s, 100 per cent of the vegetables consumed in this province were grown in this province. Mr. Speaker, in 2015 that was down to 10 per cent, because that government had a singular focus and it was on the oil industry.

Mr. Speaker, we are diversifying the economy. You look at the agriculture industry and the fact that through a partnership with the federal government – which is something they didn’t know how to do, by the way. They didn’t know how to partner with the federal government. Through a partnership with the federal government and \$37 million, I think it’s \$14 million invested by this province to grow the

agriculture industry, and we’ve identified land through Crown Lands to ensure that’s protected for agricultural purposes.

If you look at the tech sector, Mr. Speaker, there are 4,000 people currently working in this province in the tech sector. Now, 10 years ago that wasn’t the case. In fact, that industry is growing by leaps and bounds. We see that as a potential for this province, a huge potential. We’re putting some focus on that industry because that is diversifying the economy, not managing by chequebook or putting all of your hope in the oil industry.

Now, the oil industry is still important, make no mistake about it. In fact, we’re looking to expand that as well, you look at *Advance 2030* and what we’re planning to do there. Right now, there are 85 wells registered with this province. Many of those are registered with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency already.

We have seven, I believe it is – I ask the minister –?

**MS. COADY:** Seven.

**MR. OSBORNE:** Seven new players in our oil industry, Mr. Speaker, in the last two years. That is considerable, and there’s more to come. Because our government focused on going to the world looking for investors, looking for people to come here and invest in the oil industry.

There are seven new players in the oil industry. We have 85 wells currently registered. We’re determined to get that up to over 100. We’re looking at an additional 14,000 people employed in the oil industry in this province by 2030.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Seven thousand.

**MR. OSBORNE:** Sorry, 7,000 people. Seven thousand people employed, direct employees, plus the spinoff in that industry.

Instead of just focusing on the royalties we can take from that industry and the fact that we’re a supply base because we’re the closest geographic location to our oil industry, we’re going to look for other opportunities in that industry as well, and that’s part of *Advance 2030*. We’re going to look for other

opportunities in that industry. Instead of just pumping and selling oil and supplying the pipes and so on to that industry, Mr. Speaker, we're going to look for opportunities because we believe the future is bright in this province.

Look at the \$35 million in this year's budget for economic development, because we believe that if we try and diversify the economy we can and we will.

Through *The Way Forward*, Mr. Speaker, there are other areas we've been focusing on. Look at the Ocean Supercluster and the fact that we've been able to partner with the federal government on that. We were very early out of the gate, Mr. Speaker. We were absolutely determined it was going to come to the Atlantic region. This province will be the primary beneficiary of the Ocean Supercluster initiative with the federal government because we are determined to grow the economy, to grow jobs, to diversify the economy. We believe we have a bright future in this province.

If you look at tourism, Mr. Speaker, 20,000 people employed in tourism in this province last year. Twenty-thousand people that –

**MR. A. PARSONS:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. OSBORNE:** The Government House Leader is telling me I'm doing a great job, keep her going.

Mr. Speaker, 20,000 people employed in the tourism industry in this province last year. So we know the future is bright in this province.

One industry that actually I was surprised when I looked at the statistics, and that's the film and television industry. Mr. Speaker, 640 people working in this province in that industry – 640 people.

So there are opportunities there if we look for them, if we focus on those opportunities. This province has a bright future, Mr. Speaker, and I am absolutely proud of the work done on this side of the House to overcome the challenges that were put in place in 2015 when we assumed government. The fact that we've gotten our deficit from \$2.7 billion down to less than \$800 million this year, Mr. Speaker, and by the end of

this fiscal year it'll be down to less than \$700 million, because we are headed in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at our employment numbers in this province they're comparable to 2011, even though we've come off the three megaprojects. In 2011 we believed those numbers were historically high, because they were. We were proud of the employment numbers in 2011. Well, we're comparable to that number now.

While the other side will preach doom and gloom and things are terrible, Mr. Speaker, that's not the case. There's a greater sense of optimism now out in the community with people you speak to because things are starting to get better, and we're going to continue on that trend. We're going to continue to look for opportunities for the people of this province. We're going to continue to focus on diversifying the economy, and we're going to continue to pay down the deficit that the other side of the House left the people of this province to pay off. We're going to continue, Mr. Speaker, to find efficiencies within government.

We are proud of the work that's been done on this side of the House and we believe the future in this province is very promising, and we're going to continue on that trend.

Thank you very much.

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

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

It is moved and seconded that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I declare the motion carried.



**AN HON. MEMBER:** Division.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Division has been called.

Please summon the Whips. Call in your Members, please.

**Division**

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

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion of the budgetary policy of the government?

All those in favour, please rise.

**CLERK:** Mr. Ball, Mr. Andrew Parsons, Ms. Coady, Mr. Haggie, Mr. Byrne, Ms. Dempster, Mr. Crocker, Mr. Osborne, Mr. Mitchelmore, Ms. Gambin-Walsh, Mr. Warr, Mr. Bernard Davis, Mr. Edmunds, Ms. Haley, Mr. Letto, Mr. Browne, Mr. Bragg, Mr. Derek Bennett, Ms. Cathy Bennett, Mr. Finn, Mr. Reid, Ms. Parsley, Mr. King, Mr. Dean, Ms. Pam Parsons, Mr. Holloway.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against the motion, please rise.

**CLERK:** Mr. Brazil, Mr. Hutchings, Mr. Paul Davis, Ms. Perry, Mr. Kevin Parsons, Mr. Petten, Mr. Lester, Ms. Rogers, Ms. Michael, Mr. Lane.

Mr. Speaker, the ayes: 26; and the nays: 10.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I declare the motion is carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I would move from the Order Paper, Motion 10, pursuant to Standing Order 11(1) that the House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. today, Monday, May 14.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I would call from the Order Paper, Concurrence Motion for the Social Services Committee.

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

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity again to address Members on both sides of this hon. House.

Serving, of course, in this hon. House affords new opportunities that enlighten Members to the intricacies of how things really operate within government. So it was for me when I took on the role of Chair of the Social Services Committee when going through Estimates. Of course several departments fall under the Social Services Committee: the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development; the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development; the Department of Health and Community Services; the Department of Justice and Public Safety; the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment; and of course the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

Although a dry and tedious exercise by nature, Estimates allows Members from both sides of this House an insight into the workings of the various departments and bodies of this government – of any government. It gives one a true feeling of government and the complexities associated with governance. There are those who deride our political system, but when you have a chance to see the workings of government, you gain a whole new appreciation for the system, Mr. Speaker.

As we take time to look at the recently introduced budget for 2018-2019, our third budget since forming government, it is a good opportunity to reflect upon the past 2½ years. Shortly after taking government and learning of the true financial situation of the province at the

time, we brought forward a budget with contents that were trusted upon us because of our dire financial situation. Not a pleasant document by anyone's standard, including the Members of his side of this hon. House. Not pleasant but certainly necessary. Necessary to prevent the train wreck that would have occurred, hadn't we intervened and reacted, but it was not all doom and gloom.

Yes, a time of financial austerity but also not a time of stagnancy, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, I am proud of what we have been to accomplish in the District of Burin - Grand Bank. Yes, the Canada Fluorspar project start-up was a major accomplishment. I have spoken on that on several occasions, so I won't elaborate today, Mr. Speaker, other than to say it's providing resuscitation to St. Lawrence and the surrounding area, as was the new deal that will see Ocean Choice International operating a fish plant in Fortune for the next four years. But those were certainly not the only success stories that I can reflect upon.

Shortly after becoming elected, I learned the arena in Fortune was facing a very real possibility of closure, Mr. Speaker. With the arena there for more than 30 years, a very sobering thought indeed. There was a huge problem with the refrigeration and the only cure was a complete removal of the floor and replacing the piping that was part of that system. No small undertaking for sure, but it was generally agreed that if the arena was to close, it would probably never reopen or it would be years before it reopened, Mr. Speaker.

Our government looked at the broader picture; the arena has been the venue where residents and those from other towns have gone for years for physical activity and for entertainment. It has been an important social hub in the Town of Fortune. Far from being reserved for the residents of Fortune, the arena is used by people as far away as Marystown. The reality again, Mr. Speaker, is that facilities like the Fortune arena are not just sporting venues; they are an essential part of health care in our province. Professionals in health care will tell you that the best medicine is preventative medicine.

It is imperative that we promote healthy living, and physical activity is an important component

of healthy living. Arenas and ballfields and tennis courts and gymnasiums are all essentially proactive health care facilities. It is alarming to read studies that suggest our youth are part of the first generation to have a life expectancy that is shorter than that of their parents. It is the first time since records have been kept that this is the case, Mr. Speaker.

A major cause of this is the stationary lifestyle that has been adopted by so many youth. We have an obligation to do what we can to convince our youth of the importance of physical conditioning, Mr. Speaker. For those who want to see it simply as a financial matter, physically fit individuals are not as large a burden on our health care system, so we win both ways.

There is also research to suggest that participation in social activities, like sport, adds to the sound mental health – a topic near and dear to all of us today, Mr. Speaker. When I say I'm proud to have been involved in getting the Fortune arena up and going again, as was the case with the swimming pool in Grand Bank, which was also in need of repairs that the town couldn't afford on its own, you can understand why. On a number of levels, it is money funding well spent.

As well, we have to look at such facilities from the perspective of maintaining rural Newfoundland and Labrador. For young families looking to stay or move into an area, amenities such as sporting venues are an important consideration. The Fortune arena offers strong minor hockey and figure skating programs. For families with small children, this does not go unnoticed.

Another enticement for young families to move into an area is something most of us consider very basic: clean and safe drinking water. For most young families it is not as much an enticement as a requirement, Mr. Speaker. The Town of Fox Cove-Mortier, though small in population, is certainly huge in scenery.

One would think that a place so close to Burin and Marystown would be a prime place for young families to settle, but the town has one major drawback, Mr. Speaker: no town water. With the residents depending on private wells,

many of which go dry in the summertime, I was more than pleased to secure funding for phase one of a project to provide residents with good safe, clean drinking water; a basic need that is finally being met and hopefully an enticement for families to stay or, of course, for new families to move in.

Water for Fox Cove-Mortier, a support vehicle for St. Bernard's volunteer fire department to ensure that they can provide adequate protection for the residents of several communities in the area, Mr. Speaker, those are the kinds of projects that give me the most satisfaction because they speak to the very basic needs. As a government, we see them as needs we must continue to address, despite our financial woes.

The last time I stood in this hon. House I referenced the issues we are seeing in our province due to climate change. Unfortunately, the clock prevented me from completing my thoughts at the time, but I will revisit that topic today. With a population living largely in proximity to the sea, I think it is a topic especially important to Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. Unlike President Trump, I do agree with those reputable scientists who are insisting that climate change manifested in global warming is real, and it will impact our planet in ways far less pleasing than the empty snow shovels I referenced last time.

Aside from Winterland, every town and community in the district I represent, the District of Burin - Grand Bank, Mr. Speaker, is located next to the sea. No different than the majority of towns and communities in this province. Our forefathers came here to fish. Naturally they settled by the sea, not a problem for the most of the past 500 years, Mr. Speaker.

While climate change might keep the snow in check, the same cannot be said for torrential rains and windstorms. Windstorms in this province invariably means increased tidal and wave action, increased sea surges as it were, Mr. Speaker.

In areas that saw occasional flooding in the past, flooding that occurs several times a year is becoming commonplace. Towns that were built a far distance from the closest landwash have seen hundreds of feet of coastal land succumb to

the raging sea, and now have houses that are becoming close to the new and constantly approaching shoreline. Breakwaters and other shore protections that were put in place decades ago are now being compromised. One of the first issues I took on, on becoming an MHA, Mr. Speaker, centred on this problem.

For some time the area of Lamaline known as The Meadow was flooded once or twice a year. Since the main highway winds its way through The Meadow, not only was flooding an inconvenience for locals but also for the travelling public. Residents who travel to Fortune, Lawn or St. Lawrence for work were left stranded. Children making their way from Point May to St. Joseph's Academy were left stranded. It became noticeable in recent years that not only did the flooding become more frequent, but the flooding increased with time, Mr. Speaker.

For years the Town of Lamaline had been asking the provincial government to remedy this problem, and I was delighted to have worked alongside the then minister of Transportation and Works to make that project a reality. No longer is a flooded meadow a reason to miss work or school, Mr. Speaker. No longer is a flooded meadow an impediment to first responders being able to carry out their critical work.

I'm also pleased to have worked with the Town of Lawn and the Town of Point au Gaul ensuring approval for projects to be carried out this year to address flooding and coastal erosion.

In Lawn, Mr. Speaker, Power House Road, on which, among others, several seniors reside and the town's post office is located, flooding had become a critical issue for the past several years there. With seniors living there, flood interrupted access for first responders was a huge worry; a huge worry for the people of Lawn, Mr. Speaker, and a huge worry for me.

I was pleased to work along with Mayor John Strang and the other councillors for the Town of Lawn to gain approval for this project to be carried out this year, Mr. Speaker. When completed, the residents of the area of Lawn should not have to worry about flooding for many years to come.

In Point au Gaul a different problem, but one also resulting from climate change. During my younger years I paid many a visit to Point au Gaul and can remember well the land leading from the houses down to the land wash. Today, the distance between those same houses and the land wash is greatly reduced. Sea surges, the likes of which were unknown before, have simply taken the land and decimated it like dust in the wind. Mr. Speaker, so have been the beaches such as in Point au Gaul to the sea. Gabion cages, armour stone and cribbing that had been put in place years ago were tossed aside like peddles. It had gotten to the point where if something wasn't done there was a very real possibility of some of those houses being washed out to sea.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to work with Mayor Lewis Dodge and his council to ensure that infrastructure will be put in place to provide that much needed protection this year. Point au Gaul will be spared from the effects of climate change and hopefully will provide home for generations to come.

I am convinced that in the years ahead issues that crop up as a result of climate change will become more prevalent and something the 40 Members elected to this House will be forced to face head on. I am also confident that we will adjust and will implement plans to secure our towns, our roadways, any infrastructure that is threatened. It is certainly something that needs to stay on our radar, Mr. Speaker, and I am confident that will be the case. There are challenges that will be posed by climate change, that's for sure, but that is why the 40 of us are here, to take challenges and deal with them, to implement change where change is needed.

