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HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Ross Wiseman, MHA

Thursday

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

MR. KING: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader, on a point of order.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to just correct some information that I gave in Question Period yesterday which contradicted the Minister of Fisheries. The House Leader asked a question around the \$17 million commitment to the St. Lawrence mine. The actual amount drawn down on that for engineering and design work is \$637,000.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS MICHAEL: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Third Party, on a point of order.

MS MICHAEL: I rise on a point of order.

Yesterday, at the end of the debate on the government private member's motion, there was a vote on the motion and the Speaker ruled the motion defeated – twice.

Once the Speaker has ruled on a motion, the House cannot revisit that question, even if the Government House Leader calls for it.

Pages 567-568 of O'Brien and Bosc, the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Second Edition, 2009*, states that when the question is called, the Speaker will take a voice vote. "He or she will ask for the decision of the House by saying, 'All those in favour of the motion will please say 'yea'; and then, 'All those opposed will please say 'nay'. The Speaker listens to both responses, judges the voices and the sense of the House, and states his or her opinion as to

the result: 'In my opinion, the yeas (nays) have it'. If there is no objection, the Speaker then declares the motion carried or negated, as the case may be...."

In the case of the vote yesterday, the Speaker ruled two times that the vote was defeated, and then adjourned the House.

We find also on pages 582-583 of O'Brien and Bosc, referring to results of a vote: A Decision Once Made Must Stand.

This is what it says, "A decision once made cannot be questioned again but must stand as the judgement of the House. Thus, for example, if a bill or motion is rejected, it cannot be revived in the same session, although there is no bar to a motion similar in intent to one already negated, but with sufficient variance to constitute a new question. This is to prevent the time of the House being used in the discussion of motions of the same nature with the possibility of contradictory decisions being arrived at in the course of the same session. It is not in order for Members to 'reflect' upon (i.e., to reconsider or go back upon) votes of the House, and when this has occurred, the Chair has been quick to call attention to it." Reference 360 in O'Brien and Bosc. "Members have also occasionally called attention to the rule." Reference 361.

"The House may reopen discussion on an earlier decision (i.e., a resolution or an order of the House) only if its intention is to revoke it" – reference 362 – "this requires notice of a motion to rescind the resolution or discharge the order, as the case may be." Reference 363.

We are asking that the Speaker stand by his decision that the motion was defeated. As well, Mr. Speaker, the daily proceedings were adjourned for the session of the House of Assembly, it being 5:00 o'clock as per Rule 9.

From our own Standing Orders, Rule 9 says; "If at 5:30 o'clock in the afternoon except on Wednesday, the business of the House is not concluded, the Speaker shall leave the Chair until 7 o'clock. At the hour of 5 o'clock on

Wednesday afternoon the Speaker adjourns the House without question put.” Rule 33 says basically, “A motion to adjourn... shall always be in order....”

Mr. Speaker, how can a member try to function in the House of Assembly if the practice becomes that the government can simply say the House is in session after it is 5:00 o'clock on Private Members' Day when the House has been declared adjourned by the Speaker? The only way that the Opposition can do its job under such a system would be to camp out in the Chamber all the time after adjournment in case the government decides that the House should be suddenly seized of a Division.

Therefore, we ask that the Speaker's decision, that of the decision that the motion was defeated, stand, and also that he remind the House that once adjourned, the House cannot be recalled except under the House rules until the hour outlined under Rule 8.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you review the end of the proceedings of the House yesterday and let the motion stand as per your original ruling. If government members wish to reverse the vote, that they move a motion with proper notice and take the proper action.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader, to the point of order.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do want to speak first of all to recognize that Division is in page 13 of our Standing Orders here. Division is provided as part of the rules here any time a member wants to call Division so that the votes are duly recorded, where each member stands in his or her place to indicate how they wish to vote. That is a practice provided in the Standing Orders and it has been an ongoing practice provided in this House of Assembly, at least since I have been here, 2007.

I have also, and some of my colleagues, had a chance to review the video that the member

opposite references. It would be my suggestion that I stood here, as House Leader, on my feet before 5:00 o'clock asking for Division. I think you may see some conflict between the time the House was adjourned and when that occurred, but the video clearly shows, in my viewing of it, that I was on my feet before 5:00 o'clock, before the House was adjourned, and had every right, as any member does, to stand here and call for Division as provided for in the Standing Orders.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we acted yesterday, as a government, the way we have every right to do, just as members in the Official Opposition or the Third Party have a right to do. We followed the Standing Orders. A vote occurred; you made a ruling. We called for Division to record the vote, and that is provided for in the Standing Orders, so I do not believe there is a point of order here.

