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HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Ross Wiseman, MHA

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12 November 2013

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): Order, please!

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I stand on a point of privilege.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member, on a point of privilege.

MR. A. PARSONS: In this House, Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, Nov. 7, the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island stood and apologized in this House for a breach of the Code of Conduct.

Shortly thereafter, within the hour, the member gave an interview in the next room and said, and I quote: I did not apologize to the people of the Province because I feel I have not done anything against them. You know, I find it hard to apologize for being active, doing nothing wrong, doing nothing.

Mr. Speaker, such conduct to me is an affront to what we do in this House and an affront to all members and the people in which we represent. Again, I would remind that this is the people's House.

A finding of contempt falls under the umbrella of privilege, in that it is an affront to the dignity and authority of Parliament which may not fall under a specifically defined privilege. The House has a right to punish as a contempt, any action which may not be a specific breach, but tends to instruct or impede members of the House in the discharge of their duties, or is an offence to the dignity of the House, including disobedience of legitimate commands.

The logic or rationale behind this is that the House should be able to protect themselves from acts which directly or indirectly impede the House from their functions.

I would say the House has wide latitude in maintaining its dignity and authority through the exercise of contempt power. Going through

O'Brien and Bosc, the Speakers have acted in breach of an order of the House in the past.

It is our position that an apology in this House, as was ordered, is to be clear and unequivocal. However, to follow that apology in this House, the people's House, with comments made to the public at large via broadcast media saying you are not sorry and you did nothing wrong would seem to indicate that the apology was fake and disingenuous and, therefore, contempt of this House.

I have the Hansard here from the day, Thursday, November 7, and I have commentary from the Government House Leader, which we echoed in our comments, "I would hope that the public would have respect for this House of Assembly and for the people in here in seeing that we are taking the issue very seriously, all members here, and that we are holding one of our own members accountable for the actions that have occurred."

My commentary that day was, "Any breach, even when by a sole member, affects every single one of us..." and that we would have to treat this matter very seriously.

It is our position that to stand in this House on one day and to make an apology which is supposed to be unequivocal and clear, an apology to the members of this House, to the House itself, to the Speaker of the House, and to the people in which we represent, and then to walk outside and to say just the opposite to the public at large shows that the apology was not that at all; and that, therefore, is contempt of this House.

Therefore, we would ask that you find the member in contempt, and I would ask that you forward the motion, if a prima facie case of contempt is found, to the House Committee on Privileges and Elections.

MR. SPEAKER: Are there any further comments to the point of privilege?

Points of privilege are taken seriously by the House, and should be taken seriously by all of us

as members of the House. The House is going to take a brief recess to review the submission made, and we will adjourn for a few moments while we have a review of the submission that we just heard.

This House stands recessed.

Recess

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Opposition House Leader has raised a point of privilege with respect to the conduct of a member of this House. It is a significant issue that has been raised. As I have said earlier, points of privilege are taken very seriously by the House.

A couple of things that have been raised in that point of order require a significant amount of research, I believe, before I am in a position to render a decision. There is a reference to an interview that was done outside of this House. I want some time to review more clearly and more closely the content of that interview, and then to review the transcript of Hansard from Thursday of last week in the context of that interview.

I am going to suggest to the House that we continue with the proceedings of the day and give the Speaker an opportunity to review it much closer and report at a later time.

MR. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island have leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: By leave.

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

MR. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, I apologize to this House, unequivocally.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

I just want to be clear for the House; the Opposition House Leader has raised a point of privilege. As I understand, the request was that the Speaker consider the point of privilege and determine, firstly, whether there is a prima facie case of breach of privilege; and, secondly, should I determine that there is, that the matter be referred to the Committee of Privileges and Elections. That will dispose of the point of privilege at that point.

I acknowledge the member's comment; however, it does not dispose of the point of privilege being raised. As I said earlier, I will take it under advisement, consider the issues referred, and look at the transcript of the interview that was with one of the media outlets, and report back to the House at a later date.

Thank you.

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we will have members' statements from: the Member for the District of Harbour Main; the Member for the District of Port de Grave; the Member for the District of Bay of Islands; the Member for the District of St. John's North; the Member for the District of Mount Pearl South; and the Member for the District of Bonavista South.

The hon. the Member for the District of Harbour Main.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HEDDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On October 26, 2013 I had the honour and the privilege to attend the Brigus Volunteer Fire Department dinner and dance at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 65 in Brigus.

Mr. Speaker, it was an opportunity to thank the firefighters and their auxiliary for another successful year providing protection to the citizens of Brigus and surrounding areas.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I had the great pleasure during this event to recognize the contribution of

firefighter Ken Broughton on achieving thirty-five years of volunteer fire service.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Broughton has given unselfishly of his time to fire and emergency training, responding to emergencies such as residential and commercial fires, to highway traffic accidents, and volunteering within the community and surrounding communities to promote and raise awareness of this protection.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating Mr. Ken Broughton on his thirty-five years of volunteer service with the Brigus Volunteer Fire Department.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Port de Grave.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand today in this House to recognize Zoe Wilkins, a former student of Ascension Collegiate, Bay Roberts who was the latest winner of the Lester B. Pearson Scholarship for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Zoe was selected on the basis of academic achievement, her volunteer activities, and her character. Lester B. Pearson is one of the ten United World Colleges located in Victoria, British Columbia. The school dedicates itself to international understanding by creating an environment in which students from many different cultures and countries come together to study and serve their community.

In selecting Zoe they noted her involvement in her school community highlighted by her election as Vice-President of the Student Council and a member of the school math team. A dedicated volunteer both in school and in the community, Zoe performs with two community-based choirs and bands, and, Mr. Speaker, in her

spare time teaches violin to a group of young students.

Zoe will graduate in two years and will receive the world-respected International Baccalaureate Diploma, which replaces the twelfth grade and university freshman year throughout North America.

I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating Zoe Wilkins as she embarks on this prestigious educational experience.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Minnie Vallis of Meadows, a well-known volunteer and advocate who passed away on July 26 at the age of eighty.

Minnie's volunteer service over the years was exemplary. She was involved with many groups, including the Girl Guides, Transition House, Hospital Board, Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities, and the Meadows 50 Plus Club. She also served on the Meadows town council for fourteen years, both as a councillor and later as Mayor. Minnie was also a passionate advocate for seniors, the disabled, and caregivers.

Never one to shy away from a challenge, Minnie faced one of her biggest challenges in 1992 when she suffered a double brain aneurism and had to relearn basic life skills including reading and writing, but she never let that slow her down.

Minnie's volunteer work was recognized many times over the years. She received the Lieutenant Governor's Volunteer Award, the Queen's Jubilee medal, and the provincial Seniors of Distinction Award. In 2010, Minnie was presented with an honorary Doctor of Laws degree at the Grenfell Campus fall convocation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing the tremendous contribution Minnie Vallis made to her community and, indeed, the Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, I stand in the House today to honour Silver Cross representative Natasha Lucas, her son Matthew, and daughter Mackenzie, who yesterday laid a wreath of remembrance at the Remembrance Day ceremony at the National War Memorial in St. John's.

Their husband and father, Sergeant Donald Lucas, was one of six Canadian soldiers who were tragically killed after a roadside bomb exploded near them in Afghanistan on April 8, 2007. This tragic incident also claimed a life of another Newfoundlander and Labradorian, Private Kevin Kennedy of St. Lawrence.

Sergeant Lucas, whose parents, Ella and Fred, reside in the District of St. John's North, started his military career with the Royal Newfoundland Regiment before transferring to 2nd Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment, based at Canadian Forces Base Gagetown in New Brunswick. He has been described by his fellow soldiers as a charismatic leader who often spoke of his love for his wife and his children.

Silver Cross representatives symbolize those left behind by the casualties of war. I ask all members to join me in honouring Silver Cross representative Natasha Lucas and the Lucas family. Let us dedicate our work here to all of those who gave so much.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to rise in this hon. House to recognize several outstanding young people in my community.

The Mount Pearl Focus on Youth Awards, held this past May, was a tremendous success and highlighted the great talent, athleticism, and intellectual ability possessed by some very amazing youth.

These individuals included: Mount Pearl Female Youth of the Year, Erin O'Brien; Male Youth of the Year, Tyler Flynn; Youth Volunteer of the Year, Alyssa Milley; Male Youth Athlete of the Year, Colin Hunt; Female Youth Athlete of the Year, Hannah Jardine; Youth Team of the Year, Robyn-Lynn McGrath and Mathew Power; the RNC Youth in Service Award winner, Alexia Spencer; Youth Group of the Year, 1st Mount Pearl Rangers; Performing Arts Individual Award winner, Julia Dunne; Visual Arts Award winner, Laura King; and Literary Arts Award winner, Abigail Newman.

I would ask all members of this hon. House to join me congratulating these young people in their accomplishments.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista South.

MR. LITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to honour Mr. Felix Maloney, resident of Summerville. On October 4, Mr. Maloney was inducted into the Newfoundland and Labrador Volunteer Hall of Fame, being awarded with the lifetime achievement for volunteers.

Mr. Maloney enjoyed a thirty-seven-year teaching career, spent over a decade as a bookkeeper, and has been a Justice of the Peace for many years. With his skills, he became the 'go to' person in the area, with neighbours

asking him to write letters to government, make out a bill of sale, prepare their income tax returns, or fill out employment insurance forms.

Mr. Speaker, Felix has been a member of the local volunteer fire department since 1987 and continues to fundraise for the group. He has been a volunteer member of the local service district since it was formed and currently serves as treasurer. He is deeply committed to his church and parish. He is responsible for organizing a fundraising campaign to restore St. Anne's Roman Catholic Church in Summerville, and has served on the pastoral council for St. Patrick's Parish Church, in Plate Cove, for over forty years.

Mr. Speaker, hon. colleagues, please join me in recognizing Mr. Maloney for his years of dedication and contribution to our great Province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FRENCH: Mr. Speaker, the First World War was a defining time in the history of Newfoundland and Labrador. Our Province's role in the Great War is a story of courage, perseverance and pride built on the backs of men and women who signed up for service in droves to answer the call both at home and abroad.

With the 100 anniversary of the First World War approaching in 2014, I was honoured to join our Premier at Government House last week as more than \$3.6 million was announced for *Honour 100*, an initiative that will pay homage to the sacrifices made by our veterans. Our Premier spoke personally of the profound effect of visiting the memorials to our soldiers at places

like Beaumont-Hamel and Monchy-le-Preux, and reiterated our commitment to commemorate Newfoundland and Labrador's First World War story.

Mr. Speaker, we have organized our First World War commemorations planning into five pillars: Anniversaries, Legacy, Education, Provincial Outreach, and Research and Development. Over the coming months, we will be announcing a series of initiatives under each of these pillars. We will co-ordinate a number of events focusing on the reformation of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, the march of the First Five Hundred to the Florizel, the contributions of the Women's Patriotic Association who gathered at the ballroom at Government House to knit socks for the men who served in the Newfoundland Regiment, and the arrival home of the soldiers in 1919.

Mr. Speaker, we will renew our relationship with the communities connected to each of the key battles involving the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, and will work with our partners to commemorate the centennial anniversaries beginning in 2016 through to 2018.

It is our government's hope that *Honour 100* will put the bravery and the sacrifices of the First World War at the forefront of our thinking, and help us continue to understand the debt we owe so we can bestow the honour and respect they so rightly deserve.

The upcoming centennial period will present a unique opportunity to reconnect Newfoundlanders and Labradorians with their past and help remember the sacrifices made by honouring our veterans, past and present. It will help ensure that the legacy of these brave men and women, to whom we owe so much, is acknowledged and remembered as significant to the character and identity of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy.

Once again, we see this is a great initiative on the government to bring forward to recognize the veterans and the great sacrifices that many have made over the years, Mr. Speaker.

I just attended a fundraiser in Corner Brook for the statues in Corner Brook. The next thing they are going to raise is the memorial tree that in Beaumont-Hamel, where the brave soldiers were trying to get up the enemy lines, there is one tree that was there. They were all rushing for the tree, the only way to get around the wire. That is where most of the Newfoundlanders lost their lives.

At the time, Mr. Speaker, they did not realize how important and significant it would be. To bring back all of this and to help to recognize all of our past history is a great feat, and it is a great thing the government is bringing forth because we all need this connection. I know in Curling, on Monument Hill, there is a War Memorial there. There is one in Lark Harbour. All throughout, we are all touched.

Mr. Speaker, on my behalf, and I am sure all the people on their behalf, we say great job. It is great that you are recognizing the sacrifices that the men and women made in the Great War. Congratulations, and anything we can do to help out, to help with this recognition, we are definitely included in that.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

Honour 100 is about commemorating the great, great sacrifices of many who gave so much so that we could all live in a fair and just society. Archivists are absolutely crucial in any successful commemoration. The last budget cut from our archives three archivist positions, including the only conservator. Our archives may be the only in the country without a conservator and already the work is backlogged.

Honour 100 will be handling thousands of valuable, precious artifacts that require the expertise of a conservator and archivist. These cutbacks were short sighted and must be reversed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. the Member for St. John's North have leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: By leave.

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

MR. KIRBY: Thanks to the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

I have had the privilege myself of visiting the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial in France and it is as stirring an experience as I expect one can have.

I also want to commend the Patten Family Foundation and Elinor Gill Ratcliffe for their generous contributions to the exhibit that will commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the First World War and the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works and Minister Responsible for Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this hon. House to acknowledge and celebrate an important milestone for the Miawpukek First Nation in assuming responsibility for its people.

I had the honour of participating in a ceremony held in Conne River last week, joining the hon. Bernard Valcourt, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development and Chief Misel Joe, of Miawpukek First Nation, to sign a Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle.

Mr. Speaker, this Agreement-in-Principle is an important achievement in signaling the beginning of final agreement negotiations and moving Miawpukek First Nation closer to self-government; providing greater flexibility and control in the development and delivery of programs and services, in a manner best suited to the Mi'kmaq culture and values.

Miawpukek developed and refined its vision for self-government based on extensive community consultations that took place throughout the negotiation process. As a self-governing First Nation, Miawpukek First Nation will provide for political and fiscal accountability in any constitution drafted in accordance with the eventual final agreement.

Upon conclusion of a final agreement, Miawpukek First Nation will be able to assume greater control over the conduct of its own affairs through the exercise of jurisdiction in several subject areas such as culture and language, education and social development, child and family services, health, land management and resource management.

Mr. Speaker, the jurisdictions set out in the Agreement-in-Principle will eventually allow the Miawpukek First Nation to better maintain and promote its linguistic, cultural, and historic traditions.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador strongly believes in the Aboriginal people of the Province taking control of their own destinies and this agreement marks a significant step forward for the Miawpukek First Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating the Miawpukek First Nation on this historic step forward towards self-government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Mr. Speaker, we, too, wish to congratulate the Miawpukek and both levels of government on developing an Agreement-in-Principle. This is a good first step, but much work remains and all levels of government must co-operate to reach a final agreement.

Mr. Speaker, we must remember that the Inuit of Labrador, Nunatsiavut, took thirty-five-plus years to reach final agreement, and the Innu Nation are thirty-plus years and counting as they strive towards a final agreement. We hope it will not take this long for the Miawpukek and its 2,500 off and on reserve members to reach final agreement.

Mr. Speaker, the Qalipu people are now undergoing a rigorous qualification process that we hope will be resolved in the near future. Congratulations to the Miawpukek First Nation for reaching this important milestone in their efforts to obtain self-government.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Congratulations to Chief Misel Joe and all involved in getting to this point. Conne River is a thriving, healthy community with leadership that has put its people first – an example for our own government.