Change like full-day kindergarten, Mr. Speaker, which we were reassured would work out for the betterment of the children for which the education system is intended. Not without a few glitches of course. You cannot expect to bring in new programs without glitches ever, but nor do you steer away from change where it is warranted simply because you are afraid of the inevitable bumps along the way. You act in a professional manner and deal with the problems, always striving for a program that accomplishes that for which it was intended. I am sure my district is no different than many other districts

in this province. I know it's a well-worn expression but it's oh so true: when the going gets tough, the tough get going.

Again, thank you so much for this opportunity to speak here again today. I have touched on quite a few topics but they are topics of relevance to the people of my district. During this spring sitting of the House I hope to speak more broadly of course, Mr. Speaker, on other matters important that are raised.

Thank you so much.

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

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

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

It's a pleasure to rise once again to speak. I just want to speak to the most recent issues that are affecting the industry which I'm a critic for, being the agriculture industry.

Foremost, I would like to congratulate the Coles family, now of Reidville, and their venture into agriculture. I'd like to do more to encourage those types of initiatives with families and individuals to expand our provincial production.

I'm constantly being confused by the 20 per cent figure. I did some math myself and I realize that we are actually already at the 20 per cent figure, when you take into consideration the dairy, the eggs and the chicken, and complemented with the limited horticulture production. I really need the government to clarify what this 20 per cent increase is. If they're talking 20 per cent increase which would basically double the amount of horticulture production in this province, as I've mentioned before, farmers, producers, enterprises have a big concern with these haphazard efforts to increase the horticulture production.

There's no doubt that we do need to increase our horticulture production and the food security of this province, but when politicians start talking about increasing the amount of farmers, the amount of production, that's only one very, very small portion of it. If we want to double the

production, we need to double the amount of money we're putting into agriculture.

We've actually seen a decrease of about 20 per cent in our own provincial agricultural programs. Yes, the CAP program is there to replace the Growing Forward program, but it's basically the same amount of money. We're having the same amount of money divided up amongst possibly double the amount of producers. That would, in fact, only translate into about the same amount of growth when it came to agriculture production as it has been in previous years. When it comes to horticulture production, horticulture production has actually decreased every year for the past decade by about 8 per cent. In my thoughts and talking to industry, it's actually going to decrease again this year.

We can talk about encouraging people to get into agriculture, we can talk about the land that's been available for agriculture, we can talk about the government assistance that's there, but the reality is it has to be viable for people and families to become farmers, to become food producers. As of right now, if industry trends are any indication, viability is very difficult to achieve, even with the level of funding.

My family has been in the agriculture industry in Newfoundland and Labrador since the early 1800s. Over the course of the past almost 200 years, we've had to evolve, we've had to change our direction, develop new products and identify new markets.

On my little road alone, on Pearltown Road, there were once seven farms and now there are only two. Production is less than what it was of the early 1900s. When large grocery chains came in – and we're going to see this continue, as our grocery chains and food supply networks become nationalized, more and more of our products will be provided on a national supply basis. So it's going to be very difficult for Newfoundland supply to get into our food systems.

I'd like to point out one example. I've often heard the comment being made that we're going to encourage producers to sell to government agencies and institutions. Well, I understand – and, of course, I'll stand to be corrected – that

there are ongoing talks at this very moment to source all the meals for our hospitals, medical institutions and long-term care facilities from a company outside of Newfoundland and Labrador. That will basically eliminate any potential avenue of sale within our publicly funded institutions.

When government talks about these opportunities being there, I think that's an injustice to anybody who is considering entering the market or entering the agricultural field because there are talks to prohibit us from entering those institutions.

As a farmer, it's more about a conviction, a commitment and a lifestyle versus a quick fix on dollars. Often, there have been many years, over the past 200 years, where my family has walked away from a season and owed twice as much money as we did when we first started. Even my own personal farm, between my wife and I, we've run into all sorts of challenges – government policy being of them. I do not see the evolution of government policy that will logistically enable farms to proliferate. Government policy has to change. We have to give priority to our own provincial production when it comes to what is available for people to buy. As long as we are allowing imported food products to come in, often at a loss, but because it's part of national markets, it's going to be very difficult to expand the agriculture industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I'll just veer off that topic for one moment. My last opportunity to speak, I had spoken about the diminution of resources available for seniors and low-income individuals. The subsequent Member from the government side got up and spoke and said it's great, we're putting in extra money in low-income support; we're putting extra resources for those who are having a difficult time making ends meet.

I was really impressed by that, but the more I thought about it the more I realized that should be sounding alarm bells. Why are we having to put more money into it? Yes, there was a cost of inflation, but there is an increased demand in those types of services. So I think that's really indicative of what's happened to our economy over the past two years. It's something that's going to increase.

When we look at another 20,000 people are projected to leave our province in the next two to three years, that's a big concern. When we look at and hear that we're looking at return to surplus in 2022, my question is: What will our provincial debt be by that point? We talk about debt and deficit and we talk about borrowing, but we have never ever heard payback. Is there a plan to pay this back, or are we going to continue to borrow and more and more of our provincial revenue is going to be eaten up to service the debt? That is something that we really, really need to address.

I'm not a financial analyst, but with the instability in the Middle East and I guess just political posturing by the Trump administration, it's going to create instability in the oil production markets and we're going to see a big increase in oil production. That is out of our control, but it's going to be to the credit of our provincial finances. Just as a drop in oil prices is a detriment, increase is going to be a huge, huge boost to our provincial financial position.

I would really encourage and I hope to see some of that increase being put back into people's pockets. I would like to see more money in people's pockets to be able to spend in the economy. In the past two years, yes, we've had financial challenges, but it's been largely the people of this province that have been paying for that deficit. It's been largely the people of the province that have been expected to stick their hand in their pocket, take money out that they would normally spend in the economy and put directly into provincial revenues. It has failed our economy and it's going to continue to fail our economy.

We need to look at the individuals who are spending in the community. I hear every day – actually, I was just recently standing out in my field and I was contemplating what to plant in a particular field. I had an individual stop on the side of the road. He walked up to me and wanted to give me his thoughts on the provincial economy.

He has two children that are now in university. Both of those are already making plans to leave. He's a retired government worker and he's going to follow them. He's going to leave our province. That's going to be a triple loss to us

because we subsidized his children's education, we subsidized their university education and now we're subsidizing his retirement. It's going to be spent in another economic jurisdiction.

We will always be on the continual losing end unless we change the perception of our economy, change our economy and keep those people here. Be they retired with a stable income from government or be they educated on our dime, those people need to stay here. In order to do that, we have to provide two things. We have to provide opportunity. Opportunities exist, I think everybody in this House realizes and will agree with me on that. Those opportunities have always been there, but enabling us to capitalize on those is government's responsibility.

We need to foster a business environment that will encourage people to invest their money here, encourage people to stay here, spend their money here and circulate that dollar within our community. So often do our hard-earned dollars go out of this province. Again, we will always and forever be on the losing end if every dollar that's so difficult to contain within our province leaves our province.

I'll go back to agriculture once again. Newfoundland has, believe it or not, always been on the cutting edge of innovation when it comes to agriculture. I can remember my grandfather telling me about Bowater actually. They had a hydroponic greenhouse powered by the waste material from the paper plants. So they're using this waste product as a biofuel to power a greenhouse, heat a greenhouse and produce sprouts.

Now when everybody hears sprouts, most people think sprouts that we, as humans, would eat. Well, actually sprouts are a huge source of protein. They were actually feeding their cattle to provide milk for the lumber woods and the City of Corner Brook.

That type of innovation has always existed. Even in the times of Commission Government the – not leaders, the people assigned to look after our province at that time, they focused on agriculture as being a huge opportunity for Newfoundland. It was bringing in new breeding stock, bringing in innovative technologies.

Corn has been grown in this province long before the '90s out on the West Coast, in the Corner Brook area, Bowater. We had a guy, Louis Capal, from Cuba, they were growing corn back in the late '60s, early '70s. There was a considerable acreage of wheat and barley grown both on the East and West Coast. So all these things are not new to Newfoundland.

The issue is market availability. There's always been an opportunity for agriculture. There always will be opportunity for agriculture as long as people are here because people need to eat. The problem is the market availability, and that is something where government needs to step in and either produce legislation or amend legislation that will enable local products to get in the local marketplace. That doesn't only include agriculture.

When I look at bottled water; we, in Newfoundland, have a great source of fresh water. Why is it we are continuing to allow bottled water to come into this province? Number one, it's environmental degrading – it's ridiculous. Number two, we have plenty of water available; plenty of potable water available in our province. Why is it we can't put in incentives or legislation that more of the bottled water that we drink is produced here?

This morning I made my weekly trip down to Robin Hood Bay, the landfill site. Every Monday I have to take trash down and dispose of it. I happened to take the opportunity to leave the, I guess, residential side, which is really nice and tidy and clean and very organized, and I took a drive down around what they call dumpsite A.

Dumpsite A is – I'm pretty sure we should enforce that anybody who disposes garbage in this province should have to go to dumpsite A and look at what we're actually doing to the environment. On the eastside of dumpsite A is what is locally known as the plastic forest. It is an area full of shopping bags; one single-use shopping bags.

Now this is what is caught in the trees, but do you know what's on the other side of those trees? The Atlantic Ocean. So if that's how many are caught in the trees, how many of our

plastic bags are ending up in our ocean? That's a concern right across the globe.

We've all heard of the plastic island in the vortex of the Pacific Ocean. There's also, not quite such a large island, but there's also a mass forming in the Atlantic Ocean. Really, when you think about a single-use plastic bag, how much damage does that do to the environment? How much could we as a province, we as a Legislature, do to mitigate that damage and that continual contamination of our environment?

It's also said there's not a fish that swims in the ocean that there are not plastic molecules can be found in its flesh. That's really starting to concern me.

Even if we stop producing those bags and the waste that ends up in our ocean today, we will be decades, centuries, millenniums trying to remove the damage we have already put there, but that's not to say we shouldn't start. We should, right off the bat, as a province, as a Legislature, implement the prohibition of single-use plastic bags. There is no reason why we can't all, every one of us, tuck a reusable bag under our arm and walk about our shopping malls, our grocery stores.

That would make a huge, huge difference in our environment, especially in Newfoundland where we are surrounded by oceans and surrounded by waterways that carry our wasted plastic bags and disposed plastic bags out to be absorbed into the environment. That's something that I'm pretty sure everybody in this House would support. It's little actions like that, that make a big difference. We should be starting to lead Canada in environmental industries as our island is more affected by the environment than probably any other jurisdiction in Canada.

We often talk about Muskrat Falls in this Chamber. We see and we hear of the doubling of electricity rates. That's really, really bothered me and it bothers a lot of my constituents. So the more and more I read about it, the more and more I read and understand that it's not necessarily the project itself that is going to double our electricity rates. We have been in, basically, infrastructure maintenance deficit since the early '70s. We need and have not put in enough infrastructure upgrades.

I've even read reports that, this past winter, if we did not have that Maritime Link, we would be short on electricity. If the weather had to have been a couple of degrees colder, we would be short on electricity. Whose community in this province is going to want to shut the electricity off for a couple of hours? Is there anybody in this province that wants to shut their community off for a couple of hours so another community could have rotating power?

That's something that we're not conveying to the people. Yes, we need to mitigate the rates, yes, Muskrat Falls did go over budget, but I can guarantee you without those transmission lines and a connection to the North American grid, we would have been in a sad state this winter, and an even more sorry state in the future.

That brings me to another environmental issue. Holyrood is still in the top 15 environmental producers of greenhouse gases in North America. Yes, we're continually going to improve that, but the reality is it's an eyesore and an embarrassment to our province. It's a big producer of carbon. Muskrat Falls and other hydro projects will be able to counteract that, and I'm going to dance for joy, as I'm sure every creature on this planet, when we finally shut that switch down and that embarrassment is part of our history, not part of this province's future.

In saying that, we have to look at our other hydro assets: Cat Arm, Bay d'Espoir, Star Lake. All those now are approaching the time when their infrastructure is aging and becoming less reliable. So now is the time, even though it's another financial burden on our province, we have to start improving that infrastructure, rebuilding those dams, improving efficiencies within our electrical infrastructure.

I was so excited about that – my time is up. So I'll have an opportunity to speak later.

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

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

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

It's a pleasure to stand and speak to the Concurrence Motion, and we're speaking to the

social sector. There are many things we can talk about in the budget. To be honest with you, going into this, I was really hopeful that I would be able to support the budget. I was disappointed that I had to vote against it, because there were some positive things that I have outlined in the budget. There were some new initiatives.

Given the financial circumstance that we're in, they still came forward with some new initiatives that I thought were good, were positive. I'm also glad to see there's been some effort to reduce spending. I would argue perhaps not enough.

I heard the Minister of Finance talking about the Opposition would want to lay everybody off. That's certainly not where I'm coming from with it, but I think in terms of the attrition plan, I think I would have liked to see us be perhaps a little bit more aggressive on the attrition plan. Right now, I think maybe if 10 people retire, we're probably hiring back seven or eight or whatever. Maybe that could be reduced a little more in certain areas to try to get the numbers down and try to get the expenses down. That would be my only concern, really, on the expenditure side and always looking for more efficiencies.

We continue to have a crippling debt and we continue to have a big deficit, albeit nowhere near perhaps what we were told it would be, but it's still a big number all the same. I think it's important that we all work to reducing those year-over-year deficits and reducing the huge debt that we have. Let's not grow it any further than we have to.

The big thing for me with this budget continues to be – and I know Members will say and the government will say we can't continue to talk about 2016. I get that, I understand that, but the reality of it is that a lot of the measures that were taken in that particular budget remain today. It's not that you did anything new, not that you added anything new, but the things that were done in 2016, a lot of those things still have not been reversed.

Thankfully, the gas tax has been reduced significantly. I think we're down to four cents on what it was now. I guess that's being saved for the carbon tax. That will be my prediction at



least, that at some point in time they'll say we have a carbon tax, but we were going to roll back the gas tax, that additional four cents. Now we'll just leave it there and that will be the carbon tax.