MR. SPEAKER: Any further comments to the point of order?

The hon. Leader of the Third Party, to the point of order.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, just one more point in response to the Government House Leader. The difficulty in reviewing both Hansard and the video, which I have done, and done more than once, is that there was a whole section of what happened here in the House that is not recorded, because the minute that the Speaker said this House is adjourned, with everything that goes with that, the minute that happened, the recording ends. The vocal recording ends.

There was a whole interchange here in the House that now is not part of the public record. It was after that interchange that the decision to allow Division happened, which was after the adjournment of the House. We will not see either in Hansard or in the video a whole section of what happened between the call for adjournment and the decision to allow the Division to happen after the call for adjournment. I would like that to be considered by the Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader, to the point of order.

MR. KING: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

I recognize there may be lapses in the video, and I want to say this in the kindest of regards to the Speaker, and in respectful regards, but it is my contention that I stood in my place before 5:00 o'clock as Government House Leader and I had a right to be recognized when I called Division. The grey area seems to be when the House had been adjourned by you and when I had been recognized, but I would suggest clearly, a Government House Leader has a right to stand here on a point before 5:00 o'clock, before adjournment, and be recognized by the Speaker.

Again, I submit to you that I see no point of order here.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The Speaker will undertake to review the tape and transcript of Hansard and report at a later date.

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we will have members' statements from the Member for the District of Exploits; the Member for the District of Bonavista South; 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; and the Member for the District of St. John's North.

The hon. the Member for the District of Exploits.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: Mr. Speaker, in the spring of 202, a neighbourhood senior approached the staff at the Dr. Hugh Twomey Centre and asked if he could turn some sod and grow some vegetables on that property.

With interest and support from the community groups like the seniors working group, the Boys

and Girls Club, Legion Action Committee and funding from the Central Regional Wellness Coalition, the Community Garden Project was born.

Mr. Speaker, today there is a Community Garden Committee in place and they have been working hard to recruit hobby farmers to guide the project.

The committee is utilizing a resource manual from the Newfoundland and Labrador Food Security Network. The project is open to residents fifty-five years of age and older.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating the Community Garden Committee on their recreational and healthy initiative.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Honourable colleagues, I rise in this House today to applaud the Bonavista Mockbeggar Mudslashers, a team of seven young boys, who, in June of this year, won the Under 17 Play On provincial tournament. The two-day street hockey tournament took place at Memorial University, where the Mudslashers beat out approximately thirty teams.

The team's victory can be attributed to a lot of practice and hard work. After much fundraising throughout the summer, the boys headed to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, to represent Newfoundland and Labrador in the Under 17 Play On street hockey championship on the nationals. Right now, Play On is Canada's largest street hockey competition. We can certainly be proud of these boys who played some great games and took home an impressive third place finish in Canada. We also need to

recognize the parents who helped the team with training and fundraising.

Mr. Speaker, hon. colleagues, please join me in congratulating Matthew Fisher, Tristan Gray, Ethan Street, Nathaniel Duffett, Conal McNamara, Brent Monks and Brad Paul in their outstanding performances during both tournaments, and the true sportsmanship each member displayed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Harbour Main.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HEDDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate eight outstanding high school graduates in the provincial District of Harbour Main.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador awards \$1,000 Electoral District Scholarships to three high school graduates in each electoral district with the highest marks. This year, Mr. Speaker, the three recipients were Katie Cranford and Amy Barrett from Ascension Collegiate in Bay Roberts and Yaneesh Jerath of St. Bonaventure's College in St. John's.

Also, Mr. Speaker, there were five students who received the Centenary of Responsible Government Scholarships, which are valued at \$1,000 each to individuals with the highest marks. This year the recipients were Kristin Downey of Ascension Collegiate, Bay Roberts, Courtney Cole, Harrison Lake, Cassie O'Leary, and Devon Percey of Roncalli Central High, Avondale.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating these students and wishing them well in their future education and training.

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 rise today in this House to recognize Mr. Greg Smith, a teacher at Amalgamated Academy, Bay Roberts on receiving the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence.