They have developed a community-based government focusing on housing, care for seniors, education, and a sustainable economic development based on community needs and benefits. Our government has a lot to learn from what is being done in Conne River.

Bravo Chief Misel Joe and the people of the Miawpukek First Nation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Member for The Straits – White Bay North have leave?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. This is a commendable model for maintaining tradition, education, and social and economic development that is driven by First Nations. I certainly congratulate this step towards self-government for the people of Conne River.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, the consumer advocate in Nova Scotia is speaking out against the Muskrat Falls Project. John Merrick said the latest agreement to import additional electricity from Muskrat Falls is not good enough to make Nova Scotians pay for the Maritime Link.

I ask the Premier: What happens to the federal loan guarantee and the financing of Muskrat

Falls if your deal with Emera of Nova Scotia falls through?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, the federal loan guarantee was announced by the Prime Minister of Canada, our Premier, and the Premier of Nova Scotia on November 30, 2012. Mr. Speaker, that was a great day for the Province, a great day of successful work by our Premier and our government to ensure that we had a federal loan guarantee that would ultimately mean \$1 billion for the people of this Province – \$1 billion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Through that process, there are a number of conditions precedent that have been outlined by the federal government that we collectively continue to work towards so that we can secure the federal loan guarantee and move on with this project.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Obviously, the minister could not answer the question, but that is fine, we understand you are just new at the job.

Mr. Speaker, in one of the filings with the UARB, the board's consultants said that Nalcor, in order to satisfy Emera's demands, will build additional wind or water power facilities to increase their firm energy production.

I ask the Premier: If building additional power plants is all a part of your deal with Emera, why have you not presented any details or costs for these additional plants?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question, and I understand the member does not truly understand all the details, because he too is new on the job.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, the UARB are going through a process to look at compliance filing where we are going to have an opportunity to do a win-win good business deal with Nova Scotia, where we can sell our excess power, and they can have access to excess power. The UARB are looking at those conditions, and others, Mr. Speaker, are certainly in support of the compliance filing that we have made and we certainly look forward to a positive ruling.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, at least I know my limitations, and Muskrat Falls is not yours, I can assure you of that.

Mr. Speaker, if building new power plants in our Province is required to meet conditions placed by Nova Scotia, these plants are part of a larger Muskrat Falls Project and their details should be available.

I ask the Premier: Why did you exclude the cost of these power plants from your Muskrat Falls budget and from the review of your consultant, Manitoba Hydro?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, so we are clear, in all the work and all the research that has been done, and all the experts, Muskrat Falls has been determined to be the least-cost option for us to provide power to the Newfoundlanders and Labradorians well into the future. Regardless of

what rhetoric, what questions, or what direction the member opposite wants to take us in, it is the least-cost option, Mr. Speaker.

Any potential, Mr. Speaker, to build other power generation facilities that the member is referring to, the likelihood of that happening – to be quite frank, I asked the question. The likelihood of that happening where we would go outside of our firm power and get into our non-firm power, Mr. Speaker, we would have to do without rain or snow for twenty-four years in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, anybody who is doing an analysis of a project would have that included in case we need it, which they are now making a commitment to Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, government invested nearly \$600,000 into the Humber Valley Regional Planning Advisory Authority to develop a land use plan for the region.

I ask the minister: Can you provide an update of the authority's work and when the report will be finalized and made public?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, my Department of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs is very interested in ensuring that there are regional plans in place in a number of regions in this Province. The process involved in land use planning is a lengthy one. It is a complex one. We are working actively with the regions that currently have a plan and the ones that are in the process of developing those plans.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, obviously the minister has no idea of what he is talking about, absolutely no idea.

Mr. Speaker, an ATIPP request shows that the last payment to the Town of Pasadena for the authority's work was made April, 2011 – over two years. Residents have been waiting for the committee's report for more than two years.

I ask the minister: Can you confirm if this report will have any legislative authority over municipalities in the region or is this just another \$600,000 fiasco by this government?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, when we talk about land use planning issues in various regions of the Province, it is really important that we work under the Urban and Rural Planning Act to ensure the process is carried out correctly. In any regional planned amendment, for instance, there are four decision points that I must deal with as minister responsible every time there is any kind of amendment.

In terms of this particular report, my understanding is it is a draft report and further consideration is required. We are very committed to working with the partners in each region of the Province to further develop the regional plans that are in process.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier this weekend says that she is launching a campaign to acknowledge the innovation of our young people and small businesses. She used the example of a group of young people designing a smart meter for measuring energy in Ontario.

I ask the Premier: If you are now promoting innovation in our energy sector, why did you pass Bill 61 last year forbidding energy innovation in our Province for fifty years?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a hat trick today, Mr. Speaker, in terms of questions coming from members of the Opposition, one, two, three wrong. In terms of what I talked about in this Province on the weekend, it was celebrating the innovation of our business leaders and our industries here in this Province. We spend a lot of time talking about energy, and that is a good thing. We spend a lot of time talking about the fishery, and that is a good thing, too, but there are a lot of other things going on in this Province and it is time to celebrate it.

In terms of Bill 61, Mr. Speaker, we are just saying that Nalcor has to be the lead on energy development. It does not prevent it from forming partnerships with people who bring good ideas to the table.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, what we do know is that there is going to be very little choice in this Province for fifty years based on a power purchase agreement, which will be required for the federal loan guarantee. Mr. Speaker, the facts are clear. The Premier and her government passed Bill 61 with Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, a monopoly to supply, distribute, and sell electricity in our Province. This bill prevents any innovation to our electricity energy industry for fifty years and forces residents and businesses to buy Muskrat Falls power.

I ask the Premier: How does giving Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro exclusive rights to electricity in our Province encourage any innovation by others in this sector?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the MHA for Humber Valley is completely wrong in what he says. It does not prevent innovation. It does not prevent Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro or Nalcor for entering into partnerships with innovators around energy.

What we have found through our research, and it has been well documented and well discussed here in the House of Assembly, Mr. Speaker, is that Muskrat Falls is the cheapest alternative for power generation in this Province. It is a good project, good for us, good for the region, and good for the country.

Mr. Speaker, they have not been able to propose an alternative on the other side that makes sense if we do not do Muskrat.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, it was a dairy farmer on the West Coast who came forward with a proposal, and we all know where that went.

Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro is proposing in 2014 a capital budget of \$151 million, almost double what their budget was in 2012 and more than five times what it was in 2004.

I ask the Premier: Why is Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro's capital budget expanding at such an alarming rate?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said here in this House many, many times, as a utility Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro is highly prized by the people of this Province. So much so that when an attempt was made to privatize the company some years ago, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians rose up and came into the streets to prevent it from happening.

Mr. Speaker, they do not do that to have a big company or to grow their company because there is more profit into it for them. They do what is necessary, replacing transmission that is worn out, increasing transmission where it is necessary.

Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro has a regulated rate of return that is set by the Public Utilities Board. Whether their capital budget is large or small does not make any difference to the return to the company at the end of the year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

MR. BALL: It is certainly not like Emera's situation where their return on their capital does make a difference to ratepayers as you know, and here in our Province, too. Mr. Speaker, as Hydro's annual budget continues to grow at alarming rates, they are proposing a 74 per cent increase to industrial consumers and a 25 per cent increase for most people in Labrador.

I ask the Premier: How do you expect any industrial growth in our Province by raising energy rates here while offering discounted rates to the people in Nova Scotia?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Emera is a privately-held company with shareholders. Its job is to make money for its people. What we do as a publicly-owned utility, a utility that is owned by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, is provide energy rates at the cheapest rate possible. We are pretty proud of that.

In terms of the work that needs to get done here, it is necessary work, Mr. Speaker. It is a process of refurbishment. Because we are not intent on profit, we ensure that – and we have to ensure because it is the way that the utility is regulated within the Province – any money spent has to be recovered from ratepayers. When you are spending money building a system, operating a system, refurbishing a system, Mr. Speaker, then that is passed on to ratepayers, and we have some of the best rates in Atlantic Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, there have been at least three fires and multiple breakdowns onboard the *Northern Ranger* this year while providing passenger and freight service to Black Tickle in Northern Labrador.

I ask the minister: When will your department issue a Request for Proposals to replace the *Northern Ranger* as a roll-on/roll-off vessel as you have committed to?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are well aware of the issues on the *Northern Ranger*, as well as with other ferries within the government system. Before the end of the year, I am committed that we will

have an RFP out to replace the *Northern Ranger* and the *Apollo*.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, the best case scenario for replacement for the *Northern Ranger* is 2016. People of Labrador will have to live with the huge number of interruptions in service until then. Mr. Speaker, due to lack of maintenance, there will be breakdowns.

I ask the minister: Will you introduce a scheduled plan of action for the next two years to compensate for the anticipated breakdowns on board the *Northern Ranger*?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, since I have gone into the department, one of the things that I have really been working on is putting together that RFP. We are aware of the issues; 2016 is the date that we are hoping to have the new ferries replaced, what we are working with today. I am working now, through the senior officials in my department, to see that we can ensure a safe and reliable service between now and 2016 on the Labrador Coast.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We understand that government has decided that government inspectors are no longer permitted to volunteer their time to inspect floats at the downtown Santa Claus parade. Christmas is a time for giving, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Premier: Is your government really going to prevent inspectors from volunteering their time to ensure that children have a Santa Claus parade? I thought the Grinch was only imaginary.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the work that our officials do in Service NL. The inspection services they carry out throughout the Province, they take very seriously on a day-to-day basis.

I am not aware of the report that the hon. member has brought to the floor here today. I will certainly look into it, Mr. Speaker. I know that our people are on the ground, that our people are on the ground doing their work and wherever there are inspections required, that is where you will find our employees.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

These inspectors volunteer their time to inspect the floats at the Santa Claus parade.

I ask the minister and the Premier: Because your government promotes volunteerism, will you please reinstate the right for these volunteers to inspect the floats?

MR. SPEAKER: I ask the member to direct his comments to the Chair, please.

The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more important to our government than the well-being and safety of Newfoundlanders

and Labradorians, and especially the children of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, there is obviously some collective agreements in place that our inspectors have to follow as part of the protocols, but certainly I would take the member's question under advisement and let him know at a later date.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, on Friday we heard of a Harbour Breton fish plant closing down because they cannot process salmon due to infectious salmon anaemia – 150 jobs gone on top of fifty jobs gone in Harbour Breton just three months ago.

I ask the minister: How many people are actually processing farmed salmon in this Province today?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is certainly an unfortunate situation currently on the South Coast, but it is temporary. The company has been clear that it is business as usual. The impact of the current depopulation order, Mr. Speaker, they will be able to manage that. There will be a temporary layoff from their plant in Harbour Breton.

I do not have the exact number of how many are processing, but we do know that as a result of collectively working with industry and our government's investment that we revitalized the economy on the South Coast, Mr. Speaker.

There have been some ups and downs, but we work closely with industry. We have strong biosecurity in place. We have made good investment, Mr. Speaker. We have a great return on that investment. I am sure the people on the South Coast are certainly very appreciative, Mr. Speaker. This is a temporary shutdown; we fully expect it to ramp up again real soon.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, when the current Fisheries Minister was in Innovation, Business, and Rural Development his department invested in wave technology. In case open containment became unfeasible, it would use this for close containment.

In August, under pressure from the Opposition, the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture sent a delegation to West Virginia to study closed containment.

I ask the minister: Has government learned enough yet to move to closed containment, or are we going to continue to support the boom and bust cycle of economic and financial degradation on the South Coast?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, government has learned enough that in looking at closed containment facilities and looking at whether there is any large-scale closed containment salmon farms around the world, government has learned enough that it does not work. It is not economically viable. It is not feasible, Mr. Speaker. Any attempts have been closed down. We have done that research. I have spoken about it here in the House time and time again

Mr. Speaker, our commitment is to work with the industry, as we have in all facets of the

economy in this Province. If there are new opportunities and there is new technology, we are always there to listen. We want to learn and we want to do all we can to continue to strengthen the economy, particularly the strength of the aquaculture industry, Mr. Speaker.

We are wide open; but, at this point, there is no technology proven to be feasible and viable, and we certainly will not be introducing it on the South Coast of this Province and shut down the aquaculture industry.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BENNETT: Recently the Premier provided a private briefing for a few friends and industry reps before she threw a party at The Rooms in order to give away our processing sector to the Europeans.

Will the Premier provide the contents of the briefing she gave immediately before she announced the giveaway of our processing sector to the Europeans?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, we stand in this House day after day. The member opposite representing the Liberal Party of the Province, the Opposition, day after day tries to find ways to condemn the fishery, to run the fishery down. We had a CETA agreement, one of the best things to happen in our fishery in a long time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: We were able to negotiate \$400 million, Mr. Speaker, to invest in the industry for the future of the industry.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, industry stood shoulder to shoulder with us. The head of the unions and the head of the processing sector greatly applauded the efforts of our Premier and our government to look forward to the benefits of this, and the member opposite continues to try to find ways to disagree with it.

Where does the Liberal Party stand on the fishery? Tell us.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I guess from the answer we are not going to get that briefing.

Mr. Speaker, the current wait time for speech therapy in Clarenville is eighteen months. As of May, there were over 100 children waiting for therapy in Clarenville alone. Early intervention for autism is critical and the incidence of autism is growing. We need a government that is proactive on this issue.

I ask the minister: What action is your department taking to address this unacceptable wait-list?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have invested considerable time and effort into addressing the situation, particularly around autism. For the purposes of the House and in answering the question, I would also like to point out that the Minister of Education and I have formed a new committee to look precisely at these very issues and to see what it is we can do around improving the services we offer.

Mr. Speaker, in the meantime, we still continue to invest considerable money as well, \$10.5 million invested in autism through the ABA program. We are seeing some great results with that, and we will continue to work. We are working with Eastern Health as well to analyze the wait times to see what it is we can do. We are also working –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, obviously the answer to my question was nothing. There is no action being taken.

I asked these questions in April, 2012 and all I got back then was: We are investing money. Again, here we are in November, 2013 and there is still no answer. We asked about the very issue a year and a half ago. There was a twelve to fourteen month wait-list for speech pathology at the Janeway. The minister says she is going to invest. As of June, 2013, the wait-list is thirteen months in St. John's.

I ask the minister: What concrete steps are you taking to get the wait time for therapy down to the recommended four to six months?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, further to that, we have made contact with the University of Toronto where they have some specific expertise in this area, and we are working with that particular university in terms of trying to reduce wait times.

Apart from that, we have hired sixty new full-time allied health professionals since we have been in power to deal with some of the issues,

particularly around autism. Mr. Speaker, that has seen a 29 per cent increase in the number of speech-language pathologists that we have working in the Province right now.

SOME HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!

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

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

Last week, the Minister of Health and Community Services stated that two rapid response teams have been put in place and two more planned to help seniors stay out of the ER by providing home-base supports. I have heard from the minister, and I thank her for getting in touch with me, that this information is not accurate.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Could she please clarify for the House when the rapid response teams will be up and running?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for asking the question again so that I can in fact clarify the information.

What I referred to the last day happened to be the fast track system that we have in place, as opposed to rapid response. In terms of our rapid response teams, Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to work on those. We will have four, as opposed to two, rapid response teams operating in the Province. In fact, the RFPs have gone out and we expect to start the process around hiring very, very soon, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the minister: When exactly do we expect to have the four of them in place, in terms of the fiscal year that we are in?