A lot of the other taxes still remain and, in particular for me, it's the levy. That's the big one. That was the deal breaker for me in 2016 and I guess it will remain that until such time that the levy is eliminated. Really for me, that's because many of the people in my district are the ones who were impacted significantly –

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

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

**MR. LANE:** – by those taxes and by the levy. A lot of the people in my district, in my demographic, are people that are in that income range. When we heard of people back in 2016 that said between the gas tax and the insurance and the HST and the levy and so on, as a household we're out \$5,000, \$6,000, \$7,000, \$8,000, just gone out of our income that I would have, expendable income is history, those were primarily people in my district that fit that demographic.

Even seniors, the government keeps talking about the fact that they put in additional money for seniors for their low-income benefit, and they did – I'll give credit; they absolutely did. Now, they rolled back the home heat rebate and it was all rolled into one, so to speak, but for a low-income senior at the very lowest end of the scale, basic OAS, CPP, they probably got an extra \$400 or \$500 a year, whatever it is, on their low-income seniors' supplement. I'm sure they all appreciated it and I'm sure there are lots of people who do appreciate it.

But the problem I have, in my district, is that many of the seniors that I would have in Mount Pearl are people, for example, that worked in the public service. Every second door is a public sector worker or a former public sector worker. So they got their OAS, their CPP and they got a small government pension – not a big one, not like some people think oh, you worked for the government you're getting \$60,000 or \$70,000 a year in pensions. No, an average worker, maybe they were a clerk III or they were a data entry

operator, whatever the case might be, they got a small government pension.

Well, that senior with that small government pension, guess what? That means that's just enough to put them over the threshold. Just enough so that they don't get drug cards, they don't qualify for any of the programs that Newfoundland and Labrador Housing has, the Provincial Home Repair, the energy efficiency and all that stuff. They don't qualify for any of that stuff and now when there were measures taken, for example, if they had health issues and home care costs, their share went up on home care, some of the non-prescription drugs that were covered, over-the-counters that were no longer covered and then if they had a vehicle and so on, they had to pay the insurance tax and all that like everybody else but they didn't qualify for that seniors' supplement. They didn't qualify for it.

It's like anything – and I know wherever you draw the line, there'll always be that issue, but you have to appreciate that if you have a group, for example, these seniors, and you say we're going to help them out by this seniors' supplement, but if you have someone who is only making an extra \$2,000 or \$3,000 a year, or \$5,000 a year more than those basic seniors, then they're not getting that and they're not getting any of the other programs either.

On top of that, they have to pay more for gas if they have a vehicle. They have to pay more on their house insurance and their vehicle insurance and all that kind of stuff. Some of them had to pay a levy and the extra HST.

When you talk about the low-income seniors, many of the seniors in my district were the ones that were just above. So that meant nothing to them. They got nothing out of it, but the expenses and the added taxes did impact them.

Like I said, the families, demographic in my district in particular, these are all people who are making – probably there are two people working. So they have a combined household income of \$80,000 or \$100,000, or whatever. Some would say that's a lot of money. Some people said that's a lot of money. I have someone over here who makes \$30,000.

You have to realize, if you have a family income of \$80,000 or \$100,000 but you're living in a neighbourhood where your mortgage is – you can't get a house less than \$350,000, \$400,000, whatever the case might be, then you have to pay insurance and everything else. They have kids to go to school, blah, blah, blah. That might seem a lot to some people but it's really not. Your lifestyle is dictated by the money coming in and your expenses.

You're paying high council taxes to the City of Mount Pearl; or, in the case of people in Southlands, to the City of St. John's. Then when you yank all at the one time, you yank that income away from them with all these taxes and fees, that has a huge impact on those people and on those families.

For me, that's why in 2016 my phone was ringing off the wall, my email, my Facebook and everywhere I went, because I represented a demographic that were getting hit from all angles. They were getting hit from all angles. Of course, at the time in 2016, at that time government changed, sort of, their tone – if I can put it that way. At that time, clearly, there was a perception that there was an agenda of a public sector strike and that government was going to really play hardball with workers.

Again, every second door in my district there's someone working for the public service. On top of getting nailed with the taxes, now they're in fear of being out on the street on strike. Because the tone was they're coming after my salary, too. They're coming after my benefits on top of that.

So it was a big problem, a big problem for everybody, but in my district – and I'm sure there are other districts that have high populations of working-class people and people working in government and so on, they would have felt that same impact. Perhaps there are districts where there are primarily seniors, maybe not a lot of people working for government and so on in some areas, you're probably not hearing it; but in the St. John's area where a lot of the government jobs are and that, we're hearing it.

That's the demographic that's getting hit, that got hit, with all of the increases. Some of them have been repealed. The gas tax has been

repealed. That's a good thing. Insurance is going to come down 2 or 3 per cent or whatever it is, I think. That's a positive thing. When the levy is gone, it'll be great.

Now I'm a realist, I try to be, and I don't think if any of us in this House of Assembly on either side, Opposition too, all of us, if we were to be honest with ourselves, I think we would all realize that for government to do nothing was not an option. They had to do something. To say there would be no increases, you cannot, legitimately, in my mind at least, stand up and say at the same time: You should cut every tax and increase all the services, but you can't increase the debt. You can't have it all.

It's fine to say diversify the economy. That's important, but that can't be done overnight. You can't just wave a magic wand and diversify the economy either. So it has to be a reasonable balance on how you do things. I think we would all acknowledge, given our fiscal situation, some increases had to happen.

I would have supported, I still do, some increases. For me, it was a case of – what we heard, I heard at least – too much, too fast at the time. A lot of those measures remain today.

So, hopefully – I'm not sure if next year the levy is supposed to be gone or not. I'm not sure if it's the last year for it, but if there was no levy this year I could probably support it because, like I said, the budget wasn't too, too bad overall. I'm not opposing it for the sake of saying I oppose it, because I'm sitting over here either. If I thought it was something I could support, I would. Anyway, that's where I am on that one.

Under the Social sector there are a number of departments here: Children, Seniors and Social Development; Education; Health and Community Services; Justice; Municipal Affairs and Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. I'm going to take a few minutes just to speak to the Education one.

I want to say I was really pleased in this year's budget with the commitment and the money to implement a number of the recommendations in the Premier's Task Force on Educational Outcomes. I don't think anybody here would be against that. I think that's a positive thing.

There were some positive things in that regard. Finally, seeing some movement that I think needed to happen. Are there things that need to happen more? Absolutely. One thing comes to mind is the issue with children who are deaf and hard of hearing. There's definitely work that needs to be done there. That was not addressed in that task force. That needs to be addressed.

Certainly, the autism for the IQ70 – is it IQ70 it's called?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** IQ70.

**MR. LANE:** IQ70. Anyway, the IQ70 issue, that needs to be addressed. I really believe that needs to be addressed. There are other things, but at least we have seen some positive movement on education and I'm glad to see that. I do support that. I'm disappointed on the 1.6 kilometre rule.

Let me say, first of all, in terms of the school busing, I think government did take action. I acknowledged that when we had all those buses that were in disrepair and there were safety issues and stuff. I will give government credit that through Service NL, I believe it was, they did step up and they did make some improvements to inspections. I feel more comfortable and confident now than I did, that hopefully now we have safe buses on the road. So that's a good thing.

In terms of the 1.6 kilometre rule, I saw in a news story the other day that the English School District are now going to be cracking down on the 1.6 kilometre rule. Apparently, they've always been cracking down on it in my area for sure, but apparently there were parts of the province where they weren't cracking down on it and there were people getting a bus that didn't live 1.6. They lived closer but they were getting the bus anyway. I don't know if it just went through the cracks. If there was political interference or what it was, I don't know, but now they're cracking down on everybody.

I suspect next September, Members who have not been receiving a lot of calls in the past are going to start receiving them the minute that changes for sure. The 1.6 kilometre rule, I can remember the Minister of Education or the former minister of Education behind me there, I

can remember him speaking in the House of Assembly when he was in Opposition about the 1.6 kilometre. He kept talking about the Deloitte report, and I can't remember how much it cost, but it was a significant number because he always referred to it as the \$1-million Deloitte report or something. He wanted to emphasize how much money was spent on the report that recommended the 1.6-kilometre rule should be changed and should be based on safety. Interestingly, when he became minister, all of a sudden he forgot about all of that and he did nothing about the 1.6 kilometres. I really think that's an issue that needs to be looked at, in fairness. Take the partisanship out of it, it's a safety issue. It really is a safety issue.

You can take it to the extreme and say: Do we offer a bus for someone who lives directly across the street or next door? There has to be a line somewhere I suppose. But I really think the 1.6, particularly if you're talking about a child who's in kindergarten or grade one and they have to walk to school because of whatever reason – the parents are working or there are some other issues – safety has to be a factor.

I heard the Member for Cape St. Francis talk about there's a main road in his community where there are all kinds of traffic and there's not even a walking lane. There's no sidewalk and there's also no gravel shoulder, I think he said. They're literally walking in the street – literally. The Member for Harbour Grace has talked about it as well.

That is something that we really got to look at, even areas with sidewalks. I've got all sidewalks in my district in the City of Mount Pearl, but even with sidewalks in the wintertime they're not always cleared. I have to say the city does a good job clearing them, they are our priority, but it could be two or three days before the sidewalk gets cleared off. Where are the kids going to walk? Then I have four-lane roads: Commonwealth Avenue, Smallwood Drive, Richard Nolan Drive and so on. Four lanes and little kids having to go across that and missing out on the bus because they might be 1.3 or 1.4 kilometres away.

Now they've even cracked down further because before they would get courtesy seating. They still can get courtesy seating, but before the bus

driver would take some discretion. For example, over on Commonwealth Avenue there was a child who was 1.3 kilometres away, I think – a disabled child, actually. He got a courtesy seat but the bus driver on the route would actually go down one side of Commonwealth Avenue, pick up kids, come around and then stop in front of his house so he could actually get on the bus. Now they've cracked down to the point of not only – with the courtesy seating, they won't stop in front of his house, even though the bus is literally passing the house.

So now they expect that child to cross over Commonwealth Avenue, one of the busiest roads in the region, to cross over to the other side of the street in all that traffic to get the bus on the other side, even though the bus is literally coming on his side and always stopped on his side. These are the types of things that if we can't fix it all, we have to fix some of this stuff. I'm sure every Member here has their own stories and has their own constituents with stuff, but it really is something that we have to look into in terms of safety. We really do, especially in the situations where the bus is going by anyway.

I would certainly encourage the government, the acting minister or whoever is going to be minister, to take a legitimate look at that issue, revisit the issue and try to do something because the safety of our children should be the number one priority – it really should. Whether you're in an urban area or you're in a rural area, safety has to come first and I encourage government to take a look at that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I see I'm out of time.

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

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

It is an honour once again to rise in this House on behalf of the people of Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune and speak to *Budget 2018*. The budget day, Mr. Speaker, is always a very big day for many people in Newfoundland and Labrador. There are some who probably don't pay much attention to politics, but in my district – and I have 21 communities that are scattered over 11,000 square kilometres – everyone tunes in to

the budget to get an inkling of what the next year will bring and, in particular, how the budget will impact them directly.

It is certainly a very, very important piece of business that we are doing for the people of the province. It is quite informative actually sometimes to listen to various Members as they point out issues that are unique to their district. Some may also apply in your own district, but it certainly can be a very educational time here.

I have to say that I was extremely delighted to listen to our newest colleague, the Member for Mount Pearl North, who shared some stories with us today about the agriculture history of this province. I found it was quite fascinating to know that Bowater was actually involved in that type of innovation with greenhouses back in the day. Bowater was very, very big company down my way, actually, where they operated along, what we can now, the Bay d'Espoir Highway.

We had camp one, camp two, camp three, camp four, camp five, camp six, camp seven, came eight, came nine and camp 10, and all of these were logging camps. At the time, the population of my coast was about 14,000. I'm not sure what it was up in Central Newfoundland, but I am pretty certain that some livyers of Grand Falls and Bishop's travelled down the Bay d'Espoir Highway as well to work at these camps.

I know my husband's father used to be responsible for delivering supplies back and forth. They used a horse. He'd travel by night so that everything would be there for the workers to start their day. To hear my colleague talk about their innovations was quite interesting. I really enjoyed that today.

It is Innovation Week in Newfoundland and Labrador and that is something for us to celebrate. We have come up with some phenomenal inventions in this province and we're continuing to do so today. The jigger, unfortunately, was invented by a Newfoundlander but wasn't patented by a Newfoundlander. I think it was the Norwegians who made most of the money of that patent, but it was actually invented by a Newfoundlander, Mr. Speaker.

The more awareness and education we can do with our population as a whole around the types of opportunities that exist in innovation, around the opportunities that exist in export marketing, I really think we need to take a strong, hard look at it as one of the options for diversifying our economy. With a population base of only a half a million people, we really need to get into export markets and products that we can sell in the global economy, Mr. Speaker. I do believe that will be part and parcel of the key to our future.

Another example of innovation that comes to my mind and how it's inherent in us to be innovative is the cod farming. We're doing fish farming in Newfoundland and Labrador today. It has really become, I guess, an industry on the South Coast where I live, since about the early '80s; but, in actual fact, it was well over 100 years ago that the very first cod farm was started, I believe, somewhere in here on the East Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, somewhere in around –

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Petty Harbour, Bay Bulls.

**MS. PERRY:** Petty Harbour, Placentia area, somewhere around there, 100 years ago, that one?

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** I'm not sure about that one.

**MS. PERRY:** No, the one before Bay Bulls even. I think it was out around Placentia somewhere and they actually were farming cod back then.

Technology didn't enable it to work out at that time, but they were thinking and they were trying it back then. One thing I'm absolutely certain of about us, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, is we persevere until we succeed. That's why those of us who are still here are pretty hardened and we're pretty tough. We all certainly believe in the potential that this province has.

What is alarming to all of us – and in our role as Opposition legislators, we certainly have a responsibility to point out that all is not always rosy and to try and encourage government to make changes to policy in areas where there can

be a positive impact on the people as a whole, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things I like to do sometimes for light reading is I like to go on Tweeter and see what the news articles are in the *National Post* and *The Globe and Mail*. I was really alarmed to see some of the economists writing recently about how Canada is becoming of less and less interest to the international investor; whereas once they looked at Canada as a bright spot to invest, a place to be with supportive regulatory regimes, supportive governments, they are now looking at Canada and saying, maybe that's not the best place to do business anymore. That's a real concern, Mr. Speaker, because it's spreading from Ottawa all across this country.

We need international investors, Mr. Speaker, if we're going to continue the innovation agenda. If we're going to really develop the most potential out of our mining sectors we need the large multi-million dollar global companies. It is incumbent upon us as legislators to provide that support of environment which will allow our economy to grow and which will allow diversification to happen.

As I've said many times when I stood up to speak in this House, it's not government's job to create jobs. It's government's job to provide a supportive environment for the entrepreneur to create jobs, Mr. Speaker, and that is the only way we will achieve true sustainability. There's no way you could tax all of us as workers to raise enough money for all of us to get a paycheque. It's not government's role to create the jobs. It's government's role to create the environment that allows a private sector person to establish a business and sustain that business.

As my colleague talked about earlier, we can promote the merits of agriculture all we want – and I think we should. I strongly believe in the agriculture sector, but we have to be realistic about the realities farmers face when they're growing food for the population of Newfoundland and Labrador. Perhaps the solution is not to ask for ideas on what people would like to grow, perhaps the solution is sitting down with the existing entrepreneurs and operators of companies, finding out where the real logistical problems are, where they are in the legislation and fixing those and that way

create the environment that allows agriculture to flourish.

Maybe we're looking at things wrong. Maybe throwing money at things is not always the solution, Mr. Speaker. The solution is sitting down and talking with those who are actually out there with their sleeves rolled up trying to make things work; talking with them, listening to them and not just talking and listening, but then actioning what they say they need in order to grow. The action piece is crucial as well. We hear a lot of talk in this hon. House, but it's when we see the action that the results really happen.

I certainly will be supportive of any approaches we can take as a government for the people of this province to provide that type of supportive environment, whatever the industry is, be it aquaculture, agriculture, mining, fishery, forestry, innovation, tourism. Any type of industry that we have in this province we need to be there as a government to support them in any ways we can. That doesn't necessarily mean having money to throw at it, Mr. Speaker. It means making the regulatory changes in some cases that will enable an industry to flourish.

The fishery, Mr. Speaker, is one I'd like to touch on for a little bit. Having come from a region on the Southwest Coast of the province where the fishery was really our mainstay, the fishery and the forestry, in large part, because of Bowater. After Bowater pulled out we saw a continual decline in the forestry sector in my region.

The fishery stayed vibrant and strong until 1992. In fact, at that time, we had a population of 14,000 people on what I refer to as my quaint little coast. Our population today is only 7,000. So we've lost half of our population since the fishery collapsed, Mr. Speaker. That is significant. If not for aquaculture, our population, I would venture to say, would probably be half of that again. We'd probably be looking at 3,000 to 4,000 people.

The aquaculture industry has actually created, it's estimated in direct and indirect jobs, anywhere from 2,000 to 2,500 jobs. That has enabled families to stay, families who are having children which has enabled us to have somewhat of a sustainable population, Mr. Speaker. It's

making a huge difference. Mind you, we still have challenges and we still have struggles.

Right now, we have three fish plants. Only one of them is operational fully at the moment. The other one is periodically operational, and one is hardly operational at all. We feel, as an area that has strongly invested in aquaculture for the last 30 years, really been pioneers of the industry, there should be a greater social conscience by the business people, by government. The people there need continued support and the aquaculture industry needs to be further strengthened to ensure its long-term sustainability on the coast.

So I certainly look forward to seeing strong support from government in that regard. Again, a lot of those supports can be regulatory as well. That would really enable the industry to grow. It's not always about money, Mr. Speaker.

I didn't want to talk a whole lot of negatives here today because it is Innovation Week and things are positive, but there is a mood of the people again, and you've heard some speakers talk about it, that's happened of late where people are talking more and more about wanting to move away again. We're hearing more and more about retirees who five years ago were saying: Yeah, maybe we'll come home. Are now saying, maybe we won't.

It's the uncertainty, Mr. Speaker, I think that puts the fear in them. Not knowing what their taxation rates are going to be from one year to the next. Not knowing how much of that fixed income is actually going to be disposable income for them or money that will be given back to government in the form of taxation.

A lot of consideration have to happen. Herein, again, is where I think we should keep a very keen eye where possible, when possible, because recognizing of course – and I applaud the former minister of Finance for taking action on the situation we found ourselves in after the oil crisis. What disheartens me is we're not seeing the spending side of the ledger tightened as well as it could be. There's been a lot of effort to get us on the right track and we certainly wouldn't want to see that unravel in the next few years.

I think we have a responsibility in the budget to keep a very, very, very close eye on where we're spending money and continue to find areas that may be referred to as wastage, that are not absolutely essential for the well-being of the people. Maybe some of those could be deferred expenses, Mr. Speaker. Measures to get us through the short term so that we can again get to a place where we can lower the taxes, and we can encourage the private sector businesses to come and take a look at this province once again.

When you think of the impact of Liberal taxation – again, I'll speak about the federal government. Another article I recently read – and I think I may have mentioned this the last time I spoke – is that in 2019 as a result of the federal government budget changes over the last two years, each and every person in Canada that is a taxpayer will be paying \$2,200 more than what we're paying this year.

So next year, in 2019, we're going to lose another \$2,000 of disposable income. That, Mr. Speaker, is an insurance payment for a senior with a car. That is probably a couple of months' worth of groceries for a senior. It's certainly a couple of months of paying a heat bill for a senior.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Does that include the carbon tax?

**MS. PERRY:** That doesn't even include the carbon tax. The people haven't even been hit yet with a carbon tax. I'm glad you raised that, I say to my hon. colleague. The carbon tax is one I want to speak to again and implore that government take strong action with its federal colleagues. We're not sure if cannabis is going to be legalized by July or not, there may be a delay so why not delay it –

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

**MS. PERRY:** My colleagues are heckling me here now, Mr. Speaker. Why not delay, at the federal level, imposing additional taxes for a time?

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

**MS. PERRY:** I am listening to my colleagues there now, Mr. Speaker, and it is throwing me off track.

The carbon tax, I think, is going to hurt. I think it's really going to hurt the people of this province. If someone could tell me that the carbon tax was actually going to make a difference in carbon emissions and reduce our carbon emissions, I might be more inclined to say okay, well, maybe it could work but no one is able to tell us that.

There is no evidence whatsoever that this is going to be anything other than a federal slush fund that will be used to fund projects, that we don't even know are going to be eligible. We don't even know what type of projects. Will they be R & D projects, will they be innovative projects or will they be just money that is added to ACOA? We don't know.

What we do know is that each and every person is going to be hit in their pocketbook to the tune of hundreds and hundreds of dollars. We, as citizens, our seniors, our people who are on income support and fixed incomes are going to be asked to dig into their own pockets and take more. Well, why can't the federal government look at some of the areas they're spending money on, find the savings there and let people keep the money in their own pockets? Let us keep going to the stores and spending on the local economies. Let's keep our country flowing, Mr. Speaker.

But the carbon tax, I am in strong opposition to it. I have not seen a case that the federal government has been able to make whereby they're going to show me that this is going to reduce emissions. And until such time as they can do that, I think they should delay it. We're in no rush. As a province as well, we can sit back and say, well, if we don't come up with something ourselves, the feds are going to impose it on us anyway. Well, let them do it. Because guess what? We'll all stand together, all 500,000 of us in this province.

Guess what? I think Nova Scotia would stand with us too, and I think New Brunswick will stand with us. I think PEI will stand with us. I think the West Coast of this country will stand with us. We need to stand together to say to

Ottawa until you can produce a plan that shows us where your carbon tax is going to reduce emissions, then please don't impose that burden on us, because we're struggling enough to survive as it is. In some places of this fine country, senior citizens are making a decision as to what they're going to do – either heat their homes or buy their food. So another tax is really not a solution to anything and will only bring more hardship.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I will say that I do truly hope that when we see budget 2019 next year there is no carbon tax. I'd love to hear a report that diversification efforts are successful and we're able to see some relief in taxes as well. But if that can't happen, then certainly we'll see some prudence with respect to expenditures and some real signs that there are some real legitimate efforts being made to stop any absolutely unnecessary spending and just spend on the things that will improve the well-being of our citizens in Newfoundland and Labrador until we get through the rough times.

We're going to get through the rough times soon; they're just around the corner, by all accounts. As the government has said it, too, is relying on oil and has a plan for 2030 to increase the amount of revenue we get from oil. So everyone is in agreement that better times are around the corner, and what we need to do is ensure continued fiscal prudence until we get there.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

It's a pleasure to get up once again and speak on Concurrence. It's part of our budgetary process and I've had the pleasure of getting up numerous times to speak, and this time is no different.

Mr. Speaker, I guess listening to my colleagues speak on this budget, everyone goes in different directions. As an Opposition and as government, we stand here and we ask questions. The way I was brought up, you ask a question and you expect an answer. That's not so easy to come by.

Our newly appointed leader of the Opposition done quite well today; I think so. I think he did and most people, by all accounts. He has asked questions about Arctic surf clam. It's a huge issue on the Grand Bank. It's a huge issue to the people in that community; it's 25 per cent of the quota. It was a huge issue for the government opposite for a while and now, all of a sudden, it's slowly – hopefully, people are just waiting for it to slip away; let it disappear.

You ask a question today: Did you ask the prime minister about the Arctic surf clam quota issue? I think it was a straightforward question; you could simply answer yes or no. Instead, we get into a diatribe of tariffs and ferries that were bought several years ago and wharves that were missing. Not the answer obviously – that was the question that was asked, not the answer.

Ask about carbon pricing then you get a lecture on – when I asked the question, I was getting a lecture on my previous employment to Humber Valley, to Muskrat Falls. I don't know, it went on – actually, there was so much interest that *The Telegram* wrote an article on it, it was that good because there so much gibberish, it was quoted as. And a lot of people had discussed it and it was brought out – the point I'm making now, because I'm a believer. There was a former minister who used to sit on that side of the House and I had the pleasure of asking him question after question after question and I have to tell you, he gave me answer after answer after answer. I've applauded him every opportunity I get and I'll keep doing it, because it was refreshing.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Is he still there?

**MR. PETTEN:** No, he's not there; that's right. He's in the Chamber, but he's not in that position. I miss it, because it was great. A simple thing: You ask a question and you get an answer. If you leave here and you walk outside this Chamber and I pick up the phone or if I run into someone and I ask them a question, they'll give me an answer. You come in here and you ask a question, no answers. You get a lecture on something that's totally unrelated.

Arctic surf clams and the Bell Island ferry or the wharf over in Bell Island, now tell me the connection. Other than there is water around



both of them, that's the only connection I can get. The surf clam floats in salt water and so does the wharf. Other than that, there's no relevance whatsoever.

These answers are coming from the Premier –

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** A little order, please. Just a little order.

**MR. PETTEN:** Personal loans, sits in the top office in the province and you're asking a question, have you talked to your good friend, Justin, about the Arctic surf clam quota –

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

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

**MR. PETTEN:** – and that's what you get back.

Some people on the opposite side, they get revved a bit when you mention certain – they get sensitive, Mr. Speaker. We are the Opposition and I'm sorry but that comes with this territory. Our role is to oppose government for the sake of getting good answers, good governance, Mr. Speaker. You can't just have one government going without being challenged and asked the questions. When you ask questions, we all want answers. But like I say, answers are very few and far between.

You mention getting a road paved in your district, you're told: What about Humber Valley Paving? There's never been one of their machines ever drove through CBS, Mr. Speaker. To the West Coast, to something happening in Labrador, I'm looking for road paving in CBS and I'm hearing about a company out in Corner Brook that's no longer. What about a pothole fixed, and then you're reminded about the methylmercury up in Goose Bay, which you are quite familiar with, Mr. Speaker.

The point I'm trying to make when I bringing this (inaudible) –

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

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

**MR. PETTEN:** – is people in this province don't miss those opportunities, Mr. Speaker. They watch the news; they read. Surprisingly, more people what the House of Assembly than I ever thought they did because a lot of people know a lot of things happening here, which I was surprised by, but it's good to see. It's good to see people are engaged. People watch this stuff. People hear tell of it and people know. It is reported upon.

A good example, just to emphasize my point: I got in this House there a while back, a few weeks back and we got on another form of the budget debate and one of my most passionate topics – and I'm trying to stay clear of it today – is roadwork. I went on, the roadwork, I went on and I kept at it, kept at it and kept at it. I know I pushed the button and the Minister of Transportation got so irate he walked out. That was fine. But actually I kept on it and kept on it. I showed the passion. The media actually contacted me. They found it refreshing and they wanted to do a story on the simple fact I was asking simple questions. I wanted to know where the roads are scored. I was told that is a legitimate question; you're not asking anything wrong.

I said: Well, maybe I'd like you to tell the crowd opposite. I'm only asking a question. I'm not challenging them. I'm not calling them anything out of line. There are 40 Members here and I want to know the answer, where they score.

I get lectured. The stretch they try to connect it to, the next thing they're going to tie that to combined classes and education. The connecting dot is just not there, Mr. Speaker.

I know they don't like to be reminded of any of that stuff; they like to get up and talk on the budget and the Premier was up today. I heard bits and pieces of what he was saying. You listen to it. This is the 2016 budget. Make no mistake it's dated 2018, it's the 2016 budget. A few changes here and there, but for the most part it's still that budget. I'll say it every chance I get and I'm going to continue to say it: The people of this province are still struggling; there's nothing been done to improve things.

When you get up, you say the same thing over and over again; eventually, you start to believe

it. That's kind of a scary thing because I really believe a lot of Members opposite actually believe in this. What they say, they say it again and repetition – if you ever practice, you do something and you say repeat after me, repeat and repeat and all of a sudden you believe it yourself.

This guy is deceased now; he was a very colourful character. He lived in my community. Members on this side probably know him; I'll leave his name out of it. It was a very valid point. He loved telling these stories. Some stories were a bit taller and other tales were taller than others. He's a very colourful person, well liked and whatnot.

Someone said to his wife one time: Some of this stuff doesn't make sense, where does he get it from? She said he sits up all night and he talks to himself, talks to himself and talks to himself. When he gets up the next morning it's all true and you can never sway him from it.