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

SOME HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the direct answer that she is looking for in terms of exactly when, will be very early in the new year. As I said, the RFP has already gone out. It is currently in place now, and we really hope that very, very early in the new year we will have the teams in place. There will be four teams, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to the two that we originally announced. Those teams will be at the Health Sciences, they will be at St. Clare's, and also there will be a team at Central Newfoundland Regional Health and at Western Memorial.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Stories continue to come out about pregnant women having terrible ER experiences at Eastern Health. The policy of not monitoring and supporting women who are miscarrying at less than twenty weeks has put some women at risk.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: What is she going to do to ensure that women under twenty weeks get the same treatment as other pregnant women?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of miscarriages that we have read about in the paper and that have been brought to the floor of this House of Assembly, obviously, I cannot make any comment on those particular cases. What I can talk about, though, is the protocol that we have in place. This is something that is exceptionally important and it is an issue that we take very, very seriously.

Mr. Speaker, when a pregnant woman reports to the emergency department there are certain protocols in place. If the woman is under twenty weeks the woman is treated. If it is a non-pregnancy related issue she is treated within the ER. If it is determined by people in the ER, being the nurse practitioner or the physician, that the woman needs other treatment, then the woman is referred on to the labour and delivery unit. The initial triage happens in the emergency room.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister has to investigate the fact that the protocol is not working and she has to do something about it.

Mr. Speaker, Labrador West has not had occupational health and safety officers stationed there for three years. In one of the most industrialized areas of the Province, not just mining, but construction and supply industries, it is time to provide more than fly-in and fly-out inspection services.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador: What actions is he going to take to treat this as an urgent situation, not just an ordinary hiring situation?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, we have been through several unsuccessful attempts at recruitment to fill these positions. I said in the House last week there were reasons for this. The labour market in Labrador, we know how hot that is right now. We are not the only government agency or organization that has seen these kinds of difficulties, but we do have people on the ground on a regular basis.

We have twenty-eight officers right throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. They go to high-priority work sites in Labrador. There are work sites in Labrador that are prioritized as high priority, Mr. Speaker. They are up there at least every two to three weeks and often more, depending on conditions.

While our preference is to have people on the ground, Mr. Speaker, right now we are meeting the need, we are meeting the demand, and our people are there on the ground doing the good work that needs to be done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: What would be a non-priority area for him?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, when you look at the metrics for Occupational Health and Safety Branch of government, the number of inspections throughout this Province has gone up phenomenally in the last ten years. The incident rates in the workplace have gone down by 50 per cent since 2003 because of this increase in inspections.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: We are doing the work, Mr. Speaker. The work is getting done. We are

going into priority areas, and we are going into regular workplaces as well, Mr. Speaker, and our metrics and our analysis shows that.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Because of the province-wide housing crisis, seniors across the Province are living in fear of the next rent increase or need to downsize, but cannot, because there is nowhere affordable to go.

I ask the minister: Will he help our seniors with this housing crisis by establishing a seniors' rental assistance program similar to the one in British Columbia?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, Responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Affordable housing is a challenge all across Canada. It is certainly a challenge here in Newfoundland and Labrador. I have to reference, while on my feet here in the House of Assembly today, the great work that is being done by Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. They are continually investing –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: – millions and millions of dollars in housing in this Province, with 2,779 units here in the City of St. John's alone.

I listened to the Deputy Mayor of St. John's last week and he referenced that the challenge is so great that it cannot be solved by just one level of government. We all have to work in partnership

in regard to this challenge, and I will continue to do so as the minister responsible, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre, for a quick question without preamble, please.

MS ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, in 2011 this government promised –

MR. SPEAKER: Without preamble, please.

MS ROGERS: – a home ownership assistance program for low earners. Where is it?

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

MR. O'BRIEN: Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to invest in affordable housing with over doubling our rent supplement program in this Province to \$8 million over the last couple of years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

I want to acknowledge in our gallery today a former MHA, Mr. Sam Winsor, who is joining us.

Welcome, Sir.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion

Notices of Motion

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

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that under Standing Order 11, I shall move that the House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 14, 2013; and further, I give notice under Standing Order 11, I shall move that this House not adjourn at 10:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 14, 2013.

MR. SPEAKER: Answers to Questions for Which Notice has been Given.

The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, I am still in Notices of Motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, I am sorry.

MS SHEA: According to Standing Order 63.(3), we were required to give notice of the private member's motion on Monday, but where the House was closed on Monday, we would like leave to be able to put forward the private member's motion.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been normal practice; yes, please.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista South.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for the District of Port de Grave, the following private member's resolution.

BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House

(1) acknowledges the tremendous importance to Newfoundland and Labrador of the terms of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement-in-Principle, CETA, between Canada and the European Union for which the provincial government successfully advocated, and

(2) supports the decision of the federal and provincial governments to establish a \$400 million fund to improve our fishing industry's

global competitiveness to capitalize more fully on the phenomenal opportunities that CETA will generate for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, the motion, as just put forward by the Member for Bonavista South, will be the motion that will be debated tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, a petition of the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS the marine environment off the Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador supports a diverse ecosystem, a multitude of organisms and species, above and below the ocean, as well as supports social and economic development in our Province; and

WHEREAS our fisheries is a billion-dollar industry and employs over 20,000 people; and

WHEREAS oil leaking out of a sunken paper carrier on the Province's Northeast Coast has been identified as the cause of recently discovered oiled seabirds; and

WHEREAS this sunken vessel has the potential to pose even more serious threat to the marine environment and wildlife, and this threat is

causing concern for many residents, in particular the fish harvesters in the region; and

WHEREAS the provincial government is failing to be proactive and transparent in protecting our marine environment from this catastrophic threat, instead passing complete responsibility on to the federal government;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the provincial government to show accountability and transparency involving the urgent issue of this sunken carrier and its current and potential impact upon our Province by producing a comprehensive joint action plan with the federal government, to immediately extract the remaining oil in the ship so that damage to our ecosystem, fish resources and economy is mitigated before a more catastrophic event occurs.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed primarily by residents of Twillingate, Durrell, New World Island, and these towns that are immediately adjacent to this particular environmental threat. This issue became known and well apparent earlier this year. The provincial government's response seems to be to contact the federal government that sent out a remote operated vehicle and went down and put a patch on the hull of this leaking freighter that has been under the water for thirty or forty years. It is at a depth of 250 feet or so, eighty-odd metres.

We have lost the whole summer season – spring, summer, fall, and now we are going into winter. It simply is not good enough for this government to sit back, do nothing, and not pressure the federal government.

I understand and appreciate that the environment at sea is a federal responsibility; however, the environment is a responsibility for everybody. Why isn't this government pressuring the Stephen Harper government in Ottawa to do something with the environment?

It seems, Mr. Speaker, this government has a one-track mind. That one-track mind is Muskrat Falls. Muskrat Falls, loan guarantees, everything that comes up they want to do nothing to offend the federal government whether it is pressure, whether it is CETA, whatever, whether it is search and rescue –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the member that his time has expired.

MR. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS government has a responsibility to ensure that Internet access is broadly available so people have the right to be able to access the Internet in order to exercise and enjoy their rights to freedom of expression and opinion and other fundamental human rights; and

WHEREAS Bide Arm was bypassed under the Broadband for Rural and Northern Development initiative, which saw high-speed Internet added to thirty-six communities on the Great Northern Peninsula in 2004; and

WHEREAS nearly a decade later Bide Arm still remains without broadband services, despite being an amalgamated town with Roddickton; and

WHEREAS residents rely on Internet services for education, business, communication, and social activity; and

WHEREAS wireless and wired technologies exist to provide broadband service to rural communities to replace slower dial-up service;

We, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge the government to assist providers to ensure that Bide Arm is in receipt of broadband Internet services in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, it is very vital that we move forward and provide a municipality such as Bide Arm, which is part of another town at this point, with basic infrastructure such as broadband Internet at an acceptable speed so that the children in the community, of which there are quite a number of them in Bide Arm, have that opportunity when it comes to accessing the Internet.

As well, as I spoke to residents when I was going door to door in this community, one resident is trying very diligently to pursue distant education and doing so at a much slower speed. It makes it very challenging when you are trying to stream video and information. It is highly critical.

I have met with providers. I have met with wireless providers, having discussion and dialogue. I encourage and urge government under its Rural Broadband Initiative, which has \$6.2 million in the Budget, to look at this municipality, which is amalgamated with the Town of Roddickton, to receive broadband Internet services.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

WHEREAS the residents of the Southwest Coast of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador must use Route 470 and trunk road 470-10 on a

regular basis for work, medical, educational, and social reasons; and

WHEREAS Routes 470 and 470-10 are in deplorable condition, such that the shoulders of the road continuously wash away and there are huge potholes on the road; and

WHEREAS the condition of Routes 470 and 470-10 pose a safety hazard to residents and visitors to the Southwest Coast; and

WHEREAS the Department of Transportation and Works is responsible for the maintenance and repairs in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS the local division of the Department of Transportation and Works does make periodic repairs to this route, but these repairs are only temporary patchwork and this road needs to be resurfaced;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to support the users of Route 470 and 470-10 in their request to have Route 470-10 resurfaced.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time I have stood in this House and spoke about this piece of road in my district. I will say on a somewhat unrelated note I have to commend the Minister of Transportation because I have stood in this House and talked about Burgeo road and how it is in deplorable condition. I have had a chat with the minister and actually he did make sure that a section was done. A lot of residents have been complaining and e-mailing. The minister took it upon himself to make sure that it was looked after and it was done, and I thank the minister for that and for acknowledging the residents who complained about it.

Mr. Speaker, in this case we do have a section of road. This is the road that connects basically Port aux Basques right down to Rose Blanche

and then the ferry to La Poile. It is a road that, again, is a very windy, twisty road and it really needs to be looked at. I know this government has a huge inventory of roads that need to be looked at, but that is why a plan needs to be put in place to address it.

The side road that leads to the community of Fox Roost-Margaree is actually at a point where it is a danger. It is a hazard to go over and many parents have actually considered not letting their children go over it in a bus. It is washed away in certain sections where there is only one lane. I have had complaints from the different taxi companies that go in and out. I have had complaints from parents, from bus drivers, from operators, and especially from tourists who go down there and look at the road. It is really not fit to be on.

Again, I am putting this in in the hopes that the minister will put this in his files to have a look at and hopefully – I believe it is too late at this point, but I hope it will be looked at in the coming year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS the residents of the Pynn's Brook area are facing dangers in turning their vehicles safely off the TCH Route 1 into their own driveways; and

WHEREAS it is common practice along TCH Route 1 to impose speed reductions for traffic travelling through communities such as Badger, Deer Lake, Bishop's Falls, Gander, Clarenville and Whitbourne; and

WHEREAS highway traffic accidents along the stretch of TCH Route 1 through Pynn's Brook have caused deaths and injuries;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to reduce the maximum speed limit on TCH Route 1 through the Pynn's Brook area from the present 100 kilometres an hour to sixty kilometres an hour.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important issue for the people living along the Trans-Canada Highway. I guess still sticking with road issues; we are talking a little bit here about the safety of the residents in that area.

Pynn's Brook, Mr. Speaker, the last time I went through, a lot of traffic is going through that area now, more so than what was there in other years. I think right now at Motor Vehicle Registration, it has about 610,000 to 615,000 vehicles in this Province right now travelling on our highways. Mr. Speaker, that is a lot more than what it used to be upwards of twenty years ago.

We also have the record of course, that there are an increasing number of accidents in a lot of high traffic areas, mainly when some of these roads are cutting through towns. For example, the Town of Clarenville, the speed limit used to be 100 kilometres an hour going through the city, but right in the area where – I think it is Manitoba Drive, where it comes out onto the highway, the speed limit there has been reduced down to seventy; anywhere from where the Irving is on the east entranceway of Clarenville to the west entranceway of Clarenville.

We have a lot of towns where speed limits are being reduced. Badger is another example, there used to be a lot of car accidents, where the speed limit has been reduced down to sixty. Gander is another town where the speed limit has been reduced from 100 down to sixty.

We have an ongoing concern here. We have a record numbers of accidents that have happened

in the Pynn's Brook area. Every now and then you hear from these particular areas, of course, where accidents still do happen but we have a lot more important issues out there to deal with. We have unsafe roads when it comes to distracted drivers, too, at the same time. When it comes to facing the dangers that are faced by a driver when it comes to pulling into his own driveway or their own driveway, Mr. Speaker, I think this is an easy problem to address. It is already close to a slowdown area where the scales are nearby, where traffic has to slow down anyway.

I think it would be safe to say that hopefully government will address this in the coming weeks and months and have a look at this situation, because we will be talking about traffic issues, of course. Some of the legislation that government is going to be talking about in the next couple of weeks –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the member that his time has expired.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS Early childhood educators are trained professionals essential to the operation of child care centres and indispensable to many parents and children across Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS on the occasion of Early Childhood Educators Week in May, 2012, government conveyed its support and recognition for the role of early childhood educators and expressed its appreciation for their value; and

WHEREAS early childhood educators working in child care centres receive salaries that are the lowest in Canada amongst ECEs; and

WHEREAS government's 2012 increase in subsidies paid to ECEs applies only to Level I ECEs working in child care centre homerooms and Level II Early Childhood Educators who operate child care centres; and

WHEREAS all early childhood educators are highly educated, skilled, and deserving of a fair and equitable wage subsidy; and

WHEREAS government has discriminated against some of the most skilled ECEs in Newfoundland and Labrador;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the government to revise the enhancement to the Early Learning and Care Supplement to include all early childhood educators working in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, there is a new minister now in Child, Youth and Family Services, and some people were very excited about the prospect of this minister being in this portfolio. I would say, perhaps no one is more excited than himself, Mr. Speaker, and I say that with all due respect.

I encourage the minister to use his enthusiasm for his new-found role to look at this. I started this petition with early childhood educators. One day I was knocking on doors in the spring of 2012 on a street called Coventry Way in my district, and encountered someone who works in that sector who felt quite upset about government's decision.

So I urge members to call upon government, the minister, to have a good look at this and see if something can be done for the upcoming budget year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS transgendered people face high risk of discrimination, violence, underemployment and lack of access to housing and other services; and

WHEREAS a recent EGALE Canada survey found that 90 per cent of transgender youth hear transphobic comments regularly from other students and one-quarter hear such comments from teachers; and

WHEREAS the Public Health Agency of Canada reports that nearly half of trans youth seriously considered suicide and one-fifth attempted it in the previous year; and

WHEREAS all individuals should have equal opportunity to live their lives and meet their needs without being hindered or prevented by discriminatory practices based on gender identity or gender expression; and

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to amend the Human Rights Act to include gender identity and gender expression in the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I am so looking forward to not ever having to stand in this House again and deliver this petition. I was very heartened and pleased to hear from the Minister of Justice of his intention to introduce a bill to amend our Human Rights Act to include gender identity and gender expression.

That news has gone out across the Province. That news has gone out across the country. That news has gone out across the world and is so embraced, not only by the transgendered community, Mr. Speaker, because this is good news for the transgendered community, and I am so proud to have been able to push and push for it, but it is also good news for their families.

It is good news for human rights activists around the world. It is good news for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador because once again it can prove that our human rights legislation, our Human Rights Act, is a living, breathing document that responds to the modern times that we find ourselves in.

Mr. Speaker, I do look forward to debating this issue once the bill is presented to the House. It is good news, and I so look forward to not ever having to present this petition again because we will have won this hard struggle.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

WHEREAS there is no cell service in Nunatsiavut; and

WHEREAS many individual travel in close proximity to their respective communities and are subject to accidents and/or misdirection; and

WHEREAS cell coverage may well have saved the life of young Burton Winters;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to work with

appropriate agencies to provide cell coverage for the North Labrador Coast.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have been here in the last two years and I have seen progress made by this government, slowly but surely, on establishing cellphone coverage throughout parts of the Island portion of our Province. I am glad for it and I really do appreciate it. I have stood up on this petition many times before to talk about the close link, that the installation of cell service would help alleviate some of the search and rescue cutbacks that we faced over the last two years.