We're watching this on a day-to-day basis across the floor, Mr. Speaker. They believe it. Actually, people around here believe this is good. I'll say this – and this is something I'll say every time and I think it's valid to keep saying it – if you go out and you talk to the people on the street, they don't believe what they're hearing opposite, Mr. Speaker. People on the street, like I started off in my prelude, they want answers. They want us to ask questions and they want them to provide answers.

Whether it's taxation and whether it's that road being paved, what's the score with carbon pricing. What about Holyrood? What are we doing about Holyrood? What about Muskrat Falls? What about methylmercury? What about combined classes? What about the 1.6-kilometre policy? What about Husky? What about the Arctic surf clams? These are all valid questions. People want answers.

There's no one getting up on this side of the House on a day-to-day basis and saying anything that's off the rails, other than they're asking the question. You get this rhetoric coming back and it's over – and to be honest with you there are times I tend not to even pay attention what's coming across the way because I know what's coming. For example, last evening I'm watching

the news and I listened to the commentary going on. The Premier comes on and talking about something in *The Way Forward*. Normally I try to pay attention to that stuff, but the beauty of today's technology – and most Members in this House I'm sure have it; it's called a PVR and you just click, click and you get 30 second clips right. I had to skip it.

I'm listening – I said I'm no different. I'm a citizen now; I'm not politician. I'm home in the house with my family and I'm saying I can't watch this. I can't watch it. There may be something good in that but I'm tuned out. Guess what? The rest of the province feels the same way. The vast majority of this province feel the exact same way and I have a feeling I wasn't the only fellow with his hand on the remote last night fast-forwarding.

Do you know what? It was actually a sense of relief – I think I might continue to do it. Doing certain sections of the news, that drives me, that irritates me – because I feel our news cast, our weather goes for 10 minutes and I'd like to know is it going to nice tomorrow or not. I'm a 10-second weather man. I don't like the 10-minute one, so I'll just go click the fast-forward button, but that's what most people are doing, on a serious note, with the issues in this province. They're frustrated with the same old rhetoric they get back.

When you get into politics – and sometimes I question, maybe I'm not the true politician because I like answers. I like getting answers; I like giving answers. Maybe my answers and my honesty sometimes get me in trouble. The saying the truth will set you free, I've always been a believer if you stay true to your values and you give true answers and honest answers and be fair in your responses, you'll never go astray – never. It may not be good for that one time. It might get you in an awkward position but I'm a believer that if you stick to what you believe in, you'll never go astray.

Another issue I'd like to talk about now – actually, it was a question today. Here we go again; it was another question by our leader today. He was questioning the distances of these new proposed cannabis outlets to schools and daycares. In my district, I got three in a 2.4-kilometre range; I think that's what it is. I have

three there and two are within 600 or 700 metres from an elementary school and junior high school and a high school. That was brought to my attention. I knew there were three in a small area, but it was brought to my attention because people have concerns.

Mr. Speaker, in 10 or 15 years' time, people are going to say these concerns were unfounded. What was I worried about? You don't even know they exist. I hope that's the way it works. I hope this works out to be no issue, but I think it's incumbent upon us and people, concerned citizens and municipal leaders, what have you, to bring up those issues. If they are concerns to them, they are probably concerns that we're missing.

None of us are perfect. We always say about the legalization of marijuana and no matter what issue comes here, if it's coming, it's coming, but do it right. We've always stood by the fact, we're not against legalization of marijuana. We want to make sure it's done right.

I'll take you back again – it was said to us on a piece of legislation that was reopened in this House: You rushed it, you never got it right. When I bring up stuff like that, why are we rushing stuff? Friday evening you have a news release coming out that the environmental assessment was registered; Canopy Growth had registered for an EA for the proposed site for the new greenhouse or what have you. Then, Monday morning we had a sod turning, but now that's still under EA. It's gone in for an environmental assessment, but the announcement was Monday morning. This is where it's going.

Maybe in all likelihood it will, but from my time, and I spent time in the Department of Environment, you couldn't put the shovel in the ground until you got your EA, until that passed environmental assessment. Most of that stuff has 30- to 60-day referrals going out to other departments, agencies to come back. I know they've tightened it up a bit, but within an hour of that news release there was another news release out there.

The minister and a representative from Canopy Growth were going down Monday morning for the sod turning. The excavator was there, which

is all fine, but what about the EA? Are we forgetting about the environment? Supposedly this is not going to matter. We're getting it approved anyway, just don't worry about it. Is that the regard we have for the environment? I question it.

Speaking on the environment, what about the Grieg project? I've spoken about that several times. I have no problem with the Grieg project. Actually, it was initiated under the former administration because there's value in it. It's industry, it's creating jobs, it's huge for the Burin Peninsula, but do it right. Here we go again – but do it right.

We had an environmental assessment. There were issues raised during that environmental assessment, some valid ones. There were various issues raised. It was released from environmental assessment. The groups kicked up, fought hard and they went to court. The court ordered them to do – the court agreed to do an environmental assessment or impact study.

It's about getting it right. Again, I'll refer because I've asked this question as well, you mentioned if I come up and mention as a critic for Environment about why not go and do an environmental impact study, Members from the region, I know one in particular from Burin, Placentia West, I believe, will always tell me – and the former minister used to be there – you don't care about the Burin Peninsula, you don't care about Marystown.

That's not true, Mr. Speaker. That's so wrong. That's the total opposite. I do care about the Burin Peninsula. I do care about that region. You don't want this to turn into a catastrophe. Do it right. When it's done right everybody is happy. When you're asking for an environmental impact study to be done, what's so wrong about that?

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

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

**MR. PETTEN:** Yes, it takes time and, yes, it delays the project. I get that. Right now they're in the process of doing one as the court is deciding what to do. If the court comes back and says, no, we dismiss this appeal and we don't

think you need to do it. I certainly hope this is carried on and it's done. Be cautious. Do it right.

Sure you'll put it back maybe a year or two, but at the end of the day you have a project that's done and every environmental aspect has been followed. Nothing is foolproof. Nothing will ever be that way, Mr. Speaker, but at least we have some clear conscience it's done right and we feel that the environment, once again, has been looked after.

I'm not one of those people when it comes to environment, I see the benefits of – we're Conservatives, we believe in money promoting business. Finance is very important to everyone in this province. We know job creation.

One of our Conservative approaches is stimulate business to create employment, not be government operated. Get the business. We're about business. I'm all about Grieg succeeding. We have to do it right. We have to make sure the environmental aspects are looked after. It's no good of rushing this stuff through.

We just saw with the Canopy Growth announcements, it was only registered two days prior or three days prior but that's going. What is this? Where are we to with this? Do we care about the environment anymore? I wonder.

Now we have carbon pricing, but we care about carbon pricing. We care because the federal government is bringing that down, but we're going to change people's behaviours by taxing them. We're going to pay extra money on our furnace oil. That's not going to get people to take out furnaces. It's not going to get them to stop burning oil. The cost involved, it's not reasonable. The cost to change over is too expensive, Mr. Speaker. It's not changing behaviour.

I've said this before, taxing people to change behaviour is just punishing them in that way. This is not how you would do submissions. There are a lot of innovative approaches required. There's a lot of debate going on country wide, but you just can't say because the federal government initiated this: well, that's all we can do. We're going to bring it in, that's it. There's nothing we can do. It's federal government legislation. Which partially,

partially – the right one since it is the federal government, but no one ever stopped you from fighting back.

There's no reason we can't stand up to Ottawa and say, hang on, we're already paying our share. We've said that as an Opposition here for a long while now. We feel we pay our share. We're 98 per cent green energy when Muskrat Falls comes online. We'll pay our share, Mr. Speaker.

Actually, it can be conceived that we actually contribute. We help with Nova Scotia and Quebec on the Upper Churchill with green energy. There are all kinds of angles you could look at, but just strictly sticking to Muskrat we do our share. We are doing our share.

When we speak about carbon pricing, we sometimes get lost in the fact it's industry. It's all big business. It's all about big business. It's not about big business, Mr. Speaker, it's about me and you. It's about everyone in this House. It's about every family out there. Whether you drive a car, whether you go to the supermarket – you don't have to have a car, you don't have to have a furnace. You're going to the supermarket to buy groceries. Carbon pricing will be affecting on the grocery shelves. It affects everything we do. What I keep hearing, as recently as the last couple of weeks, there's still this mindset out there, people don't realize it's going to affect them.

This guy said, what's that you're talking about? Sure, that don't affect me. Yes, it does. They think it's Come by Chance. They think it's Holyrood. They think it's IOC. They think it's Corner Brook Pulp and Paper where the big stacks are blowing out. No, it affects every single one of us. It's a tax that's going to affect every single one of us.

We keep talking about this. I know my colleague, our Opposition House Leader, myself and him spent a lot of time talking about carbon pricing. Maybe it interests us but him from being a Finance critic from a fiscal point of view, me being an Environmental critic from the view that I don't think this is going to solve our problems, and we feel combined that this carbon pricing is not the answer to reduce emissions.

We'll continue on. Like I said with a lot of other things, I believe that repetition – well, it might be repetition but eventually the hope is, Mr. Speaker, eventually we'll argue and we'll lobby and do our best as an Opposition, as what we're elected to do. We're elected to oppose government to try to bring in better legislation; better for the people of this province. That's what we're put here for.

Every Member in this House, it's 40 of us, a certain part is in government and a certain part is over here. Once again, the crowd over here – as we're referred to by the Members opposite. Even the Premier today called us the crowd over there. Maybe it's a compliment, but the crowd over here will continue asking the crowd over there questions and the crowd over here will hopefully get answers from the crowd over there because the crowd out there are hoping this crowd in here gets the job done.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

It's indeed a privilege to get up here again today to represent the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis and the beautiful people in the District of Cape St. Francis.

Before I start today, Mr. Speaker, yesterday was Mother's Day and I want to wish all the moms and mothers all over the province a Happy Mother's Day; a little bit belated but I want to wish them all well. I had the opportunity yesterday to go visit my mother at a graveyard. I'm sure a lot of people did that along the way, but I make a regular visit. I know how much I appreciate everything she did for me over the years.

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

**MR. K. PARSONS:** I know most people are like that with their moms. Yesterday, I also had the opportunity to – I'm very fortunate that I have two little grandchildren. I visited with them

yesterday and visited them with their moms. I sent out a couple of pictures to a couple of friends and they reminded me it wasn't poppy's day, it was Mother's Day.

To all the moms out there – I'm sure and we all agree to this – thank you for everything that you do. Mother's Day is an important day for all of us. I just want to recognize all the moms out there because it's an important day for me and I'm sure it's an important day for everybody.

Also before I get on to my little speech, I had the opportunity last night to watch some CNN. Anthony Bourdain was on. I got to say I really enjoyed it. I know there was a lot of criticism out there about the word "Newfie" and "Newfoundland." I say Newfoundland; I don't know how they pronounce it.

I thought it was a great show. I really did. I really enjoyed it. I thought it represented Newfoundland and Labrador really well. I know a scattered time I'll get up here and I'll talk about my trips to Millertown. That's one of the places they went. We don't eat like they eat, I can guarantee you that. The food they had on the beach there at the top of Red Indian Lake was pretty good. Not that I'm saying anything about it now, Mr. Speaker, we eat pretty good up there too. But we didn't have the chefs that they had from Quebec and Jeremy Charles and people like that there.

It was really good, I have to say. Any time that we get to promote our province and people want to come here – last week I know I heard all the people with Newfie, the pronunciation of Newfoundland and the negative impact. But I'm very proud to be a Newfoundlander, whether I'm called a Newfie or whatever I'm called. I'm just very proud to be from this area. I thought last night it was a great show.

I had a brother of mine that I called beforehand. He's down in Dallas. I said: You have to watch this now; it's coming on tonight. Afterwards, he called me and he said: Jeez, Kev, that was fantastic. He said: I really, really did enjoy it. It just showed the point of – didn't have any luck with the moose hunting trip, but they were on the bog and the cod jigging part.

I told a story here one time before. I had a friend of mine come one day from Montreal and I brought him out cod jigging. He just couldn't believe it. The cod that they caught last night, I catch a lot bigger cod most times, but they were nice fish. Just to see how easy it was to catch.

This guy goes all over the world. He's everywhere in the world. I like his show because he just brings different cultures, food and everything else. He drinks a lot of beer and wine too. I noticed that last night too. That's who we are as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We're a different breed of people. We're friendly, we're kind and we're considerate. I think that came out last night.

For all those people that may criticize or whatever, I thought it was a great show. I hope that it does great things for our tourism. I'm sure it will because that's a show that's watched by a lot of people. When you see the scenery there last night, the trip to the Big R, the Jiggs' dinner and the scrunchions, which I kind of like too, so it was good.

I'm not sure if the province had anything to do with – okay, the Minister of Health, when I said scrunchions, he held on to his heart and just told me it's not very good for the heart, but moderation, Minister, moderation. It's still pretty good.

Things like that that we can do to promote our province and to show the people of the world who we really are, I think it's fantastic that we can do stuff like that. Any time that we bring a tourist to this province of ours, Newfoundland and Labrador, we're doing great things for everybody because there are so many spinoffs.

When you look last night, I just looked at the different places; they were down in Petty Harbour, Big R, down to Raymonds. I've never been there myself, but it looked like pretty good food down there too. It was really nice.

I wanted to say that today because sometimes we always hear about negative things, but I thought it was a great show. Whatever pronunciation you want to do for Newfoundland, it doesn't make any difference to me. I just like to see our people shown, who we are as people and people of the world know what a great

province we live in and how fortunate we are to be here.

This will just cut into my speech now today – we're doing the budgetary speech. This is part of the budget. Sometimes it's easy to be negative. It's so easy to be negative, but there are a lot of great things in this province and there are a lot of great people that are here. That's our biggest resource. No matter what we have in mining or oil off our shores or the fishery, which is a little bit bad today, but our biggest resource will always be our people and you could really see that last night in that show. It was really nice, I have to say. I just wanted to mention that.

When we talk about the social sector, which we're talking about here now, one part of my critic role is Municipal Affairs when it comes to social. I was a former municipal leader, as mayor of the Town of Flatrock. I really liked it and someday I probably will go back to serve again, because when we talk about municipal affairs and municipalities in this province, especially in small towns, there's no better feeling – and it's a hard job. It's a difficult job because the smaller the town, everybody's related and it's your cousins, it's your friends and everything else, and decisions that you make at that level sometimes are pretty hard.

I know it can be a permit, it can be the size of shed, it could be road access or something like that. In small towns, it's very, very difficult and I really want to applaud all the people that do it because it's not easy, but it's important that people step up and do that job.

I want to just talk a little bit about it today, and I'm not going to harp on it very much. In small municipalities, there are some problems. I got an email this weekend on it. While, in the last couple of weeks, we've talked about harassment here in the House of Assembly, I got an email from a former councillor, talked about harassments in municipalities and what is being done about it. I advised him to send off a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and find out about the status because I didn't know.

As a former mayor – and sometimes this whole society that we live in, we have to become aware of what is out there in society. Sometimes in small towns – in most towns, in my district,

there are only a couple of workers in each one of the towns. They have to deal with elected representatives also but, in most cases, they are in there doing their job and whatnot.

In the next couple of weeks or whatever, I know I'll have the opportunity to ask some questions on that, but I'm sure it's something that we should be doing as government, making sure that we take care of people who work in our municipalities and make sure they are protected – under anything, that we will be protected in here ourselves.

Maybe there is some training that they could do. I know we did some training only a week ago. Maybe there is a training we should be offering to municipalities right across this province. It's important to everyone and it's very important that we support people who are working in these municipalities.

I just want to talk about the towns in my area. I'm just going to add a little thing that they've done in the last number of years. They've all come together and they have their regular meetings. I know there are different places in the province like the Northern Peninsula, it could be down in the Grand Bank area, in that area, where municipalities get together but what they do, the mayors have a regular meeting. I get invited to them every now and then.

Actually, the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island and the mayor of Portugal Cove-St. Philip's also attends the same meetings. They get together and they talk about different things that they are doing, what they can do – it could be a proposal on garbage collection that they all can put in together.

I know they came together now on animal control. It's working really well for the towns. They also came together and are doing a lot of different recreation. They have the Killick Coast Games down there and the towns all commit to every four – I think it's like Flatrock, Pouch Cove and Bauline are together in one; Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove are together and Torbay; and then Portugal Cove-St. Philip's. They'll switch it out every four years but it brings the towns together.

It's something that we should be doing a little bit more. No one is talking about joining them all together as one municipality, no, but there are things that towns in this province can do if we share services and we do some services that the one town doesn't have the bulk cost to it.

There are a lot of things – because municipalities in this province are hurting. I know in my own area that I'd say in the mid-2000s to 2012, the growth that was down there was unbelievable. If you looked at the Town of Torbay, that went up 25 per cent in probably four years in growth. It had a huge impact on the town itself, but it had a huge impact on everything around them, like the infrastructure needs and stuff like that. It's important if there are services that can be shared in those municipalities, that we work together and make sure that these services can be shared.

They're one of the towns that are doing the animal control thing. Flatrock now, Bauline, Pouch Cove and Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove are doing that. A great example in my area, again, about shared services – and I go back to this and I spoke about it since I've been here – is the Jack Byrne Arena. At that time, I can remember Mr. Jack Byrne, that was his whole thing was to get all the towns involved so we could get an arena. He said one town can't do it alone, but if we get everybody – and everybody got onboard and we did a proposal. The proposal came through, so that we got a beautiful arena.

Just to give you an example of what's gone down there now; we're looking for a second ice surface because there's so much use. This year, it was over 800 children that were involved in minor hockey in my area. Before 2008, when the Jack Byrne Arena opened, there were 157.

While I talked a little bit about scrunchions there a little while ago, the Minister of Health hit his heart. I'm sure that activities like ice hockey, figure skating, any kind of skating or any kind of activity we can have – young people and old, like myself, that do play hockey – involved in is great for our health.

I want to talk a little bit about the Department of Justice and Public Safety also today. That's part of our social sector here that we're talking about.

I know we had some correctional officers in today. I think I knew them all. Two or three were from my area. They have a hard job to do. It's hard, it's a rough facility they have down there but they do their job with class.

A couple of weeks ago I mentioned Don Roche, who's there now. I really want to put my hats off and thank them for the great service they do. I believe, Minister of Justice, this week is also Police Week. I heard Chief Joe Boland on today. He was talking about it. He mentioned how policing has changed.

I mentioned this to the Member for Topsail - Paradise today about some of the conversation that Chief Boland was saying this morning and a lot of it was about that. He said how things have changed in policing. It's not just enforcement and go give the tickets or arrest this one, arrest that one. He said how he grew through the ranks of the RNC. Things have changed so much in 20 years, from being out there arresting people, to today a lot of a part of the RNC's work is done through education and awareness.

We're very lucky to have – and I know a lot of RNC officers. I know a lot of them, good friends of mine. I know you, Mr. Speaker, are also a former RNC person. I know you know a lot, too. I thank them, and I know everyone over here in the Opposition also thanks them for the great job they do in protecting us and making sure that society and our whole area is well protected. I'm not sure if it's called Police Week or what it's called, but I know the chief was on this morning and I really want to put off my hat because, like I say, I got a lot of good friends that are in the RNC and I know what a great job they do.

Mr. Speaker, also under this section here, we talk about education. Education, and this is a real – it's not knocking government or anything – this is a real serious issue for me because I really believe the key to any society, the key to who we are as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are our children, are the youth that are coming up; the youth that will be here in the House of Assembly when we're long gone. We have to make sure their education is top-notch, bar none.

I believe education is – and I see it today. I know the graduation classes and everything are

on the go these days and it's amazing whenever you go to any of these, to look at the scholarships that our graduates are getting these days and the universities they're going to. They're going off to McGill. They're going somewhere else in Western Canada. They're going to prep school down in the States. They're going everywhere. We've never had a better education system than we have now.

Back in the 2016 budget, we made some changes. Our government had cap sizes on the class size, the number of students allowed in a class. That got changed again in 2016 and it went up.

Mr. Speaker, look, these are letters I received from a meeting I went to last week with concerned parents, and some teachers that were there, about the different cap sizes in some of the schools I have in my area. Specifically, this one was St. Francis of Assisi in Outer Cove, Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove. A lot of concerns there. A lot of concerns about – and we're all concerned, parents in particular. If you have a child in school you want the best for your child. That's just how society works.

Their concerns are that a lot of times now what's happening the cap size in the elementary is gone from 24 basically up to 28 with a cap, with a high as 31. That's a big concern today, because there are a lot of different issues in the classrooms and stuff like that. In that particular school, Mr. Speaker, the problem is the class sizes – the new school down in Torbay has these huge classrooms, but when you go to a couple of schools in my district the class sizes are smaller. There's not enough room in the class really for 29 to 31 students. It just doesn't have the room in those classrooms to do it.

The other issue down there, there is – I think this year it was grade four and grade five had split classes. That meant that in one group there were 12 grade fives and six grade fours; three girls, three boys in the grade four section.

Now, a big part of any school and education is for people to be able to be socialized. I really do believe that the social aspect of school is a very important part of children and making them socially being able to get up and speak, to be able to do different things in life afterwards. It's



important we teach them and they be comfortable with what they do, especially coming out of small schools. You want them to go to these universities and stuff like that. So it's important that they be able to socialize with their friends.

What's happening in that particular school is there's no cafeteria. So the children are in the classrooms all day long. If you got like three boys and three girls in grade four and they got 29 friends that are over in another class and they don't get to – it has a real effect on them. I talked to a lot of the parents and they were really, really concerned about it.

Then there were pluses. Also there were some pluses, because a split class, the maximum number of children that can be in a split class is 18. So one teacher to 18 students, versus one teacher to 28 or 29 students. You would believe that the 18 – but parents had a real, real concern about that. I'm going to make some suggestions to the minister and hopefully we can talk about it. I contacted the principal. We had a great conversation with the principal down there. They have a fantastic school, fantastic teachers down in that area and they're doing a great job.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to go on to just talk about some cuts we're doing at MUN. It's another institute we're very, very proud of. I know there's still a freeze, so-called freeze anyway, on the tuition freeze, but we got to be very careful with what's happening over to MUN.

I was over there about a month ago, just going through the different corridors and going in through the building. I believe there's a lot of maintenance that's required over in that area. It's like a snowball effect. If you don't do the proper infrastructure and take care of the needs of the small little things that are happening now, they'll get bigger and bigger and bigger.

When you take \$7 million or \$8 million out of their budget, this is where the cuts are going to have to be. We're going to see the effects of that down the road, and we can't do it. We have to make sure our institutes are top notch. Like I said, they're our future. Our children will be our future from here to eternity, and we got to make sure that we give them the best opportunity to

make sure that they have the best education that they need. It's so important – and that's our responsibility as a government. It's our responsibility to be in here in the House of Assembly and make sure that we take care of the people we really need to take care of.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to get to all of them here, but I do want to mention Health and Community Services. It's also under Social. It's another area where, again, it's a large part of our spending. It's a large, large part of our spending. I know that everybody realizes and the minister and previous ministers have done what they can to basically look at the needs, but we also have to look at what we're supplying the people and make sure we're supplying the proper services in the proper areas and do a proper job to ensure that our people – any loved one, we know that we all think about our loved ones when we go to hospital. I mean, you go over to the Health Sciences Complex, it's just so busy over there in the daytime and stuff like that and I'm sure all facilities are.

I know my time is ended. Anyway, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the leader of the Official Opposition.

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

It's indeed an honour to stand in this House as we do Concurrence here on the budget itself and have a discussion around the integral workings of this budget, what impact it will have on people and particularly the responsibilities we all have in this House ensuring people have access to services and programs without it being too encompassing financially on them and their expectation, their hopes for a better future, not only for themselves but for the next generations as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, it's an honour for me to stand here, my first day in my new role as the Opposition leader in the House and I do want to –

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** – thank my colleagues in caucus for giving me this opportunity and the Leader, Ches Crosbie, but I also want to thank the

former leader in the House, the Member for Topsail - Paradise who, for the last number of years while we were in Opposition, very eloquently spoke on behalf of the people of not only his own district but of Newfoundland and Labrador about the issues that they're facing –

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** – and again drove very diligently to ensure that government were kept at task about their responsibilities to improve people's lives here. I want to acknowledge that. And, no doubt, he's not going anywhere, so for anybody who has that illusion, he still has a role to play in this caucus very much so and particularly in his district now.

You'll hear from him many more times as we go through this sitting of the House and the next number of sittings over the next year and a half or so until we get to the next general election and then beyond. So it's an honour to stand here and have that discussion.

I was intrigued by only the last couple of hours, the discussions that we've had here from my colleagues in the Opposition about where this budget is and the impacts that it has. In principle, and I'll be fairly honest, it's probably the least intrusive budget of the three that the Liberal administration has brought down since being elected in 2015, no doubt about it. We understand it. We do understand and we do appreciate as a new administration you look at some of the challenges you have, you look at exactly what it is you're going to deal with and you look at what your own priorities are. We've had no qualms with that.

On this side over the last three budgets, we've challenged certain things and we've questioned certain things. But we've also supported certain pieces of legislation, certain areas in which funding was putting forward. I've done that in my role as critic. I've done that in Estimates in some cases. In most cases, all of us, we want to call out exactly what it is that is being invested and what benefit will that be for the people that are paying the taxes in Newfoundland and Labrador and the expectations they have as part of that.

We've come a long way in the last three years. The issue still remains that there's still a lot of rectifying some of the damages that were done a couple of budgets ago. Last year's budget tried to address some of that. It was mentioned here earlier that there have been small – and I say very small – steps towards rectifying some of the financial burdens that were put on people, and some of the loss of hope that people had about moving Newfoundland and Labrador forward and, unfortunately, some of the people who were forced to leave this great province of ours. That's what's happened. It's unfortunate.

I do acknowledge and do compliment the administration because I know there's nobody over there deliberately trying to do something that's going to be a hindrance to people's well-being, or that in any way, shape or form is going to be negative for our society, our culture and promoting Newfoundland and Labrador. I understand that. The question has always been about prioritizing *The Way Forward*.

They talk about *The Way Forward* and they have a document that outlines where they'd like to go, the question has always been – not only by the Opposition, but by a number of people in Newfoundland and Labrador – show us the plan to get to *The Way Forward*. Show us how that's going to work. There's been a lot of discussion, there's been a lot of spinning, there's been a lot of flash, but there haven't been a lot of hands-on, tangible approaches of how this is going to work, how this was actually going to be beneficial and get to the end result.

Every administration comes in with a reality of what they face. That's just the change in transitions, but then as a reality of what you face and what you're dealt, to how you're going to get to what you want to achieve. There's always a streamline. Sometimes it may not be a straight line, you go back and forth, but you find a way to connect the dots to get to where you want to go.

The problem we have here and the problem that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are echoing: There isn't anything there. There's been no way to do anything to get to the end result of what *The Way Forward* plan was supposed to do to improve people's lives. That's what we're challenging over here. We're not

saying what you are outlining isn't doable. We are not even saying that it's not on the right path. We're just saying you have not outlined how are you going to get there, what strides are you going to take, and what inclusion is going to be there for the people here who should drive what's happening in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We've been challenging that for the last couple of years. We're heavily now challenging it further and further. As the Liberal government gets further into their mandate, somewhere along the way they have to produce. They've got to be able to say, at the end of day, here are the positive things we've done, or here are the things that we did earlier and here are the positive outcomes because of it.

That's fine. I mean, we heard over the years that their administration wasn't going to be based on the price of oil and the impact that would have. They were going to diversify the economy. They were going to partner with all these other entities to ensure that works.

Obviously, we know any new programs and any time they reduce one of the taxes that was put on in the 2016 budget it's based on more revenues coming in from the oil streams, more production and the cost of oil going up, the revenue is being generated. So they've gone to that.

I have no qualms in acknowledging, as we receive more money, finding a way to either supply proper services or pay down our debt, or get our spending under control, or prioritize exactly what we're doing. I don't think anybody in Newfoundland and Labrador – the key is having a clean balance here. The clean balance here is about, obviously, outlining how you're going to control your spending, noting what your revenue streams are going to be and knowing that they fluctuate depending on what industries you're dealing with.