Mr. Speaker, cell coverage range varies from locations throughout the Province; some range as high as sixty miles and some range much shorter distances. Over the last two years we have seen cutbacks in search and rescue throughout our Province. The reason that I would like to bring up search and rescue is because any time there is a service that helps in search and rescue, it is something that we all look forward to. As was the case with young Burton Winters, at six miles from Makkovik, we did haul a Blackberry out of his pocket.

If you are looking at VHF services up the North Coast of Labrador, Mr. Speaker, there is a relay station in Hopedale and there is one in Nain. There is nothing between Hopedale and Goose Bay, so VHF range is very limited. If you take into consideration the accident around Fogo last week, where VHF was relayed throughout the Province and the crew of the *Sea Shepherd* were rescued, we do not have that luxury.

I am looking, Mr. Speaker, to cellphone coverage being established north of Goose Bay, northeast of Labrador City; and on the south coast, there are gaps in the road system where safety becomes an issue where there is no cell coverage. I look forward to cell coverage in Nunatsiavut.

Thank you.

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

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, a petition to the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS the offshore of the West Coast of the Island of Newfoundland is recognized as a region containing potentially billions of barrels of oil; and

WHEREAS hydraulic fracturing could have been an accepted and effective method of petroleum discovery and exploration, and is compatible with the protection of the natural environment and water sources when executed within the context of a comprehensive regulatory framework; and

WHEREAS the petroleum exploration sector needs the certainty and confidence of a stable regulatory regime; and

WHEREAS with that regulatory regime, oil discovery and industry development could provide unprecedented economic opportunity and bring people home to a currently economically challenged area; and

WHEREAS the undersigned support properly regulated exploration and development of oil and gas resources in this Province;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to introduce a regulatory framework immediately under which hydraulic fracturing could proceed safely and move this industry forward in Western Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, the government has shown absolutely no leadership on this issue whatsoever. A full year ago a company was doing hearings in the West Coast of the Province, hearings in park communities in Gros Morne National Park and other communities as

well, asking for feedback, and clearly could have used some sort of direction from the government. There was none.

Back in the spring, the Opposition introduced a private member's resolution that said: Please give us the regulations, please introduce the regulations, and if you cannot figure out what to do with the regulations, then by all means adopt those of the most current regulations in Canada and amend them as you go along. Nothing happened. The government defeated that resolution.

Now government has moved and said: Now we are not going to issue any more licences. Clearly, this government governs by polls and leads by polls, which is not leadership. The people in our area, not all of them absolutely oppose hydraulic fracturing and an awful lot of people this area has been absolutely decimated of population because there is no work there for people who would really like to see some economic development.

Now the government said they are going to have an internal study, go forward, and then decide what to do. Mr. Speaker, a year has been wasted. More time will be wasted. These people still want government to move on this issue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like take a moment of the House's time to apologize to this House and to the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities for some inappropriate comments I made last Monday. I believe these comments were disrespectful, and certainly I regret making them.

As well, Mr. Speaker, as their new minister, I look forward to working with them in partnership and, as a matter fact, for them on an ongoing basis. I will be building a great relationship with them and have a meeting with the coalition in the next couple of weeks or so.

I apologize for my remarks in the House last Monday on making that point.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

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

MS SHEA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to go to Orders of the Day. We will call Order 1 and we will go into a Committee of Supply, Mr. Speaker, to continue the debate on Bill 8.

MR. SPEAKER: The House is now adjourning itself into Committee of the Whole. I will entertain a motion that I do now leave the Chair.

MS SHEA: So moved.

MR. SPEAKER: Moved by the hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

It has been moved and seconded that I now leave the Chair.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Littlejohn): Good afternoon, everyone.

We are continuing the debate on Bill 8, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Additional Expenses Of The Public Service For The

Financial Year Ending March 31, 2014 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

A bill, "An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Additional Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2014 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service". (Bill 8)

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Port au Port.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CORNECT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Monsieur le Président, je suis très fier de me présenter aujourd'hui dans la Chambre d'assemblée en représentant la circonscription de Port au Port.

Mr. Chair, I am very happy to rise today representing the people of the great and cultural District of Port au Port –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CORNECT: – to speak on Bill 8 respecting the granting of Supplementary Supply to Her Majesty.

In September of this year, Mr. Chair, government reached an agreement with the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees, or NAPE, as it is commonly known. Shortly after that, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, or CUPE, and the Association of Allied Health Professionals also reached a tentative agreement with our government.

Mr. Chair, we are very pleased to reach an agreement with NAPE. The agreement was ratified by eleven of the twelve bargaining units just last month. Mr. Chair, members of the public sector bargaining units representing over 17,000 workers across Newfoundland and Labrador voted; 83 per cent of the membership voted in favour of accepting the deal.

Let me break it down for you, Mr. Chair, by bargaining units. Air Services voted 60 per cent in favour; College of the North Atlantic support staff voted 90 per cent support; general service, 78 per cent agreed; group homes, 99 per cent said yes; health professionals, 88 per cent approval; hospital support staff, 86 per cent concurred; laboratory and X-ray, 78 per cent consent; maintenance and occupational services, 75 per cent approved; Marine Services, 38 per cent approved; Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation, 86 per cent said yes to the agreement; student assistants, 97 per cent approved; and school boards, 89 per cent said yes to the agreement.

Mr. Chair, ratification votes have now taken place with the members of CUPE and the AAHP. The agreements are fair and fiscally responsible, and it recognizes the dedication, commitment and hard work of our employees in the public sector. This agreement, Mr. Chair, is in line with our government's commitment to providing high-quality programs and services in a financially sustainable way.

This agreement will benefit thousands of professional and dedicated public employees who work for the people of this Province, Newfoundland and Labrador. This agreement, Mr. Chair, also shows our commitment to these employees and shows that our government recognizes the important contribution they make each and every day to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Through the hard work and dedication of those involved in the negotiation process, these agreements were reached because they are good deals, Mr. Chair. They are fair deals to the public employees of our Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CORNECT: Let me give you the synopsis of the deal, Mr. Chair. The agreement includes a 5 per cent salary increase over four years. No salary increase for the first two years of the agreement.

In year three, public sector employees will see a 2 per cent increase to their salary, and that would be this year. In year four, or 2015, a 3 per cent increase. In year two, which is this year, Mr. Chair, full-time employees will receive a \$1,400 signing bonus. It is important to immediately enable the funding of costs associated with the new collective bargaining agreements, including the negotiated \$1,400 signing bonus, be paid to the bargaining unit employees by Christmas of this year. That is why we are debating this bill today, Mr. Chair.

As it is precedent that management and non-bargaining unit employees have received the same benefits as the collective agreements, this benefit will apply to them as well. Mr. Chair, every effort will be made to pay this benefit to non-bargaining unit employees before the end of the fiscal year.

This payment, Mr. Chair, is a fiscally responsible way to provide appropriate compensation for public employees in this year of the agreement. This bonus reflects a one-time expenditure for government in 2013-2014, and it will not impact the fiscal forecast for 2014-2015 and years beyond.

Mr. Chair, our public service deserves it. They are a dedicated and committed people to the Province in the work that they do. Outside of work, Mr. Chair, it is important to note that these people are involved in the community. They are involved in municipal politics. They are involved in fire departments. They are involved with sports. They are involved in the schools. They are involved in fundraising, and the list just goes on, their involvement in the community of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. They are a super group of people, I may add.

Mr. Chair, that has been our mantra since taking office in 2003. We have guided our Province away from the doors of bankruptcy, and now we are looking at the future with a positive and confident and optimistic view.

Mr. Chair, we only have to look at the investments we continue to make. *Budget 2013:*

A Sound Plan, A Secure Future outlines our path to prosperity within the investments we are making. We implemented a 10-year sustainability plan, Mr. Chair, our continued commitment to strong financial management. We are committed to returning to surplus by the fiscal year of 2015-2016. We are protecting vital services and programs that are important to the people of the Province.

Mr. Chair, because of our actions and our initiatives, more people are working than any other time in our Province's history. That is responsible management. That is making responsible decisions, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, being good stewards of our economy, we are investing in infrastructure as well. We are committed to spending \$866 million to encourage economic growth, job creation, and stronger communities. These investments will be spread to all regions of the Province from coast to coast to coast. We are investing in roads, marine services, health, education, municipal works, buildings and aquaculture. This infrastructure investment will generate 5,330 person years of employment in our Province.

Mr. Chair, we are investing \$185.3 million for program delivery in the essential areas for child protection, youth services, and child care; \$9.5 million on twenty-two new drug therapies under the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program and the Cancer Care and Hematology Program; \$160 million every year for home care; \$15.3 million for home support.

Mr. Chair, we are leading the country. Yes, Mr. Chair, the country, in wait times for cardiac bypass and hip fracture repairs. These are just some of the investments we continue to make in our families and health care.

We are investing for the future. We have a plan to keep our economy vibrant. We are spending over \$200 million in strategic investments to help spur economic growth. We are maintaining our investment in the Muskrat Falls Project. Mr. Chair, we are working diligently to revitalize our

fishery, just look at the CETA deal that we just signed on to.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CORNECT: Mr. Chair, as we debate the Supplementary Supply bill today, this all leads to leadership and what can be achieved with solid, sound, sincere, and secure decision making to ensure a stable and growing economy.

Mr. Chair, our Premier continues to give us this leadership. It is with this leadership that the future of this Province looks very, very bright.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CORNECT: It is simply, Mr. Chair, because of the sound decisions that she and this government have made.

Mr. Chair, let us all celebrate on our successes, but let us get ready for a very promising and prosperous future. Let me say for the record that I am supporting the Supplementary Supply bill, Bill 8, An Act for Granting to Her Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Additional Expenses for the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2014 and for Other Purposes Relating to the Public Service.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to speak once again to Supplementary Supply bill which is basically providing the opportunity for a signing bonus of \$1,400 to our workers.

It is important to recognize and acknowledge the good work that the public sector is doing, whether in our school system, whether in our education system, or whether working for a line department or other agency. In many cases, though, when we look at the role of government and what government should be doing is making sure that our public servants have all the

resources available to do their job in the best possible way.

The member opposite had just talked about investments in road and infrastructure. No doubt, we are doing a significant amount of investing in road and infrastructure, but there are many cases where infrastructure is still lacking, significantly. Like if we look at the provincial gravel road inventory, there are a number of roads that are still gravel. They need to be maintained and there needs to be a concrete plan to look at bringing provincial roads out of a gravel inventory; a plan to look at moving towards paving in some of these areas to ensure, under a timeline, that we can build stronger economies around that.

In cases, we have seen, in my district, where equipment failure has led to delays of being able to grade roads and had potholes there. Those things have impacts on people and the overall economy, and even on workers being able to do their work adequately – it does.

We need to make sure that we have contingency plans, that equipment can be delivered in a timely manner to take care of these things, and that we make decisions as a people, as a government, that when programs such as the calcium chloride program is cut, that there is actually some acknowledgement as to what the criteria was that led to this. Because cutting such a program has led to a significant amount of dust in communities. It also erodes gravel roads; the material and the substance goes from them.

It is only going to cost more money down the road to maintain these highways – like Route 434 to Conche is down to the bedrock in some areas. Government has invested upwards of \$6 million to realign and rebuild this road and those were done by workers in this Province and under the leadership of the Minister of Transportation and Works, a great investment; but if the program to cut calcium chloride is causing all this dust and exposure, it is going to end up where we are not getting the best return on our investment. Residents and citizens need to know if a road such as that one is going to be

paved, so then they can look at making further investment in infrastructure when it comes to expanding fish plants or looking at expanding the tourism business in that region.

There is opportunity, but we need to make sure that we are providing the basic tools and infrastructure and resources to people. It is like some of our depots and some of our workers who work in government buildings do not have access to broadband Internet and the appropriate tools that they would need to do their jobs in a more effective manner. These are small investments, I think, that we can make in the people, our workers, to make sure that we are able to, in a more productive way, do the business of the people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

These are not big asks by any means; these are very basic requests. It is government's obligation to look at meeting needs of basic infrastructure. If we are going to advance our rural economy, we need to make sure that we have advanced transportation and advanced telecommunication networks. Those two things are absolutely key.

We need to look at making investments in ports and in infrastructure so that we can do shipping into the Arctic, that we can take advantage of all of the opportunities that are going to come with moving forward and exploring and developing the Arctic and Arctic sovereignty. There is a role for our workers to be conducting research and to tap into that opportunity in some of our northern communities like St. Anthony, for example.

We have infrastructure that is currently built in Flower's Cove with the Strait of Belle Isle Health Centre and it has been basically idle for a number of months. People are wondering: When are those workers going to get to use this new facility? When are the residents going to be able to access the services of a new facility that has been committed by government?

It is a wonderful thing and it is a great investment; but it has taken a significant amount of time and there have been lots of questions

throughout the process by residents, by municipalities, by people who really feel disengaged in the process, by the workers themselves not having that level of communication and knowing as to what is going to happen next.

So I really commend the investments that are being put into my district, but I think some of the process that is coming forward in providing that open level of communication is what is really needed so that we can move forward positively to make sure the workers and the citizens of The Straits – White Bay North are really looked after; and when they reach out to me as a Member of the House of Assembly, their representative, I have the answers so that I can tell them and we can move forward in a very positive way working with government to make sure our region is as strong as it can be. There are a number of issues.

The Straits – White Bay North is no different than any other district in Newfoundland and Labrador when it comes to the number of challenges we face, but there are significant opportunities as well. There is so much potential and we have to look at building those economies, whether they are built around public sector, whether they are built around the private sector, or in collaboration with both. I think there are significant opportunities.

I really like this bill and the fact that it does give back to our public sector and that it does show a renewed commitment. These workers are entering into a contract over a period of time that is consistent. It shows good economic policy when it looks at something that is more sustainable over the longer term. It gives an ability to open a discussion around what we do around fiscal sustainability, as the member opposite talked about this ten-year plan. There are lots of things that we can be doing as a government that can save money. Then that can be invested back into other projects or into our public sector.

Expanding rural broadband is key. I presented a petition today for broadband in Bide Arm. If we look at communities that are more isolated and

rural, like St. Julien's and Grandois, where you travel over a thirty-kilometre gravel road, if they had access to broadband Internet, then they may be able to use Telehealth and not have to drive a significant amount to get a consultation by a doctor. Many of these people would be traveling under the Medical Transportation Assistance Program, which millions of dollars is going into the travel, and also the strain and the burden as to what that means for people.

We can be using technology more, so that our workers who are working in the public sector can use their skills and reach out in a different way so that we can make sure that the people, especially in rural economies, are well taken care of.

These are the types of things that we need to be doing, progressive policies that we would expect from a progressive government. Those are the types of things that we need and we need to see more of. I know this government is willing to listen and try and introduce such policies.

I will be continuing to use my voice to press for these types of policies as long as I sit as the Member for The Straits – White Bay North because they are so important. It is so important to build stronger economies around advancing transportation. I am looking forward to having discussions with the Minister of Transportation and Works. I know we can find some solutions that can build those stronger economies. As well, to look at the investments that have been made in the region, it is helping workers, it is helping advance the region.