It's not a clean stream when you know you're going to set X number of dollars because you have contract with a company to supply X number of products and your revenue streams are going to be that. We know the oil industry fluctuates from production, it fluctuates from impact on outside entities, like we talked about shutdowns because of issues around accidents

on a platform; but it also has to do with the volatility in the world market, up and down when it comes to the pricing. We realize that, so people need to take that into account.

Going back and saying everything that was done by the previous administration when it came to their planning was off-centre. No, it wasn't. It was a reality of the times. Knowing, in certain revenue streams, you can control certain things. In other ones, you can't.

Oil is one of those volatile ones – the same with other parts of the mineral industry; you don't know what the price of iron ore may be, or gold may be, or nickel, as part of that goes. You can't foresee some reasons that there may be shutdowns.

So to flippantly just blame everything else and say we have a better plan, that's not right either. If you have a plan that makes sense, you can show where it makes sense and you can show the start, the middle and the end results, then I think everybody will buy into it. That's all we've been asking since the day we stood here in Opposition: Tell us how you're going to achieve what you set out to achieve; tell us how you're going to address what you've said are some challenges, and we all acknowledge there were challenges.

There were financial challenges in Newfoundland and Labrador. So we had to come to a happy medium between our spending controls, our desires that people had when it came to programs and services, and how we were going to deal with our debt loads. Three continuums here that all had to be taken into account, but to do that you had to find a mechanism that worked.

While there was a lot of talk, there were minimal consultations. There was a flippant process of consultation, but there wasn't as meaningful consultation as could have been done. Because there were groups who came in with certain things that said here's how we could address this, if it was done. But it kept being pushed down the road, pushed down the road, pushed down the road until we got to a point then where decisions had to be made that had an adverse effect on people, and that's been the challenge.

That's been the challenge that's gone on as we look at where we are right now.

I do realize at the end of the day there are going to be discussions in this House. There have been changes. There have been new investments in this past budget, ones that we've acknowledged as being positive. Ones that we've also talked about, at the end of the day, what would happen if these programs and services were not in line with where the direction was? So we've had that discussion. We've had those in Estimates.

I had a great debate in Estimates and good back and forth dialogue with the Minister of Health about programs and services, where the money was being invested, why there were some new monies in some areas and less in other areas, what that meant; what it meant in the salary basis.

I was fortunate enough that the Minister of Health was open to talk also about policy. Because sometimes when we get in Estimates, depending on who the minister is, they may or may not want to talk about anything that's relevant to policy, if it's not directly related to the line items in the budget line. In this case, we did have some good discussions around what were the pertinent policies and programs that could be offered to ensure the outcomes in our health care are improved.

We know there are challenges across, because we know – we have three things going against us in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have an aging population, we have a geographic challenge at the end of the day, and we have a minimal ability to invest more monies. Those are the three challenges we face, any administration faces. I acknowledge they're facing it right now as part of what they're doing.

The conversation there was about, how do we ensure the amounts of money we're spending in health care is adequate enough to do it without having to infringe on our debt load by adding more to it, while at the same time ensuring that just throwing money at it doesn't necessarily mean we're going to have better outcomes. How do we do a better process that gives us better outcomes?

Those were the discussions we had around particular programs. The minister did outline some programs they were moving away from, that had either hit their life expectancy and had achieved what they wanted or, in some cases, weren't as effective from an outcome point of view; or, from an economy of scale, the investment wasn't in the best interest of what could be a better outcome with that same amount money being invested in another approach or a different type of program. So there was good dialogue; there was some good discussion. I was impressed to the point that there were some new approaches, particularly in health care. I saw that as a positive.

The discussions in Education were somewhat cordial also. Mainly because there's more money being invested in education in particular areas. That's as a result of what we saw in the task force on education. Particularly, the quality of the individuals we had, who had taken on the responsibility of doing the full review of the education system and finding ways to improve it, particularly working within the confines of the present system we had.

Those individuals went through the process, engaged as many people as possible and many organizations, took the information that was shared with them and then broke it down into categories that would be beneficial. Even in education, it's just not the sole responsibility of education to improve the outcomes in education.

We talk about mental health in it, we talk about psychological help. We talk about some of the more economic training that may be done. There are other line departments and line agencies that may be beneficial in having a partnership.

There were some good discussions there. There was a little over \$6 million that was put directly into addressing the recommendations made by the task force on education. As a result, we're hoping now to start seeing some real progression on some of those.

The reading specialists would be a positive one. I'm curious to see how they're going to be allocated and where. I had one school approach me who are doing yeoman service but do have a multitude of challenges when it comes to their reading comprehension and their levels. I would

think would have been a great candidate for them to have one of these reading specialists. It would have been ideal.

I've reached out to the school district to ask: What was the protocol, what was the template, what was the matrix used to determine it? Was it population? Was it previous scores in outcomes? Was it the anticipated challenges within the school system? Was it about the number of instructors they have?

So, as part of that process, I was curious to see where we were on that, and I'm looking forward to the outcome. It's not in any way, shape or form being adversarial or confrontational towards the school district or the department. I'd like to know what they base it on, because there may be a simple matrix they use or a simple evaluation process that makes total sense. Because if it does, I have no qualms in getting up and acknowledging that and also explaining to the schools in my district, or any school that may contact me, this is why you didn't fit to get that.

Was it based on we only had X-number? Is it a pilot project? Those are questions that, no doubt – and I have every confidence the school district or the department will get me the information. Then that may be a question I ask in the House or I may be totally satisfied, or it may be a question that I can ask to the bureaucrats at the time, the officials to get clarification.

I think the hope was put there, and rightfully so – there is, obviously, going to be a benefit from it from these reading specialists that are going to be integral in improving, particularly in younger students, their comprehension level and their reading skills level. That obviously has an impact on all the other course levels as students go through.

As we all know, there's a correlation between your confidence and your ability to read, to be able to comprehend then in other courses of study, sciences, some of the other histories and geography and these types of things. There's an important role here for us to ensure that if we're going to invest and we show there's a big demand and this is going to be an asset that improves our outcomes in education, let's do that. Let's put the money in where it's needed. I

have no problem, and I know us on this side have never had problems if there are strategic plans.

It's been asked by my colleague from Conception Bay South about the roads plan, the five-year plan. In theory, it's great. Before we left I looked at that. I talked to my colleagues in the Atlantic provinces about putting that in play to see what would happen, and we were moving towards that.

I'm glad to see the Liberal administration have taken it and put it in play, but the question becomes – and the only question we've asked and we're still waiting for an answer – tell us the matrix? Tell us the scoring process so that we can go back and tell our people, do you know why you're not on this list for five years? Here's why, because the priorities in other areas dictate these are the things, simple things.

Information not being shared only gives people speculation that things are not being done the way they should be or in the best interest of everybody involved. It's a simple way to do it. I'd wholeheartedly respond to the minister when he says the five-year plan is a good plan. Sure it is.

The concept is a great plan, but getting to know and everybody understanding exactly those roads that are on it, how that was chosen, I think will alleviate a lot of stresses for some of the municipalities, for residents in certain areas, for even businesses. Because then they can tell – do you know at the end of the day, here's what we can expect. We can expect a certain level of replacement of certain roads, a certain level of repairs and then there are certain things we're going to have to live with for a period of time. While our road is not dangerous in any way, it is a bit of an inconvenience. We can manoeuvre around that for a certain period down the road.

So simple things like that, it's just a bit of encouragement we'd like to know so we can share and, probably in some cases, support what you guys are doing. It's not always about being adverse to what the government is doing. It's about being able to understand it, being able to appreciate it, being able to support it and then being able to sell it. They're the sequences of events to be able to make this work.

We have no qualms on being able to do that. As we've gone through the budget process, the questions that we've asked, from my perspective as a critic, they've been answered. I may not always agree with how much money has gone into a certain program, because I have my perspective from my background and as a critic role or in my own district feel maybe there are priorities that are more warranted because that's what I'm comfortable with, or that's what I need, or that's what I see are the priorities of certain people; but we can't always get every priority we want or think ours is the only need out there. So you have to step back a bit and say: Explain to me, justify why that's being done.

I will note, in most cases, we did get a justification. We may not all agree with it, but we got a justification as to what was being done and the intent behind it, so that was a positive process. That's been a great improvement from *Budget 2016* and *Budget 2017*. So I see that as positives here.

The other thing that we look at here, everybody has, as their main objective in this House, to find a way to improve people's lives in Newfoundland and Labrador and how do we move those things forward. We've come a long way around mental health.

I just want to speak a little bit – this time last week, as a matter of fact, last Monday night, I had the privilege of being in my district with the Town of Portugal Cove-St. Philip's when they were the first municipality to start, as part of the process to acknowledge Mental Health Week, by lighting the town hall green. It was light up the community green for mental health.

It was inspiring to have certain groups there who spoke and talked about – individuals particularly – their own struggles with mental health, the agencies that support them and, in some cases, these are individuals who struggled with mental health were fortunate enough to get some of the base supports that they needed so they could get to a point where they felt they could give back and, actually, founded some other organizations that were part of it.

Like the Spirit Horse organization, extremely positive; you see the outcomes on getting people involved in riding therapy for mental health. I

saw it first-hand and what that meant. Erin Gallant, the executive director or the chair, the non-paid chair, was very eloquent about the impact it has on her life, but on all the people who come there.

If we saw organizations that bought into doing that, the thing that we looked at, and I looked at with whole-hearted respect, the mermen calendar that went out that raised over \$300,000 for that one organization; very positive how they've been able to expand with more horses for the therapy, a better facility but, particularly, as Erin said, she wanted to take the majority of that money and put it into the programming, not bricks and mortar, and found a better way to be able to ensure more people had access to the program itself.

Also, we had the St. John Ambulance therapy dogs. It was amazing to see a number of kids who are struggling with autism and their ability to feel comfortable in particular settings, particularly around reading. That's why it meant a lot to me coming as a critic from Education and working in the department for a number of years with youth at risk and youth with challenges to see the difference when a young person who may have some challenges with autism and behaviour-wise and feeling comfortable in the proper setting, when they're there with the dogs, particularly in the library, and start to read to a dog. They read as if any other kid would; they're comfortable. The dog is their therapy. The dog doesn't judge. It doesn't speak back. It doesn't question if they pronounce the word properly or not. It's phenomenal. It was actually amazing.

The fact that somebody would come up with that therapy, would understand that and could see it and could train dogs to do it and then, as a volunteer group, is moving these dogs around – it was fortunate that Portugal Cove-St. Philip's, because we have a town-ran public library, that they could open it up. They weren't restricted by having to get other boards to decide to do things and have stepped up. They have therapy dogs that come in on a daily basis and work with the kids. We have a fair number of young people in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's who have the challenges with autism, but it's phenomenal how that's improved their state, not only their own confidence but when they go to school.

I had the privilege after then of going to Brookside Intermediate, the new school – it's the first year of operation on Thursday – and being there with a group of over 100 students and some 20 staff who did Relay for Life for cancer. Having the principal outline that some of these kids here who have challenges with autism, the reason they're productive in the school is their therapies, not only what they get in school but their outside therapies, these other agencies, volunteer agencies who've used unique programs and services to be able to come in and help them cope in that setting.

What was more amazing was these 100 students were there to run for six hours to raise money for cancer research and cancer support programs. You had the Cancer Society in there talking about what was happening. We had our own MC, media personality Fred Hutton who lives in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's and supports all these things, encouraging the community to get engaged and get involved.

That night, in six hours, they raised \$15,000 for cancer research and Daffodil Place. Again, it's a testament of how communities, no matter what age, but it showed the sequence – some of those kids there are people who avail of other services that they need, other supports, but while they're doing that they're raising money to support another segment of society who needs supports in another way from a cancer point of view.

It was an amazing set-up to see. We had one young student who got up and talked about cancer. He was sort of their spokesman who had lost his father only a few months ago to cancer. So it hits home for everybody. But what was amazing was, in that room, there were dozens of people who avail of other services that are provided by supports from government, not-for-profit agencies, church groups and all of that who were willing to do their part to ensure somebody else had a better quality of life depending on the challenges they had.

It brings your faith back in humanity. It brings your faith back in young people that we're in a good place. If we can keep these young people well educated, if we can keep them positive but, particularly, if we can keep them in Newfoundland and Labrador with choices. If they choose to go, that's fine. There's nothing

wrong with wanting to spread your wings, being worldly and seeing the other things that are out there but if we can find ways to ensure that they have choices – and that's what everybody in this House sets out to do from the day we get in here, to ensure that the young people that we serve have more choices than we did and have the option to do things that we never would have thought existed. That was a privilege to be part of that and to see so many things positive in our society.

Then, I had the privilege on Saturday – as part of the ending of Mental Health Week – to go to St. Michael's high school on Bell Island. There's a group over there called Heal Bell Island. We have some challenges on Bell Island with mental health, like every community does. We have some challenges with addictions, like every community does. But we may have a little bit more challenging situations because we're isolated, we're on an island and there are some restrictions. We've had some economic challenges over the last number of years.

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

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

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

This organization held it's first ever Heal Bell Island Mental Health and Addictions Information fair. I thought when they sent an invitation to me, I said that's great, we'll get a couple of groups from Bell Island who try to do their part to ensure that services are available would show up. I was amazed when I got there. I went and I set up my little table – I guess I was invited as the MHA; a chance to mingle and say a few words. But I brought some information that I thought might be pertinent because I wasn't quite sure who would show up. I sort of dabbled and grabbed a little bit of everybody's. But my table was sort of a mishmash of everybody else who was in the room, which to me was positive, which to me was great.

They didn't need me to try to pick and choose what's in a brochure or what it means, or here's the contact you should have. They had tables with counsellors from everything from AA and Al-Anon, you had it from Choices for Youth, you had it from Thrive, you had it from

CHANNAL. You had medical professionals with tables set up there. The Pharmacists' Association set up there. Eastern Health had their tables there, In Good Hands, Let's Talk Cannabis.

So you're talking about just some of these agencies – and I'll name a number of other ones that were there – but just looking at knowing that addictions and mental health just doesn't stop or start with one organization. It's a collaborative approach to particular issues that people face and nuances in anybody's life that may need to be addressed differently.