I have had very good dealings with ministers in the government. I look forward to keeping that and moving forward. Right now, I really support this piece of legislation. I do not think I will have any further comment unless something comes up pressing on this. I will be supporting the legislation.

I thank you for the opportunity, Mr. Chair, to make further points on this bill.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is a great pleasure to rise in the House today and speak to Bill 8. I think it is very important that we recognize the contribution of our public service.

Before I do that though, Mr. Chair, I certainly want to acknowledge the fact that yesterday was a very special day in our Province as communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador commemorated Remembrance Day. Despite the weather conditions in some parts of the Province, ceremonies for the most part did go ahead. People took time out of their day to acknowledge the contribution of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice so that we can enjoy the freedom that we do today.

Just last week, Mr. Chair, I had an opportunity to join the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation and the Premier at Government House, as the minister said earlier today, when we launched Honour 100, our First World War commemoration on behalf of Newfoundland and Labrador. I think Newfoundlanders and Labradorians appreciate the fact that the First World War was an influential moment in our history. Our role in that war shaped who we are today. It is a story that is built on perseverance and pride. So many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have done great service for our Province and our country.

I am very pleased to see that commemoration plan launched. The celebrations will unfold over several years. I certainly look forward to what is to come in 2014 as Honour 100 really ramps up.

Mr. Chair, the public service of this Province does so much for our people and our communities. In the last few weeks in my new role, I have had an opportunity to gain a new perspective, a new appreciation for the role that the public service plays. I have been thoroughly impressed with the women and men I have met through Fire and Emergency Services Newfoundland and Labrador, through Municipal

and Intergovernmental Affairs, all of whom are working very hard each and every day to serve the people of this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Good things are happening. In the seven-and-a-half minutes I have left, Mr. Chair, I will not get to cover all of them, but I can tell you there is much to be proud of in terms of the work that our public service is doing in this Province.

I met with many people who are serving communities and serving this Province just this past weekend as I participated in the Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador Conference on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. It was an incredible success. I met municipal leaders from every corner of the Province. I am not sure if it was a record turnout, but it certainly felt like one. The sessions were full, the plenary sessions were full. The evening festivities were full of enthusiastic people, many of whom have served in their communities for many years, and many of whom are brand new to local government in our Province.

We had an opportunity to talk about many issues of concern. We talked about the new fiscal framework. My officials provided an update on the work we have been doing in that regard, and there was real enthusiasm about the process we have embarked upon to date, and real excitement about what is to come as well.

We have been working very closely with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador as we have embarked upon a review of the provincial-municipal fiscal framework in this Province. In fact, I have already had a couple of meetings with the President of Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador. Our officials are meeting quite regularly with various stakeholders to continue to advance this work.

It is important work, and it is going to take some time to conclude. We suspect it will take eighteen months to two years to work through the entire process. We want to take the necessary time to ensure that we get it right.

A really important part of this review, as we outlined this weekend at the MNL conference, is the consultation piece. We are going to be talking to various stakeholder groups. We are going to be talking to the general public. We want to hear the views of municipalities. We want to hear the views of local service districts. We want to hear the views of people in the Province who live in unincorporated areas. Anybody who avails of municipal services in this Province is welcome to have their say in this important process.

Our goal is to look at every aspect of the relationship between the Province and our communities. We are going to look at efficient and effective ways to deliver services. We are going to look at the structure of local government. We are going to look at how services are paid for and how services are shared in this Province.

There are a large number of public servants at the municipal level in this Province delivering critical services to the residents of our communities each and every day. It is an important process. There was real enthusiasm, as I said, this weekend when we met with municipal leaders from around the Province and we definitely look forward to continuing that dialogue.

Another hot topic at the convention was Municipal Operating Grants. Our department has had a really strong relationship with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador and with municipal leaders from around the Province. We have really listened to the requests from municipal leaders to arrive at a new formula for Municipal Operating Grants, or MOGs.

The new formula which we presented in detail to municipalities this past weekend is transparent, it is equitable, and it is sustainable. We have presented it in a way that makes it easy to understand for all stakeholders. There was an enthusiastic response to the new Municipal Operating Grant formula as well. Many communities in Newfoundland and Labrador are receiving an increase in their Municipal

Operating Grants. The other piece of the good news is that none are receiving a decrease. We are getting positive feedback all the time.

I received a note just last week from the mayor of a small municipality who said that he is more than delighted with the great increase in their MOG. This increase in their MOG, along with the building of their new municipal building and government's continued support for industry in their community, will see a great future for their town and their whole region. That is the kind of feedback we are getting from municipal leaders right across Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: As usual, I am being heckled by the former Minister of Municipal Affairs who certainly did some great work working with stakeholders in the municipal sector in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Did you like that? That is for you.

MS JOHNSON: Did you tell him about your first announcement?

MR. KENT: I am now getting heckled by my colleague. It is coming at me from every direction today. It is hard enough having to answer questions from across the way, but then you have to put up with the heckling on your own side.

The new Minister of Innovation, Business and Rural Development wants me to tell you about one of my very first announcements. In fact, I think it was the very first announcement. We were announcing municipal capital works funding for three communities in her district, very important water treatment projects and waste water treatment projects. Those are a really high priority for our department. We want to ensure that all residents of this Province have access to clean and safe drinking water. So anything that we can do to improve our water infrastructure in this Province, those are the projects that will be of high priority when it

comes time to make decisions about future funding.

We talked about capital works funding as well this weekend. Of course, the entire fiscal relationship with municipalities will be reviewed as part of the fiscal framework, but we continue to recognize the need for more infrastructures, both in communities large and small.

I had some good discussions with the urban summit, with the urban municipalities group at Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador, and this was one of many issues that we touched upon. Certainly, as we look ahead to the next round of municipal capital works funding, we are very aware of the fact that communities large and small each have unique needs that need to be addressed and we are going to continue to invest in needed municipal infrastructure.

Mr. Chair, I also had an opportunity at the convention to provide an update on the provincial basic 911 service that we are working to implement. I was pleased to report to everyone at the convention that we are on track to deliver a Province-wide basic 911 service to everybody in Newfoundland and Labrador by the end of 2014.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: A lot of progress has been made on this file. Implementing this service is an important priority for our government. We have a team in place. We are currently working on legislation, which I hope to introduce here in this House in the spring, and we are well on our way to have the Province-wide basic 911 service in place by the end of next year.

Mr. Chair, I see that I am out of time. There is lots more that I could talk about and I will probably get up again, but I certainly am pleased to rise and support Bill 8 today in the House.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just stand to have a few minutes to speak on this Bill 8 and recognize the work. Of course, I think everybody on both sides here, and the Independents also, agree that this is a good bill, Bill 8, to have the bonuses for the civil servants and the others involved.

My question is: Why are we still debating it? Let's bring in something that we need to bring in. We all agreed that this bill will pass, so we should bring this in now and let's pass this bill so that we can just move on to some really important legislation, Mr. Chair. Everybody is in agreement of this bill. Of course, government, with the lack of legislation to bring forth, they are just dragging this on and getting up, pounding their chest but there is so much important –

MR. KENT: (Inaudible).

MR. JOYCE: I hear the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs. I say to the minister, I never said one word while you were speaking.

Mr. Chair, do you know what the minister should do? Go look on the \$600,000 that his department just wasted on the western regional land management group. Go ask. I said three years ago when it was set up that the person they gave it to was the Minister of Finance's co-campaign manager, a retired professor of a university. I said it had no legislative authority – \$600,000 of wasted taxpayers' money. Here is the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs over there now, Mr. Chair, bawling and shouting at me when his department has wasted \$600,000.

That is the kind of stuff that we should be discussing here. How can we stop this waste? The minister stands up – it is in a draft form. It was in his department two-and-a-half years still in a draft form. Do you know something, Mr. Chair? That is going to collect more dust now

than what is on *The Munsters* show. It is going to be dust on that now. You are never going to see that report again. You will never be able to find it. That is how bad this is, Mr. Chair.

I asked the minister if he could stand up. He said he was going to stand again. I ask him to stand up and explain how you can give out \$600,000, have a report in on his desk for the last two-and-a-half years, all the municipalities – and I spoke to some councillors recently who spend a lot of volunteer time, spend a lot of energy, spend a lot of town resources into trying to develop this plan just to find out it has no legislative authority – it has no legislative authority.

For the minister to stand up here today and say it is only in the draft form, two-and-a-half years – I think it was April 2011 the last cheque that was made out to this committee and I think the report was sent down in April 2011. Those are the kind of things we should be discussing in this House, not something that we all agree on, the civil service and this building.

It is going to pass; it is unanimous it is going to pass. Everybody in this House agrees what the civil service has done for this Province. Everybody agrees with this Bill 8. Everybody agrees with this bonus. We are still going to discuss, yet we do not want to talk about the other issues that is happening here in this Province where we could save money, Mr. Chair.

I go back on numerous occasions where I brought things in this Legislature of how we can make improvements. I asked the Premier just last Thursday, I think it was: Will you commit to have a new fiscal arrangement with the municipalities in Newfoundland in 2014? She would not make that commitment.

Now, Mr. Chair, what would you do as a mayor of a town? Just put yourself as the mayor of a town when you are having financial restraints and you are having a hard time meeting your payments and you are going after the Province since 2008 saying listen here, we need some help here; we need a new fiscal arrangement.

You as a mayor, Mr. Chair, do you think that is fair? After the Province committing and committing to it. The former minister brought this along, no doubt, yet the commitment is not there to have it done in 2014. That is just some of the issues.

I look at transportation and works out in the Bay of Islands, some major safety hazards, some major safety concerns that I have been raising. I have been writing on numerous occasions, Mr. Chair. Take Copper Mine Brook out there, I have been writing now for six, seven or eight months. It has gotten so bad now that traveling – it is eighty kilometers and now it is down to thirty kilometres; hazard signs on both sides, Mr. Chair.

That is the kind of stuff that we should be trying to figure out how to find funds to get it fixed. This is not a luxury. I look over in McIver's; it is another prime example. Over in McIver's there is a dip in the road, again with schools buses traveling over it. It is dangerous. I have been bringing it to the government's attention for at least eight or nine months, probably even up to last year when it started moving again, Mr. Chair. That is the kind of things that we need discussed here, not a bill that everybody agrees with. Let's find some ways how we can solve the problems of the Province and let's find some ways how we can make our roads safer for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. That is the kind of things that we have to be looking at.

Do I look and say there are some good initiatives by government? Yes, I would be the first to admit it. I said it on numerous occasions that there are positive initiatives that were made.

Mr. Chair, I have to respond to a comment. I think it was the Member for Mount Pearl North who last week was talking about Clyde Wells and the nurses.

MR. KENT: South.

MR. JOYCE: Sorry about that. I apologize to the minister. It was St. John's South.

He was talking about how Clyde Wells rolled it back. Yes, he did. I was not part of it, I was his assistant, but he did do it. I give him credit. The nurses –

CHAIR: I ask the Official Opposition Leader to speak to the Chair.

MR. JOYCE: Sorry, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

MR. JOYCE: The nurses – I was a part of the government. I did not vote that day, for personal reasons. I was not in the vote that day, but I have to tell the Member for Mount Pearl South, when I stood in the House at that time and spoke about the nurses and legislation back to work, I did it as a man. I stood up. I did not go on the computer and start stacking polls. I stood up in this House of Assembly and I voted, Mr. Chair, not like the Member for Mount Pearl South out admitting how he is stacking polls against all the different groups – out stacking polls around. That is what I do.

That is what we have to discuss, Mr. Chair. That is the kind of thing we have to discuss. Let's discuss important issues instead of trying to take personal attacks at me because we did it. Yes, we did it. I admit I did it. I stood up in this House of Assembly and I spoke about it. I did not go behind a closed door with a computer. That is the difference. If you are going to say something, let's get up here and let's discuss it. I did it, and that is the kind of open discussion we need here.

We cannot just stand up here and say everything is rosy. Let's get up and give credit when credit is due. I will be the first to believe. When you need to give credit, I will be the first one to give credit. I can tell you there are ministers across the way at public events who I gave credit to because there are some great initiatives.

You will not see me hiding behind a computer with a fictitious name stacking polls, Mr. Chair. You will not see that, because if I am going to say something it is going to be upfront. It is going to be for the benefit of the people of

Newfoundland and Labrador, and in benefit for the people of Bay of Islands, Mr. Chair, which I am elected to do.

MR. LANE: (Inaudible).

MR. JOYCE: The Member for Mount Pearl South, I am sorry if I hit a nerve, but I hope you learned your lesson about stacking the polls.

Mr. Chair, we should move on from this. Let's bring in some good legislation here that is going to benefit. Apparently the government says they have lots of legislation. We are ready to debate some meaningful legislation that is going to be brought in that is going to make positive changes around the Province, and that is what we need.

From my understanding, Mr. Chair, the long-term care facility, that extra wing will open up next month, I think, I say to the Member for Humber West, and that is a good thing. It took a while. We all fought for it, but that is a good thing. That is opening up. That is another fifteen to eighteen beds, I think. That is a good thing for Corner Brook. That is something positive. Those are the kinds of things we need to discuss in this House, how we can bring in this type of legislation so that we can all move things forward. Let's have an open dialogue.

The former Minister of Municipal Affairs, I have to give him credit. If you want to sit down and have a chat with him, you might not believe this, Mr. Chair, you may not get everything you want but at least he will tell you, and that is all we can ask for.

I look across; there are other ministers, also, that I dealt with, the Minister of Education. Look, I can sit down and have a good discussion with him. You may not get everything you want, you may not get anything, but at least you will get a discussion and you will get an answer. That is what we should be doing here. We should have frank discussions in this House.

I encourage the government to bring some legislation forward so we can have a meaningful discussion to move the betterment of the people

of Newfoundland and Labrador forward because we all support Bill 8. We are all going to vote for Bill 8. So let's just move ahead with the good legislation for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians so we can have a meaningful discussion.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for recognizing me in this hon. House. It is always an honour to stand in your place in this House. This is really an important bill, Mr. Chair.

First off, I would like to reference a couple of things that the hon. member before me referenced in regard to a regional plan out on the West Coast. This is a complicated piece of work that has to happen. It goes out to several departments for consultations and remarks. It is moving its way through the process. It is very important. It is not a waste of money, Mr. Chair, and it is a great piece of work done by the volunteers out there on the West Coast.

In regard to the new fiscal arrangement, there was never any commitment in regard to having one in 2014, Mr. Chair. It was communicated by mayors, as well as myself and the President of MNL, that it would take at least eighteen months to two years to do, and if we are going to do it, we are going to have to do it right.

In this piece of work here, Mr. Chair, in this bill, which is important, I must commend the Minister of Finance. Under the global restraints that we find ourselves in, we were able to partner with our public servants and come to a collective bargaining agreement, which is really important to recognize the good work and to support the workers we have in our public service.

I am very fortunate as a minister, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, as well as responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, to have over 700, 800 of those in Advanced Education and Skills alone in my department who do some great work in this Province, work that touches Newfoundlanders and Labradorians on a daily basis.

Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, I cannot remember exactly how many employees are stretched across this Province of ours, but I believe it is up around the 150 or 200 or so area. Do not quote me on that, Mr. Chair, because I just cannot recall it out of my head here today, but these people do some great work in the Province and they have been doing some great work over the years. Every time somebody gets up in this House and acknowledges our public servants, it is a great day in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Chair.

I want to also mention some things in regard to my own department and some of the things that are happening in the department which is certainly the result of many, many hours of work, strategies, and whatnot in regard to our public service in the support of a minister. Right now in this Province of ours we have the lowest number of people on Income Support in our history, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: As a matter of fact, Mr. Chair, I believe as well that we are tied for second in the country. With another bit of good work, maybe the next time we get a report in regard to Income Support and the requirement for Income Support in Canada, that we will be leading the country with the least number of people requiring Income Support.

Last week I spoke in this House in regard to why. The reason why is that the other piece of work that is happening within the department is working with these people, moving these people through the various programs we have. Providing training programs for them in the various colleges, the College of the North Atlantic and the private industry as well that are

providing such great courses across the Province. People are taking that. People are availing of the opportunities that have been created here in this Province over the last number of years.

There are jobs to be had and people are availing of them. They are moving from Income Support into that area. They have meaningful jobs, their lives are better, and it is great to see. It is great to see how our public servants work each and every day on their behalf in regard to helping them respond and helping them to avail of the opportunities, Mr. Chair.

There are big monies being spent in this Province. As a matter of fact, I was elected in 2003 and one of the things we initiated which was really, really important to the Province was the Poverty Reduction Strategy. It stretches over a number of departments, including the Department of Health and Community Services.

We do such great work; \$149 million in this year's Budget in regard to addressing the issues around poverty reduction. I go back to my department, my employees, and the great work that they are doing in addressing that issue. We are absolutely having an impact on that.

Do we have other challenges as well, Mr. Chair? I think I had a question in the House in regard to affordable housing. One of the things today – and it is a challenge in providing affordable housing to people. That is a challenge right across Canada. It is not only just unique to Newfoundland and Labrador, but it is a challenge right across Canada. It is a challenge right across the United States. As a matter of fact, it is a challenge in Europe, Mr. Chair.

Are we addressing that issue? Absolutely, we are. As a matter of fact, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing have built 220 new units in Newfoundland and Labrador just for that purpose, Mr. Chair. Can we address that issue and eradicate it overnight? Absolutely not. In this Province, as any other province and any other jurisdiction in Canada, we are subject to budget and we are subject to revenue streams,

which determine what budgets and what we can spend here.

Can we put every cent towards affordable housing? Absolutely, we cannot. Can we work towards a goal? Absolutely, and we are. I referenced in my question today in the House we have 5,000 units across Newfoundland and Labrador. I know that I have two affordable housing projects that I have to sort of cut the ribbon on within the next few weeks or so. That is a part of those 220 units. I know that there are units that went up in my own district, in the Town of Gander, in regard to the Golden Legion Manor, which I was a part of for a long, long time. As a matter of fact, I was Chair of the board for over twenty years. To see a project that addresses the issues surrounding affordable housing right in my community to seniors in the Province is good to see.

I see some of the members over there across the other side of the House, Mr. Chair, shaking their heads because they like to promise everything and anything to everybody, but there is within reason. We have to keep investing, absolutely. Do we have to work on all levels of government in regard to the City of St. John's and what the deputy mayor mentioned in his remarks last week in a meeting of the City Council? Absolutely. Do we have to work with private industry in trying to provide affordable housing to the people of the Province? Absolutely, we do. We have and we will continue to do so. We will continue to invest in affordable housing projects right across this Province.

I encourage, right here and now in the House today, the private sector to come forward and partner with Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and address the issue, and try to make sure people in this Province have the proper housing they deserve and require.

Certainly as the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills and the Minister Responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, I will absolutely endeavour to do just that. That is a very important issue and it is not lost on me as the minister, nor is it being lost in regard to the Province, the government, and the Premier. She

has tasked me as the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills to address those issues, to meet with these people, and try to drive that forward.

Certainly under the economy we find ourselves in, which is a vibrant, energized economy, we will have those kinds of issues because housing costs go up. That is a problem when people's salaries do not keep up with that.

Mr. Chair, I know my time is running out, but I had to address that issue in regard to affordable housing. I wanted to get up and speak to my employees, the close to 800 of them in Advanced Education and Skills. I want to compliment them and thank them for the work. I thank them for the support they give me as a minister and also this government.

I would also thank the Member for Bay of Islands for his comments in regard to me as a minister.

CHAIR: I remind the minister that his time has expired.

MR. O'BRIEN: I will continue to work hard on behalf of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I certainly agree with the hon. Member for Bay of Islands district, the Leader of the Official Opposition, that we should be talking about ways to save money and get better value for money, ways to move forward, and certainly dealing with more of the substantive issues of the day.

I will just comment briefly because there is one substantive issue of concern that I have heard from people in my district about and people

outside my district in my capacity as somebody who is interested in the well-being of our students in the education system. I will just comment briefly on this, but certainly I do support this bill and I will be voting for this bill.

One of the areas of concern I just wanted to raise because it came up several times during the break from sitting here in the House of Assembly is the issue of the number of students who do not graduate from school. I know the Minister of Education was making a statement last week about the numbers and the graduation rate being as high as it is. Well, there are still a significant number of students in the Province who do not graduate.

There are variable reasons for that. They are socioeconomic; they are work-related in a lot of cases. A lot of young people in my district are working while they are in high school, some of them in junior high school, and some of them out of necessity. There are academic reasons and school-related reasons why a lot of young people do not have an opportunity to complete school, and some of them have challenging and difficult family and life circumstances. They have personal and family issues that intervene, and they are problematic. These students continue to fall through the cracks.

The Minister of Education certainly will recall last spring when we were talking about this particular issue of students who do not complete the senior high school curriculum in the three years that it normally takes, those students are falling through the cracks, and the minister referenced something call the PASS program – the Positive Actions for Student Success program.

As I pointed out one time previously, in the Eastern School District – I am not sure what the brave new world is now in the mega-district, but in the Eastern School District that was four teachers. Four student support teachers – that is all it was. Then funding for that pilot project, I believe, has ended, and it was really up to those schools to continue with that or not.

So we still have a lot of students dropping out of senior high school, but we also have students who are dropping out of junior high school as well, and different communities are certainly affected differently. I have no illusions that the District of St. John's North has the same issues as The Straits – White Bay North; they are certainly quite different.

One statistic that I wanted to bring to the minister's attention is that about 47 per cent of youth who live in Newfoundland and Labrador Housing leave school prior to graduation. That was the most recent statistic that I could come up with: 47 per cent of youth who live in low income housing. Most of those youth who leave only have about fourteen credits or less.

Now that is a bold consideration if you think that basically fourteen credits is one year's worth of work in Level I, II, or III, and the minimum graduation requirement in Newfoundland and Labrador today is thirty-six credits. Most of those kids who are leaving our schools prematurely before graduation have fourteen credits or less.

I raise this, and I go back to what the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition said about saving money. I believe there is enough evidence out there to suggest this costs us significantly, and it has significant implications for Newfoundland and Labrador. Not only for those individuals who drop out of school but for government, for our communities, for our society as a whole, and for our economy.

As I have said in the past, and educators have said in the past, we can pay now or we can pay later. That is the decision we have ahead of us. We can pay later for all of the costs associated with a high school dropout. Those costs are related to the increased costs in health services. There is certainly lots of evidence to suggest that those who leave high school before graduating experience poor health. They actually have a lower life expectancy. In fact, by six or seven years some of the research shows.

There is a greater dependency on social services, a greater dependency on education services, if

you think about the need to go back later and complete what you began before. There is a greater reliance on employment services, and greater possibility or incidence of criminality intersection with the criminal justice system, and the potential for either youth or adult incarceration which costs us a significant amount. If we can keep kids out of our jails, out of the Pen, then we can save a lot of money and give them a chance.

There are also questions around lower economic productivity period, because they are not working and do not have an opportunity to contribute. We know people want to have an opportunity to contribute. Those impacts over the long term result in reduced lifetime earnings. That has all sorts of implications if you are thinking about people having an opportunity to save for their retirement. If you are not working, what do you have to save for your retirement? How are you expecting people to survive into their elder years if we are not giving them an opportunity in their young ones?

Again, as I said: poorer health and reduced mortality; increased unemployment; delinquency and crime. Increased incidence of substance abuse and mental health issues that may or may not be associated with that, but costs the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador significantly. Increased incidence of early child-bearing, which has all sorts of implications considering a lot of the problems we have around access to child care; young women increasing the possibility that they may not have an opportunity to enter the workforce; more economic dependency on all of us; reduced quality of life for those people, and an increased incidence of marital instability. So more marriages end in separation or divorce as a result of lower levels of education.

Now, I wanted to raise specifically a trip I took this summer to the District School. There is certainly a lot of evidence that things need to be changed for young people at risk, based on that trip. The District School, if no one knows what it is, is located just down the road on Strawberry Marsh Road. I encourage every member of the House of Assembly who has not been down

there yet, to take a walk down to Strawberry Marsh Road, make an appointment to visit the District School before you go home for your Christmas holidays, because that is one of the places in Newfoundland and Labrador where young people at risk have an opportunity to move on, get ahead, and graduate.

You should go down, because down at the District School we have some of the best teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador, some of the best education professionals in Newfoundland and Labrador, but they have some of the most difficult challenges that teachers, professionals and students have in this Province. If you go in there, you will see a lot of the operations of the District School happen in the basement of that school district building on Strawberry Marsh Road.

They do not have sufficient facilities, as far as I have seen, to accommodate the number of students at severe risk. We are not talking about kids who are at risk of leaving school. We are talking about children who are at risk of committing suicide or being incarcerated, or ending up somewhere where no parent would ever want to see them. They are saving lives down there. I have to say, it is the most challenging of circumstances.

I was very saddened when somebody said to me: In the school district they call us the bottom dwellers. This is a statement that they have to go underground, basically, to go to their classroom because everything is in the basement down there.

Everyone should go down there and have a look, but I will end it at that. I will not go over my time, but every member of the House of Assembly should have a look at the District School before you go home for Christmas.

Thank you.

CHAIR (Cross): The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Education.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It gives me pleasure to get up and speak on this bill. Mr. Chair, I did not know that my staff watch this every now and then, but the last time, last week, I stood up and spoke on this particular issue. When I went back to the office, a couple of the staff had said they very much appreciated the words that had been said about them. What I alluded to was the work ethic of our public service. I spoke about my deputy, some of the directors, and the time and the hours they put into it. I told them not to watch it too much, now; there are things to be done. They did watch it. Maybe it is when I am up, or the Leader of the Opposition is up, or something of that nature.

Mr. Chair, I wanted to speak, and certainly I want to acknowledge some of the comments the Member for St. John's North made. He finished off there talking about the students at the school down here, the Brinton complex. He mentioned that someone had mentioned to him that these are the bottom dwellers, I believe he said. I realize there are people who say that. Whenever I hear that, it just makes you cringe because if there is one thing we do in education, is that we never, never give up on a child. We do whatever we can to save them.

I will allude to the past program because it started as a pilot program, but it is being continued. I will use this example. I was in the Minister of Health's district there a little while ago. We went into Exploits Valley High and we went up into the library.

AN HON. MEMBER: It is a great school.

MR. JACKMAN: It is. It is a wonderful school, new renovations done to it, it is a top-notch school.

We went into the library, or the resource centre as some people would put it, and there was a teacher there, but he was off to the side here and there were two students working here. I asked them about those two particular students and these were students from the past program.

Now, there was one particular student who had left the school system all together.

What these teachers do, these past teachers, is they will go through the records and they will seek out students who are still in the system, maybe in their fourth year, who are really in jeopardy of not graduating – or they have gone out and sought some people. As a result, 332 students have graduated who probably would not have graduated.

I think there were some ninety-something that teachers across the Province went out, went to a particular house, and said: Look, I saw in your record that you need three more credits. Come back to school and we will work with you to get those credits.

How they do it is they set up a special circumstance in the school. Because any of us who are in schools, any of us who have been in schools, anyone as a parent or anyone who have worked with young people will recognize that not every child will fit in to a certain peg, a hole, that not all students are academic. Some have attention deficit and to sit a particular child in that seat and expect that child to stay there for the full course of the day becomes an unbearable task for this particular child, so you make accommodations.

I saw, in these two students, that they are going to graduate. I went and spoke to the young girl who was there. She has come back and she was doing the last exam that will give her that final credit and she will graduate. The other young fellow, I would say the other young fellow has probably been out of school for maybe two years, but this is the type of efforts that people are making to make sure that students get back in the system.

My point again is that while we are not in the perfect world, that we do everything that we can to make sure that no student is left without giving the best of the effort. I will acknowledge some of the comments that he made, the socioeconomics that come into play of it, and I jotted down the health. We need healthy students in our schools if they are going to be

successful. If there are mental health issues, those are things that at one point was probably brushed off to the side. It like the bullying; we attributed it to child play, but we know now that it is very much more than that. So, we do whatever we have to, to contend and have children and the older students become successful.

I just want to speak – because this ten minutes goes rather quickly – to some of the people who work in my department and the dedication that they put into their job. If I were to mention the name Jim Tuff, I can pretty well assure you anybody who has been involved in the education system will know what he does. He works with the Centre for Distance Learning.

Jim is an example of somebody in the department who is so involved in their job. Not only is he recognizable in our Province and the school system, he has become recognized as one of those educators who is the lead in distance learning. Jim knows this inside out.

I took part in a lesson a little while ago that when I was in school, when I was principal of the school, it was not offered. We are now offering music. I went out to the Bay Roberts area and took part in a session with Andrew Mercer. Now, they might have commented about my guitar playing. There are some days it is on and some days it is off. I have to let people decide whether it was on or off that particular day.

To be able to take part in that and what was really exciting about it is that online at the time I was, there is a school about two-and-one-half kilometres from my house and one of the students who was involved in that was a young girl by the name of Kendra Murphy. She was doing the music lesson online that same particular day.

One time you offered the maths, the sciences, English, the advanced courses; now we are offering music. There is a site in Central Newfoundland that is offering the skilled trades set. So, projects are being worked online like never, never before. The changing

demographics of our Province tell us that we are probably going to need more of these types of programs.

You can count on people like Jim Tuff, Andrew Mercer, and these types of teachers who are going to keep and raise that bar high, and they are going to continue the work that needs to be done.

Again, what is this about? It is about the best interest of the children, the students, and ensuring that they have a quality, quality education.

Then, if I look to the department and support services, Bernie Ottenheimer heads up that division right now, and a lot of people may not know of these people who work in the department. These are very professional people. In her department they would have people working with teachers, students, and parents of children with autism and other disabilities. They would also have people who specialize in working with students with vision problems, with hearing problems, and a variety of challenges that students face.

In my last minute, Mr. Chair, I am going to speak about the folks – Paula in my division who works with this Power of Play campaign. I hope that people saw recently – and I do not want the Member for St. Barbe now jumping on this – the Power of Play campaign and the new ads that are out; they are exceptional ads. We went down to the launch – and this is a good test; here is a good test. They played one of them at the launch and this little child there about three years old stood up in front of it and what should she say? Play it again. They played it again, and they asked that she play it again.

Any of us who have been in education and any of us who are parents or grandparents knows that when a child wants something repeated, whether it is a good book that you repeat over, and over, and over again, you know that you have captivated a child in that ad. Therefore, we are hoping that we have captivated parents in those ads, too, so that they can engage with their

children in the activities that are critical to the development of their children and critical in that early development.

Mr. Chair, my time is up. My final comment is as I have said before: I tip my hat to the public service. I thoroughly admire their dedication to their jobs. Our Province is in good hands because of the people who we have in the public service.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR (Littlejohn): The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: There is no doubt that the Opposition will support this bill. The Opposition would have supported this bill two hours ago before government started running the clock and patting themselves on the back. As a matter of fact, I expect to see a busload of chiropractors outside any time to straighten out these members. They are all bent out of shape patting themselves on the back.