Sometimes there might be a collaboration of five or six agencies that provide certain parts of services that provide people with the supports they need to be able to get control of their life, to be able to move things forward and be able to be more productive in society. They're some of the ones: Planned Parenthood was there, SHOP, as I mentioned earlier SPIRIT Horse Stable Life was there, SWAP was there, Canadian Mental Health had theirs there, Unity in the Community was there – a multitude of other groups – Al-Anon supports were there. There was a great opportunity for people to mingle around.

I was extremely impressed with the RCMP. Two young constables, one who had just gotten stationed at Bell Island, came in full regalia but with a table full of every piece of information. It's amazing how our police forces have taken the stake in mental health and addictions. It's not just about enforcing the law – and I compliment them for this – it's about being proactive. The cliché we used to hear years ago about community policing, this is true community policing at its best.

They had a whole table of all kinds of information. No doubt, they were perhaps the biggest draw for the young people and adults. While it was in the school, there were as many adults who showed up. Some who were struggling with addictions and would tell you, some who you know are already on Suboxone or methadone clinics back and forth who had some real challenges in there, and at times found it hard to stay in certain areas when they were talking about their challenges and what they ran into, and how they've relapsed over the course of the year.

I had a discussion with one young lady who's after four times being in rehab, but still acknowledges she needs to find a way. She just can't beat it. Sometimes it's because she ends up back in a society where just as she's getting enough positive control of her life, there are bad influences that take her to the dark side then. The acknowledgement and the supports in that room were amazing.

Right next to my table was the organization Turnings. We all know what Ron Fitzpatrick and Dan McGettigan and them have been doing in our justice system and around addictions. We had a great conversation about our justice system. I do give accolades; they talked very highly of the Minister of Justice who is aware and cognizant of trying to improve some of the things.

They did have a real challenge with Her Majesty's Penitentiary. We've all accepted the fact that it's a powder keg about to explode. I know everybody has done everything they can to try to improve the situation but we're limited on the age of the facility, the size of the facility, the number of inmates we have. We had a great conversation about: can we use some other facility? Is there a way to use Salmonier Line or Whitbourne to be able to offset some of the issues that are down at the Penitentiary with the numbers, because even in a counselling service these people need to have proper space to do proper counselling?

They're telling me there's a size, half the size of this room and you have 40 inmates, 40 men in most cases, having to congregate in that and there could be challenges between them. It's hard for them as counsellors to be able to find a way to be able to do things to keep people in a manner where they can identify what kind of service they need and keep it so it achieves its goal of what it was meant to do but at the same time does what it's meant to do, address people's challenges and look at better ways of rehabilitation.

They had some good conversations. I did say I will have a conversation with the minister when the time is right and have a chat around, are there other facilities? Are there other ways we can better utilize existing bricks and mortars that we already paid for, that are paid off that would



be useable so that programs and services for certain individuals could be better accessed or better provided by these agencies?

I don't think we need to invent any more services. I think we have the people, we have the expertise. We already have the proven history to be able to do it. We just need to be able to find a mechanism to be able to make that more effective. These are things that this agency had talked not only to me but talked to a number of other people at the time.

I will note that the Leader of the Third Party did attend for part of the afternoon and we had a good conversation with a lot of the providers there about the services they offer. We had a discussion with some of them about some of the shortfalls. Obviously, some of it is about resources. We realize that, but they all did admit that information, fears like that, even gives them an opportunity to talk to each other.

I had some information there on Thrive and Choices for Youth, and the Planned Parenthood delegation came over talking to me. Some of the information I shared, they even weren't aware of. Information they said would be ideal for some of the clientele they deal with, because they deal with them also that come in that have a multitude of other challenges. I think there's a way we can collaborate that.

The more we spread information out there and the more we find dialogue about the agencies that have it, and the more they find the commonalities, the easier it is to do it. It's almost like the one-stop shopping, but I realize every organization has their ability to do it. Somewhere along the way I think government has a responsibility to be able to figure, how do you coordinate that? How do you support the coordination? The coordination makes it much easier for people to be provided with the services they need.

I said it earlier and I said it 10 years ago when I started in politics, I said it 20 years ago when I was a civil servant, we don't need to create a lot of new programs, because we have so many experienced people in this province. We have so many good programs developed. We've initiated a lot of them that are now national and international programs and services, particularly

around youth at risk and some of the challenges they face. We just need to come back and find a better way to get back to doing what we're good at, coordinating those efforts. We've got some great organizations out there that are doing it, and I just mentioned some of them.

I particularly talk about Thrive St. John's, a wing of the Community Youth Network, which we have nearly 40 sites in Newfoundland and Labrador that are in some small, remote areas. They're in various parts of Labrador doing great work. We have them all throughout different parts of the Island. Could we use 40 more? Of course we could, very much so.

At least the coordination among those organizations dictates that they're similar programs and services. If one part of the organization identifies a challenge that may not have hit another community but it can help prepare that community for it, collectively they try to come up with a solution; if it means pooling resources, if it means pooling training, if it means partnering with another agency.

We have a multitude of abilities to do things here. Sometimes all we need to do as a government, or as Members of the House of Assembly, is outline a support process here. I think we have some line departments here that have that capability. Education has quite an ability to do that, because it also has arm's-length support mechanisms through the school districts. Health definitely has that, because it has a multitude through the regional health authorities, but also to the other agencies they support. We have the ability to do that.

Other line departments; the department of innovation, trade, rural development has that ability to be able to do that. Child, youth and family services – or seniors and well-being have those abilities because of the partnerships they have developed. We just have to find a way to collaborate more between line departments so they can support all those agencies that are out there.

So that was uplifting. I spent five hours with the groups going around. It was amazing. I have to first congratulate the organizers. It was their first annual, and there's no doubt it will continue. Like everything that's positive, it will grow and

more people will see the benefits of it. More people will support it, more will reap the benefits. The end result is more – we hope – will have a better quality of life and will be able to deal with some of the challenges they have. So that was amazing to see.

I just assumed everybody were paid staff. I went over, and these were volunteers who have other careers, who took their whole day on Saturday to pack up early in the morning, to go down and wait for the ferry to get on, to go to Bell Island, spend five hours in a gymnasium, finish and come back. There are some agencies that have paid staff, but a lot of these agencies are volunteer boards or coordinators. There were a couple there who were work-term students, unpaid work-term students who were part and parcel of it. So there are a lot of great things going on in this province, but we just need to be able to foster that and continue it.

A couple of years ago – I say that, I have to lead in because the thing about what I said before, 2016, we had some real challenges, budget-wise, population-wise, we felt things were going to wrong way, we're sending the wrong message; 2017, we didn't really correct the ship, but we didn't make it any worse; 2018, we're trying to correct certain things, but we're still far way from being able to do that properly. So we need to be able to ensure to people, listen, stick with us. I say stick us, stick with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, there's light at the end of the tunnel.

To do that, it's only so often or so long certain organizations can do that before they start to falter too. One of the challenges was the amounts of money that were cut to, particularly, youth organizations. There are a number of them that are still challenged by losing some of their core funding, not having some stability in their core funding.

I know the government had brought in a new process of core funding for periods of time, but I was amazed when I asked this question only Friday, the Community Youth Networks – it's ironic, because they were the ones that got core funding and multi-year core funding, when multi-year core funding and core funding didn't exist as a title. It was exclusive to them, only

because it stabilized their ability to leverage 10 times their budgets.

They're one of the largest organizations here who do a multitude of services and they, every year, have to go through the same process. So that's a bit bewildering and I've asked for some more information on that, and actually got a call from one of the staff who was going to give me some information about the process. I have to get my head around – because where it's not my responsibility from a critic role, but I'm going to be talking to my critic, I need to know exactly how this multi-year funding process works and what agencies fit and don't fit. Agencies that have larger programs and services, I would have thought would have fit easily. Carve off that block of money, put that there, you know that's stable money and it becomes part and parcel of where things move forward.

I did meet with one organization on Friday afternoon, and I can remember being part of their organization some 20-years ago, and core funding – their first staff – 100 per cent of their core funding was what we at the time, government at the time, has supplied to them.

They've gone from one staff to 157 staff today. This is a not-for-profit organization ran by a volunteer board whose budget, right now, their core funding, from what was originally core funding, is 4.5 per cent of their full budget line. So that tells me – talk about a good investment.

We have agencies who are leveraging 100 times the investment that we were given as a government and it may be from other line departments, it's from foundations, it's from federal and municipal partners out there, it's from all kinds of philanthropists for servicing; but, particularly, what we have here is an agency that has become, not only qualified but become the elite specialist in a particular field and being able to do that.

The plans now they have, like we all would think: How do they expand their services to other parts of this great province of ours? How do they make sure that every young person who has a challenge has an access to a particular piece of information, if they choose that? Or even if they don't choose to do it, how do we try to get the information to try to bring them into

the fold, to have a better shot at being able to be more productive?

There are some challenges around some of those issues that were going on. It bewildered me a little bit how agencies like that haven't been able to get what's considered core funding. But that wasn't their agenda item; that was my agenda item. When I learned that, it was just a little bewildering and I will eventually find out exactly what's on the go. But the compliment here is to those agencies that are doing great work.

We need to find another way. There are 20 of those agencies out there. How do we partner with them to ensure that they're stable, that they offer their core supports and services, but they start to expand by being able to ensure that they've got supports from government?

We talk about \$3 billion in health care – and I just use health care as one of the examples. If we could carve off a small proportion – and I'm talking immensely small – to concentrate on a couple of other organizations that we know have the ability, not only to provide 20 fold the services but leverage tenfold the money we're investing, I think from an economy of scale, from a good business plan, from a good investment plan, it's the route to go.

We need to be able to foster that a bit more. And that's easy – by picking the two or three examples we got and saying: How did you leverage that? What supports did you get from government agencies? How can we put a particular process or template in play that ensures it makes it easier for those other organizations that can do the same things that you guys are doing to make this viable and fluent?

It will be an opportunity to have and I think I will ask a few questions over the next number of weeks around that process so I get a better understanding. It's not that we're attacking anybody or saying this is not a good process; I just want to know is there a way that it can be expanded. Maybe it's there for these organizations; they just haven't accessed it. We need to find that out because, at the end of the day, if we're going to be successful in this province and we know we have a small tax base

and we can only tax to a certain degree, why can't we find a better way to utilize the return on our investment? That's one of the things –

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** So going back again – and I'd be remiss if I didn't because there's one thing that still is bothering me from the 2016 budget. It's because I guess I have a personal stake in it from that time, seeing the benefit, because it started a whole world.

It was only the other day I was in my office and I saw this plaque on the wall presented to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador from the Canadian Tire Jumpstart. The plaque read: For taking the lead in Canada and being the first corporate citizen to sign on to the Canadian Jumpstart foundation. We were. Talk about visionary.

This all happened by a chance meeting at the opening of the Canadian Tire store in Mount Pearl, from the Boys and Girls Club who was invited – and I happened to be on the board at the time but was a civil servant – and their senior Atlantic Canada manager talking about the owner Martha Billes, 91 years old, owns Canadian Tire 100 per cent hers. Her father and uncle started it back in the '20s. She stayed with the company and eventually bought it off the shareholders only a number of years ago.

She wanted to give back and set up some kind of a foundation so they saw it and looked at it: Canadian Tire Jumpstart. She wanted to find a way of how to make that work, how it would benefit young people getting engaged in sports, physical activity, positive role models and these types of things. She had noted out there that she'd like to do it. At the same time, in my role at the time, I was instructed that there was \$100,000 to go to Corner Brook to set up a similar program as the REAL Program here in the City of St. John's; wanted to do that.

When I spoke to the premier of the day and I said: Premier, \$100,000 – by the time you hire a staff person, by the time you get an office, support staff and travel, you might have \$10,000 for programs and services, minimum. Very little

benefit if anything on your return. Optics might look good until people get frustrated that you haven't really provided any. I did say: But there's an agency or a national corporation who is willing and has this program in play that would not only take that money and probably give you four or five fold, but they'll administer it all.

They'll set up volunteer agencies all through the province; they'll pay for all of that. They'll do all of that. They'll use their buying leverage power to benefit agencies such as gymnastics, hockey and figure skating to ensure kids not only are involved with the best equipment, but then they'll leverage from that organization that if we buy a spot for two kids who can't afford to be in there, you must give us three in addition. There was a whole partnership, talk about marvelous.

I was given the go ahead to sit. We sat and we discussed it with them. That \$100,000 was allocated as the first investment. As that went, every other province bought in. The federal government bought in, all kinds of other philanthropists bought in. That organization now is spending somewhere in the vicinity of \$30 million a year in programs and services; in Newfoundland and Labrador, they were spending over \$1.7 million. When it was cut out, it was \$325,000 that was allocated for the Government of Newfoundland. They were spending – directly, cash in hand – over \$1.5 million but they were leveraging nearly another \$2 million worth of services the way they developed their partnerships.

Talk about an investment, talk about the programs. Any Member here who has citizens, young people in their communities know they'll availed of the Jumpstart program and what that meant for them to be in soccer, figure skating, gymnastics and any other programs. It wasn't only just them. They even expanded to some of the arts so that people could be engaged. If you see the commercials, they are second to none of what that means about setting the example for young people in this great country of ours.

I was disappointed. To this day, I'm still disappointed every time I look at that plaque and I can't understand – minimal amount. I can only assume the decision to cut it was made without

somebody understanding not only what that program does and the benefits, so they must have talked to nobody in the field – they had 10 regional councils made up of all volunteers who represented all the agencies. These would municipalities, recreation commissions, organizations, provincial and regional, part of that process.

It was a bit disappointing. I'm going to keep asking if somebody could go back, review that and have a look at why a minimal investment – Jumpstart is still there, ready to go and invest in Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, particularly young people, in every aspect of recreation and sport, but particularly in every geographic location of this province.

Mr. Speaker, on that note, I'll take my seat and I welcome to get to speak to it again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Seeing no further speakers, the motion is that the report of the Social Services Estimates Committee be concurred in.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

On motion, Report of Social Services Estimates Committee, carried.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, given the hour of the day I would move, seconded by the hon. the Member for Burin - Grand Bank, that the House do now adjourn.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

This House now stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

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