This almost feels like a government filibuster. I feel like the intervening speaker in the government filibuster while they say what a great job they have done when, in fact, they are the only ones who are saying they have done a great job. In truth, they have not done a great job. This government is neither progressive nor conservative. I would say out of gas, out of ideas, disorganized, and lost would be a little bit better of a title.

There is no doubt that the Opposition wants to pay the Christmas bonus to all the public employees. The public employees certainly are entitled to it. Mr. Chair, I would like to refer to the most vulnerable workers in this Province. It is not the minimum wage workers. The minimum wage workers have some protection. The most vulnerable workers in this Province is the older fish plant worker who has been abandoned by this government. The older fish plant worker in a small, remote community.

I hear the heckles from the other side because only a handful of the other members from the other side represent districts with older fish plant workers and, in fact, the others just do not care. That is why they sold them out through CETA. That is why the older fish plant worker who is forty-five, or fifty, or sixty, or sixty-two – somebody who has been seasonally employed for maybe when the fishery was good for thirty-five or forty weeks of the year, someone who brought number one dollars, primary production dollars, into this economy – is no longer needed, no longer wanted, and an embarrassment and a liability.

The same older fish plant worker who was ridiculed by Margaret Wente, discussing the lovely ghetto they work in; ridiculed by Stephen Harper as being people from a culture of defeat. That is how they look at us and that is what this government endorses. Those are the most vulnerable workers.

The people who are getting the \$1,400 lump sum clearly have earned it, but I can only imagine if you are a fifty-eight or sixty, or sixty-two-year-old fish plant worker who has worked in a plant maybe in Marystown, I think they are all gone by now; maybe in Burin, but I think probably they are all gone; maybe in Jackson's Arm, but I think they are all gone; perhaps in La Scie, but I think they are all gone. I think in Black Tickle we are getting ready to get rid of them, too.

Last week, we were saying there are 9,000 fish plant workers. Well, this week there are 8,850 because there are 150 more gone from the failed aquaculture experiment on the South Coast. That will be the Harbour Breton fish plant workers. These are people who work in uncertain times in a competitive industry totally abandoned by their government.

When you look at the – I understand we are going to be going all evening, so this is going to be more like a filibuster than anything else. I expect to have five or six more ten-minute segments before we finish. The genesis of all of this began – maybe if you go back to the creation of Fishery Products International; that actually was created by a Progressive

Conservative government. That was in the 1980s when the party that had the government actually was a Progressive Conservative government and gathered up twelve or fifteen or so failed fish plant operations, put them all together and created a business for the people. A business of the people that would catch the people's fish, would do the processing, would create employment, would maintain wealth and create wealth around the Province.

Ultimately, the Fishery Products company was privatized. It was privatized by way of the Fishery Product Act, an act that this government abandoned. The Fishery Products Act contained within it safeguards so that none of the big players could take over the company.

Mr. Chair, the fishery in this Province now is really controlled by an oligarchy. Some people said the cartel through its cartel –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. BENNETT: Yes, it an oligarchy. As a matter of fact, it is similar to what happened after the Soviet Union fell apart and there were a group of businesses that were running the Soviet Union. Well, the fishery in this Province is run by an oligarchy of maybe fewer than half a dozen key players. They really have shared it up among themselves. Doing away with the minimum processing requirements is the final stroke they want

To go back to Fishery Products International, it had a provision that nobody could own more than 15 per cent of the shares of that company. That was designed so that nobody could have a controlling interest, nobody could sell it off. The types of investors that invested in Fishery Products International included big pension funds from Ontario. It was a good enough investment for them to invest large sums of pension money in Ontario.

Competitors were permitted to buy shares in Fishery Products International. The Icelanders were permitted to buy shares. Clearwater was

permitted to buy shares. Ultimately, they were able to get together and by way of a vote, they were able to team up. They were able to gang up on the other shareholders and they were able to change the board. They changed the board of Fishery Products International. That would be one way that they could dismantle Fishery Products International.

Why would you want to dismantle a failing company? Well, Mr. Chair, you would not want to dismantle a failing company, unless you wanted to take the parts. You would want to dismantle for your own purposes maybe a successful company.

At the time of the raid on Fishery Products International, this government had legislation before it that was actually voted down. In the course of voting for Fishery Products to be turned into an income trust, the Premier of the Province voted against the government's legislation. Mr. Chair, what an absolute farce.

When has it ever been in constitutional democracies, such as we have, constitutional monarchies that we have, that the Premier would vote against a bill from his own government? It simply perpetuates the farce whereby the Premier is the one who needs to maintain absolute popularity, and the government really is doing his bidding. So you have two sides of the government trying to create the notion that there is some sort of a democratic exercise underway.

Ultimately, the Fishery Products Act was done away with. The company was then basically cannibalized. At the time that Fishery Products was cannibalized, there were 15 million shares in circulation. The share float for Fishery Products International was approximately 15 million shares. Some of those shares were held by people in their little pensions and in their RRSPs, but primarily they were held by five or six big players. The 15 million shares traded for as low as \$6 a share on the stock market. On the Toronto Stock Exchange you could buy Fishery Products shares for \$6 a share. Fifteen million shares would be \$90 million.

Ultimately, when the takeover went forward and people started fighting over the parts they were going to get: Will we get the marketing arm? Will we get the quotas? Will we get the plants? What will we get? They drove the share price to approximately \$12 a share. On occasion, it may have gone slightly higher than that. Mr. Chair, that is still only \$180 million for the entire company that employed a decade or so ago 3,800 people in our Province. It had the vessels. It had 90 per cent of the yellowtail quota. It had plants they were partners of in China, the same plants that OCI is a partner in now because OCI acquired parts of FPI.

Why would they want to ship to China? Well, they would want to ship to China because the Chinese wage is a rock-bottom wage. Clearly, they do not want to have a profit here because they would pay taxes on it. Clearly, they want to be able to export from our country, from our Province, to other lower-labour jurisdictions, our product so they can then process that product at a maximum dollar.

Mr. Chair, it is a hallmark of a less mature economy that we remain hewers of wood and drawers of water. The people who now promote CETA say, well, we are an exporting nation. True, we are an exporting nation and what we export from this Province primarily is raw material. For as long as we export raw materials, we will not grow our Province; we will not grow our people.

The party opposite took power in 1972. In 1972, after twenty-three years of a Liberal government, our population had increased 56 per cent and was now 539,000 people. In the forty years since then, we have had absolutely no growth in population. Mr. Chair, if you can imagine, if a family is so inept and so incompetent that they could not keep their children, this government, and the government that preceded of the same party, the same blue government, failed to grow our population, lost population, and now our population is lower than it was in 1972. They have had more money than any government preceding them, and they have done less with it. They have learned to do

less and less and less with more and more and more.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I look forward to speaking to this bill on a few more occasions yet.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is a pleasure to take a few minutes today to speak to Bill 8, which in effect puts \$1,400 into the pockets of our hardworking public servants, Mr. Chair. It is very well-deserved indeed. In fact, the entire deal of zero per cent, zero per cent, 2 per cent, and 3 per cent certainly recognizes the hard work they do each and every day for our public service. It also recognizes the good negotiating skills of our Premier, the Minister of Finance, and our government. So congratulations to all on a great deal.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS JOHNSON: Mr. Chair, this bill is about the money for the public servants and I just wanted to take a few minutes to speak about my involvement and interaction with public servants over my ten years. I have only positive things to say.

I just recently came from the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services and I have to say the people who work there, their passion shines through every single day. You can drive by Elizabeth Avenue any time, day, evening, weekend, night, it does not matter, and there are always cars there at that building, Mr. Chair. They work day in and day out for the children of this Province and vulnerable children, vulnerable families.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS JOHNSON: Their dedication and their passion is certainly something that I saw. It came through in every policy that we changed. In every piece of work we touched, their dedication was there. That is my experience with the public service and CYFS. The same is true in my few years in Environment.

Now, Mr. Chair, I am in IBRD I guess it is about a month now, and the same is true there. I have done several events, entrepreneurs forum, different business events where you get to meet entrepreneurs, people in business, whether they are starting up a business or they are at various stages throughout their business where they are in full commercialization. One of the things that I hear time and time again is the work the staff in your department do is invaluable. Their work is critical and I cannot tell you how many times I have heard that we would not be here as a business today if it were not for the people in your department.

Yes, the financial investment is important, but the support that they provide right from the beginning where there is an idea, there is something in the works, through pre-commercialization to commercialization, marketing, attending trade shows, every part of the continuum, I have heard that our staff are there every single step of the way, Mr. Chair. They are to be commended for that. It is a great public service that they are doing.

Mr. Chair, this is about our public service as I said. We have heard many members stand up in the House and speak to the positives about the great public service that we do have. I have to take exception with the Member for St. Barbe. I believe it was in Question Period; I do have a copy of Hansard here but I do not have the time and date on it.

In Question Period on Thursday, Mr. Chair, at a time when I thought we would see all members in this House commend our public service, we see a member in this House of Assembly basically attack a public service member. The attack was on the deputy minister in IBRD. Mr. Chair, as I have said I have been there and it was in reference to CETA. His exact words were

“the key architect of this disaster”, and he went on to saying, “This is the same gentleman the Premier tasked with putting together the CETA deal...”.

Mr. Chair, I see that as a pure attack on an amazing public servant. I have been in the department one month and I can only say that he is very dedicated to IBRD, very dedicated to the fishery, but very dedicated and very knowledgeable about every single aspect that is going on in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The man is very brilliant, intelligent, and hardworking. I spent the entire Thanksgiving weekend with him because we were in the office working on the CETA piece, away from his family, all the staff were away from their family on the long weekend and I can tell you there is not a second of hesitation that came from him for spending all of those hours.

So, Mr. Chair, this is about praising our public service and I could not let this session go without pointing out what the Member for St. Barbe had said and attacked one of our public servants – one of the highest level of public servants, one who certainly does not deserve that attack, and is commended by, I would say, many members of the Opposition and many members in the Liberal Party themselves can speak to what a great deputy minister he has been.

On that note, Mr. Chair, he did make some comments about CETA. I have to tell you from my dealing with CETA and from talking to the staff, some staff have been working on this file for four-and-a-half years, right from the beginning, their dedication, their whole time in government has been on CETA, Mr. Chair, and what an amazing opportunity this is for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our Premier and our government were able to negotiate an amazing fish deal, not only for Newfoundland and Labrador but for the entire country. The package on fish is now better, because of our negotiating skills, for all of the country. We now have access to the largest consumer, 500 million people in the European

Union, twenty-eight countries, and their consumption around fish is three times the amount of fish that we consume at twenty-six kilograms per capita per year, I believe, is the number, Mr. Chair. That is quite an opportunity to get into their market.

One of the immediate benefits that we will see upon signing of CETA is the elimination of tariffs on 99.1 per cent of our fish products that are important to Newfoundland and Labrador. That is an immediate \$25 million into the pockets of people in the industry, Mr. Chair. As time goes on and we are able to develop the markets there that will definitely – a conservative number would be around 100 million that it would increase to.

So one of the architects and one of the people that helped get us through the last stages of CETA was the Deputy Minister in IBRD; again, another amazing example, a tremendous example, of his hard work and dedication to the people of this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Chair.

Tomorrow we will be debating a private member's motion on CETA, so hopefully at that time we will see if the Member for St. Barbe is out there on an island to himself when it comes to this - pardon the pun - because I have to believe that the Liberal Party, the NDP, and the Independents in the House see the value, the wonderful value, in CETA and what it means to our Province. We will certainly see tomorrow when it comes to that, Mr. Chair.

Again, this is about the \$1,400 and the zero, zero, two and three for public servants, Mr. Chair. I am proud to support this bill and really happy that they will be getting this in time for Christmas is the hope.

Thank you very much and thank you for the opportunity to speak.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Is it the pleasure of the Committee to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: The schedule.

CHAIR: Shall the schedule carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, schedule 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, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: WHEREAS it appears that the sums mentioned are required to defray certain additional expenses of the Public Service of Newfoundland and Labrador for the financial year ending March 31, 2014, and for other purposes relating to the public service.

CHAIR: Shall the preamble carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, preamble carried.

CLERK: An bill, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Additional Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2014 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

CHAIR: Shall the long title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the resolution and Bill 8 carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed a resolution and a bill consequent thereto, carried.

CHAIR: The hon. the Deputy House Leader.

MS SHEA: Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report that they have adopted without amendment a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to same.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report that Bill 8, without amendment, is approved.

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, Mr. Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): The hon. the Member for the District of Port de Grave.

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have adopted without amendment a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to same.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of Committee of Supply reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report that the Committee have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to same without amendment.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills that the resolution be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that this resolution 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'.

Motion carried.

CLERK: "That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain additional expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2014, the sum of \$62,517,800."

On motion, resolution read a first time.

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

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, that the resolution be now read the second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that this resolution be now read a second 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'.

Motion carried.

CLERK: "That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain additional

expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2014, the sum of \$62,517,800."

On motion, resolution read a second time.

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

MS SHEA: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, for leave to introduce the Supplementary Supply bill, Bill 8, and I further move that the said bill be now read the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Finance shall have leave to introduce a bill, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Additional Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2014 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service, Bill 8, Supplementary Supply bill, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. the Minister of Finance shall have leave to introduce the Supplementary Supply bill and that the said bill be now read a first time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance to introduce a bill, "An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Additional Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2014 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service", carried. (Bill 8)

CLERK: A bill, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying

Certain Additional Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2014 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 8)

On motion, Bill 8 read a first time.

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

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, that the Supplementary Supply bill be now read the second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the said bill be now read a second 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'.

Motion carried.

CLERK: Second reading of Bill 8.

On motion, Bill 8 read a second time.

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

MS SHEA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, that the Supplementary Supply bill be now read the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the said bill be now read a third 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'.

Motion carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Additional Expenses Of The Public Service For the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2014 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 8)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill is now read a third time and it is ordered that the bill do pass and its title be as on the Order Paper.

On motion, a bill, "An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Additional Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2014 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service", read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 8)

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

MS SHEA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Moving on through the Orders of the Day, Mr. Speaker, we will call from the Order Paper Motion 1.

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

MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

I wish to inform the House that I have received a message from his Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

MR. SPEAKER: Please rise.

As Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, I transmit Estimates of sums required for the Public Service of the Province for the year ending 31, March, 2014 by way of Supplementary Supply and in accordance with the provisions of sections 54 and 90 of the Constitution Act, 1867,

I recommend these Estimates to the House of Assembly.

Sgd.: _____

Frank F. Fagan, CM, ONL, MBA

Lieutenant Governor

Please be seated.

The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation, that the message, together with a bill, be referred to the Committee of Supply.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will now adjourn itself into Committee of Supply and that I will now leave the Chair.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Littlejohn): Order, please!

We are now in Committee of the Whole considering Bill 9, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Additional Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2014 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service No. 2.

Resolution

“That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain additional expenses of the Public Service for the financial year ending March 31, 2014, the sum of \$147,200.”

CHAIR: Shall the resolution carry?

The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, Mr. Chair.

I stand in my place today to speak to Bill 9, which seeks Supplementary Supply totalling in the amount of \$147,200 for the fiscal year 2013-2014, which ends March 31, 2014, Mr. Chair.

Sometimes during the normal fiscal year, Mr. Chair, you cannot actually predetermine certain expenses that you may have to incur. One of those expenses was the total of \$147,200, which certainly requires a special warrant. It is in regard to certain costs that were incurred in holding the by-election in Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair in the district.

I do not think there is going to be too much opposition from the Official Opposition in regard to this bill. As a matter of fact, it should be pretty expedient in regard to going through the House. There should not be a long-winded conversation on it for the simple reason that \$147,200 was required and was not anticipated in regard to when we did the Budget back in 2012-2013, Mr. Chair. The special warrant had not been anticipated. It was urgent and required to enable government to provide the funding for the unanticipated costs of the House. The House was not in session at the time.

This is only in regard to the \$147,200. It is just one of the costs in regard to government, Mr. Chair. As a matter of fact, maybe we will be having another by-election soon, maybe in St. John's, God knows, when the hon. member across the House is sniffing at me and moves on to another place in his life. Maybe he might be in the entertainment industry, God knows.

It gives me an opportunity as well to speak again about my department and, yes, absolutely in regard to the amount, \$147,200. We have forty-eight members in the House. Certainly, we should have those forty-eight members in the House at all times if we possibly can. In legislation we have to hold by-elections in a certain time frame. I am glad to see that, too, Mr. Chair.

It is also important that the people in the district are represented in this House of Assembly as well in regard to interacting with our departments. One of the departments that touch the lives of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians on a daily basis is the Department of Advanced Education and Skills.

Mr. Chair, there are a lot of programs in the Department of Advanced Education and Skills. One of the areas that are certainly of great importance and great interest to me is the skills training and the labour market funding. It served a number of clients, Mr. Chair, and is doing great things in the Province in regard to addressing opportunity in the skilled trades area, especially concerning the major projects we have on the go in the Province. This is really important. Our public service work with people on a daily basis to try to give them the opportunities within the department in regard to the funding, move them through, actually get them out through their training, out to an apprentice, and then through their apprenticeship program up to journeypersons.

Actually I would have to also reference, if my memory serves me right, the apprentices in regard to this Province right now, we have seen an increase in the apprentices registered in the Province by 81 per cent – 81 per cent – since 2007. I say to the hon. Member for St. Barbe, how can you stand in your place in the House of Assembly and preach doom and gloom when you have 6,269 apprentices, an increase of 81 per cent in this Province since 2007? Where are these people working? They are working in meaningful jobs that were created by this government over the last several years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: Meaningful jobs and big projects, Mr. Chair, great big jobs right across this Province that are employing Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, providing them a good living, providing them the opportunity to care for their families, buy good things, take a holiday, or whatever it may be. That is a great thing to see in this Province.

As well, I have to mention that we seen an increase of 98 per cent in journeypersons in this Province since 2005 – 98 per cent increase in the overall. That is a fabulous amount of work and this is being done by my department and especially the people who work in my department, close to 800 people who are working now as well.

We have also introduced new initiatives, Mr. Chair, like the Youth Apprenticeship Program in ten high schools across the Province as well. These are the kind of things that we are doing; we are interacting with our youth early in their lives. We are giving them the opportunity, we are presenting the opportunity, and we are identifying the opportunity. I see right across this Province that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians especially in our youth sector are availing of that opportunity and they are seizing the opportunity to go forward. That is the reason why you have seen an 81 per cent increase in regard to registered apprenticeships in this Province in the last five years, since 2007. That is astounding to me.

In regard to government hiring apprentices as well, seventy-one apprentices are currently employed within government in the Department of Transportation and Works, Memorial University, the health boards, the school boards, and Newfoundland and Labrador Housing; \$9.9 million has been invested since 2006 in that program with 324 placements in total. This is great.

To talk a little bit about the post-secondary institutions and Memorial University, I had the fortunate aspect to have my three daughters go through Memorial. One went on to Dalhousie; she will be a dentist in a few months time. My other daughter is still there working on her Education degree, as well as languages.

We have funding of \$370.8 million in the 2013-2014 budget for Memorial University, which is a 135 per cent increase since 2003. That is 135 per cent increase in the funding that we provide Memorial University to support our youth, to provide them the post-secondary education they require, give them the opportunity to enter a

profession, give them the opportunity to go out and have a meaningful life, give them the opportunity to start a family, give them the opportunity to support that family, and give them an opportunity for the collective family unit to have vacations and have things around them. That is exactly what we are doing because one of the things that we did, and did well since 2003, is invest in our youth and invest in post-secondary education.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: As well, sometimes I hear, and it is good thing, that there are a lot of students at Memorial University coming from other provinces and coming internationally, too. It is not just because of the tuition fees. It is because it is one of the best universities in Canada.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, we might get up sometimes and reference that we do have the lowest tuition fees in Canada, but that is not the absolute reason those students are coming here to avail of the facility, Memorial University, and the professors we have there. It is because they are providing some of the best educational opportunities to our youth in this Province as well as the rest of Canada. As a matter of fact, we have a past prof from Memorial University in our midst who provided some of that particular service and guidance to our youth. My daughter had the fortunate aspect of meeting the MHA at one point of time in her life. She was not able to Twitter me about it, but she certainly texted me. Then I sent her back some remarks and she asked some questions to the hon. member, and I think he was flabbergasted when he found out she was my daughter. The MHA did not know that he was having a conversation with the Minister of Municipal Affairs at the time.

I just want to reference as well that I am sure that the MHA in his former role as a prof down at Memorial University provided some great guidance and great educational skills to those particular students, and I thank him for that, to

be honest with you, because I was in that role many, many moons ago.

MS SHEA: You were a professor?

MR. O'BRIEN: No, I was not a professor, but I was a student. I was probably not a good one, I say to the hon. Minister of Environment and Conservation, but anyway it was a great experience in my life.

College of the North Atlantic: Funding is \$64.2 million in 2013-2014, which is a 27 per cent increase since 2003. Enrolment is totalled now at 5,700 youth – people, actually, because I cannot say they are all youth, and not even at MUN, to be honest with you, even though the major portion of them are certainly in our youth sector. We have people of various ages going to these institutions, and certainly they avail of the services and the great work that is happening in the College of the North Atlantic.

As well, I have to mention our private training institutions. Enrolment is up there. We have a number of institutions across the Province. They offer great services. They take their role in regard to educating our people, the people of the Province, providing them opportunity, quite seriously. I have only been in my role as the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills now for a short period of time, but I have had two meetings with them already.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Chair, the MHA across the way who is having the chat there with me while I am speaking may very well be encouraged to avail of that service, because he might require some of the services provided by the private training institution.

Student debt and student aid: We are moving in regard to that in trying to help Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Our student debt is down; we are trying to move it to a grant system as well and moving that through. It is a complicated piece of work, but we are trying to support our students in every way possible that we possibly can.

As well, I have to go back to Memorial in regard to the Marine Institute. The Marine Institute is doing some fabulous work in this Province providing innovative training to people of the Province. They are recognized worldwide. As a matter of fact, I have had a number of conversations with them in regard to their ocean technology and the innovation approaches that they are taking in regard to that programming, Mr. Chair. It is unbelievable what they are doing in this Province moving things forward.

I have to just mention again in regard to the Poverty Reduction Strategy, which has been hailed in this Province – not only this Province, in Canada and other jurisdictions – as one of the best Poverty Reduction Strategies ever produced, ever tabled in the House of Assembly anywhere in the jurisdiction of Canada and also in North America, Mr. Chair. We are investing in various ways under that strategy a total of \$149 million, \$6.5 million of that for board and lodging supplements for adults with disabilities who live with family – \$6.5 million.

Some people across the House often say: You are not doing anything. You have to be correct in regard to what we are doing. We are investing in people, we are making a difference in people, and we believe in what we are doing. Can we be everything to everybody at once? Absolutely not; but can you strive to be? You can, absolutely. You keep doing that under the budget restraints that you find yourself. You certainly try to invest your money in the areas that are most important, especially into the people who are most vulnerable to this Province and those are people with disabilities. We are doing that, Mr. Chair.

I think my time is running out here now, Mr. Chair. I will take my place in the House and I will probably come back and have another few words to say in regard to this Supplementary Supply bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to take a few minutes to speak to the by-election. It was a long spring in Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair. We all know the Premier had sixty days to call it and we were fifty-five days in because they had great difficulty finding a candidate. I believe after they canvassed the whole area from Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair and made about twenty calls they found someone and they did bring in a very small percentage of the vote. We worked very hard in the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair during the spring and that paid off on June 25 when I came in with some very, very big results.

Mr. Chair, every day last week in this House I did hear people stand on the other side and talk about the growth that is happening in this Province, talk about the small numbers of people on Income Support, talk about the benefits; but the reality of where I travel to on weekends and where I live and where I make my home in Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, the reality is very, very different. That is why the election results on June 25 came out in a very resounding win for me. People are smarter now than they were. People saw that why would you vote for a government that have done nothing but cut, cut, services in our rural communities over the past decade.

Mr. Chair, it is the end of the day, but some people are waking up on the other side because I believe I am hitting a chord –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS DEMPSTER: – when I am saying some things that are true here, Mr. Chair.

People want fairness. We do not want to live in world where certain parts of the Province are growing and thriving and other parts are struggling.

The roads: As I went door to door I heard much, much in the campaign about the deplorable

conditions of the roads. Sadly, the pavement seems to be worse than the roads, holes as big as babies' bathtubs I believe I said one morning on with Bill Rowe.

The ferry service: Certainly a lot of room for improvement there and we have big concerns and issues around that, but I do want to commend the Minister of Transportation. My very first day in the House last week I asked a question about putting extra crossings on the ferry and the Minister of Transportation and Works did see merit in that and saw that it would not take extra money, and I want to commend him for that. We had issues in Black Tickle around food that was spoiling in Cartwright and he addressed that. You have to give credit where credit is due. I agree with that.

Cell service: We have big issues in Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair with cell service and with broadband. We have Red Bay on dial-up service and we are promoting them on world markets with UNESCO status.

Health: We have many, many seniors throughout the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair. We have community clinics and they have to travel to St. Anthony for medicals, for X-rays, for CAT scans, and things like that.

Mr. Chair, they are using a medical transportation program to help them get through. I do not understand why we have a program that consistently takes four to six months to get your money reimbursed. Here are seniors on fixed incomes, sometimes they have to make this trip every ten days, and they are waiting four to six months. It is causing these people financial hardship. If we have a program, maybe we need to look at extra resources there to go in that office so that we can provide a better service to our seniors.

Mr. Chair, I mentioned earlier the by-election was not called for fifty-five days. When I came into this position as a member, I am seeing in many areas that there were opportunities lost because my district was almost a quarter of a year without a member.

One example, Mr. Chair, is the ninety-tens in Municipal Affairs. I went back over the monies that came into the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair for the last ten years and we usually got \$600,000, \$700,000, \$800,000, \$1 million, or \$1.3 million. Mr. Chair, it is absolutely shameful that this year my district got \$65,000 – shameful. We had no member, so every other district got money and we got none.

Mr. Chair, this is the public purse. We are a district with a lot of needs and when applications come in, I believe it is absolutely wrong – taxpayers' dollars – when people in my district do not have clean drinking water, yet there was no member because the Premier did not call the by-election and so we completely missed the boat.

We did recently get some money for the Community Enhancement Employment Program, but, Mr. Chair, we are certainly in need of more money in that area as well.

Williams Harbour is a little community on an island in my district; there are sixteen people on an island. In August their applications went in, they voted to relocate; all of the services are now gone from their community – only sixteen people. The quickest this government can get those sixteen seniors off that island looks like it will be next year. If anything is contentious in the applications, they may be there for another two or three years.

It is absolutely essential that we continue to ensure that a basic service is provided to these people who want to move, but the process is much slower than we had all anticipated.

Mr. Chair, there were many election promises this spring in my district, and some of them now I am working very hard to see that the promises made are being followed up on. I have to say that the people are very pleased right now that they made the right decision on June 25 because we are all looking at where we are in the polls right now. I am happy to say that I am sitting with a party that is on a continual incline, I believe 52 per cent right now in the polls. So we have made the right decision.

Mr. Chair, a tourism development officer is greatly needed in the area. Right now, we have much opportunity there for a tourism development officer. We have the Point Amour Lighthouse, we have Battle Harbour, we have UNESCO, and we have Cartwright with the Mealy Mountain Park. If this government was smart, they would see that a tourism development officer would give them a fantastic turnaround on the dollar.

Tourism right now in the Labrador Straits and Southeast, there is so much potential. We have two super ferries running across the Gulf that is moving about 300,000 passengers a year and our old, dilapidated *Apollo* moved 100,000 passengers last year – 100,000 passengers – and we do not have a tourism development officer. There is so much potential for partnership with L'Anse aux Meadows Viking trails on the Northern Peninsula and with Western there as well. This is something I will continue to push very hard for.

Mr. Chair, physiotherapists: Anybody who knows much about physiotherapy, you do not need a lot of equipment to move from one place to another and provide the service. Why do we not have travelling physiotherapists in this district? We have people who travel 300, 400, or 500 kilometres on a gravel road to see a physiotherapist, and when they get back their back is in the same condition as when they started, or probably worse.

A lot of these things you do not need a lot of money to fix; you just need a will to think outside the box and to do things differently. You just need a commitment to a people that right now is not there.

Mr. Chair, I have to again mention the cuts to the EAS offices, Employment Assistance Services offices, that were around the Coast of Labrador since the 1970s.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS DEMPSTER: (Inaudible) very, very vital service. What the EAS offices did was help unemployed people become employed, and I have many, many stories that I could stand here and tell you. Now this government thinks that by calling a 1-800 number in Goose Bay, some 600 kilometres away, is acceptable and is just as good a service. It is not. It is not acceptable.

I said it before and I will say it again, at a time when the labour market in Labrador has never been stronger we will end up with more people on Income Support, because they do not have anywhere to go to look for help with job search. They do not have anywhere to go to look for help with their resume or things like that. It is very, very sad, Mr. Chair.

Zone boards, Mr. Chair, did valuable work. I can drive down through my district and I can see all around kiosks and pull-offs, see opportunities where zone boards did valuable work. Assisted community groups write proposals and – Mr. Chair, I hear the members across the way. I must be touching a nerve or something because they are slightly distracting me here. Forgive me, Mr. Chair.

Zone boards played a vital role in co-ordinated economic development. They were moving projects forward, and there was return coming back on that. Kiosks and pull-offs increasing tourism into the area. I do not understand, Mr. Chair, why this government cannot see that investing money gives good return. They just do not seem – very short-sighted there in the vision.

Mr. Chair, the tendering process; I have to say the tendering process seems to be just as slow as the Premier was calling the by-election, because here I am four months and do not have an office for my constituency assistant to serve the people. My constituency assistant is working from a bedroom in her house trying to serve the people of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, and I believe that is very unacceptable, very unacceptable. We certainly need to see what we can do to expedite that process.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS DEMPSTER: It is very inappropriate that this government can take that lightly. It is acceptable to them that there is no office to serve the people in Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

Muskrat Falls, Mr. Chair, it is unbelievable that they are proud that a handful of people are going to benefit. I had someone reference the other day a contract that went into my district. Two or three people will benefit from that while we still have scores and scores of people who are looking to work there in Muskrat Falls. People who are skilled – I have seen their resumes, they are qualified. Yet, every time you get on a flight to travel somewhere in or out of the district, there are probably twenty-five people flying back to the Maritimes, flying to Ontario, flying somewhere to the Island while people in my district continue to seek employment on that site.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MS SHEA: Mr. Chair, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, that the House rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report progress.

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, Mr. Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): The hon. the Member for the District of Port de Grave.

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred, and have directed me to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of Committee of Supply reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

When shall the report be received?

MS SHEA: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted. Committee ordered to sit again on tomorrow.

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

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, that the House do now adjourn.

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

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Motion carried.

Tomorrow being Wednesday, this House now stands adjourned until 2:00 p.m. tomorrow.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 2:00 p.m.