This award recognized fifteen teachers from across the country for their innovative and outstanding teaching techniques. Teachers instill in their students a love of learning through information and communication technologies to better equip their students for the twenty-first century.

The award has been called the Nobel Prize of teaching by a recent recipient. Mr. Smith believes doing equals learning and it is hard to argue when you see his students in action. He regularly finds ways to connect his students with classrooms in other countries through the Global Virtual Classroom community or through ePals, a pen pal project, and encourages his colleagues to do the same.

A colleague said his passion for teaching and his students is evident daily. From his approach to curriculum and technology integration, to crazy costumes for Halloween, Mr. Gregory Smith is one of our finest.

I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating this outstanding and innovative teacher.

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, on Friday evening, November 22, the sky became brighter with a new star as Heaven received another angel. Fifteen-year-old Alex McCarthy of Benoit's Cove was taken from us at a much too young of an age.

Alex was a Grade 10 student at Corner Brook Regional High School, loved life, was very charming and free spirited. His smile could lift your spirits and the twinkle in his eyes could brighten any room. For such a young age, he touched so many people in a positive way and his grandmother, Anne Marie, told me that he is gone to Heaven to get some hugs and kisses because he gave away all of his on earth.

Mr. Speaker, Alex was kind hearted, friendly and always showed acts of kindness to his family, friends and strangers. He will be remembered for his kind acts and volunteer work as a junior firefighter with the Lark Harbour/York Harbour Fire Department.

In Alex's memory, scholarships to educate on seatbelt safety and Acts of Kindness are being set up by two local fire departments.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in extending condolences to Alex's family and trust they will find the strength and comfort in knowing that Alex's life, while cut short, made a difference in the lives he touched and his legacy will live on.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KIRBY: I stand today to congratulate the students and staff at St. Andrew's Elementary School and, in particular, Kindergarten teacher Mrs. Susan Jackman, on their successful efforts to access funding for their "Happy, Healthy Heads" project.

Last July, Mrs. Jackman applied to the Awesome St. John's Foundation for funding to

purchase 100 helmets for students at St. Andrew's Elementary, a centre city school in St. John's North.

The trustees of Awesome St. John's, who fund initiatives through their own donations, awarded a \$1,000 grand prize to Mrs. Jackman's proposal at a public event at the Rocket Bakery in August.

Canadian Tire's Jumpstart program also gave significant support to the project by donating an additional 255 helmets as well as an assortment of knee pads, elbow pads, t-shirts, and sports bags.

In the end, this excellent school-based initiative provided each St. Andrew's student with a helmet and other safety equipment. Because of the generous support shown from the project sponsors, Mrs. Jackman and her students had enough helmets left over to donate to another school in the neighbourhood.

I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating Mrs. Susan Jackman and St. Andrew's Elementary on this awesome community initiative.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the latest President's Report from Memorial University. On Monday, November 5, I was taken on a virtual tour of Memorial's annual retrospective called *Face Forward: President's Report 2013* by Dr. Gary Kachanowski. For the first time, the report is a standalone multimedia Web site, which provides an overview of the university's accomplishments.

Back in 2003, the provincial government capital investment in Memorial was \$1.2 million. Today, in 2013, this government, Mr. Speaker, is investing \$40.8 million, an increase of 3,300 per cent. This substantial funding is paying for research, new labs, residences, teaching and research space. This support also includes planning for the new core sciences building, which will create nearly 1,440 direct and indirect person years of employment and approximately \$94 million in labour income during its construction phase.

Today, at Memorial's campuses in St. John's, Corner Brook and Harlow, England, plus online education, there are 18,678 people enrolled at our university – an impressive number.

I would also like to include a story of accomplishment from Labrador, where seventeen students in Happy Valley-Goose Bay completed a customized, four-year, Bachelor of Social Work program this past June. This partnership between Memorial, the Labrador Institute, the Nunatsiavut Government and College of the North Atlantic has resulted in over 90 per cent of graduates being employed. The program also won the national *Changemakers Initiative: Inspiring Approaches to First Nations, Metis and Inuit Learning* award in 2012.

Mr. Speaker, as announced in Budget 2013, Memorial is undertaking an efficiency review. The review will help position the university for the future and tell us how to best target investments to continue to support innovative growth and programming. Any efficiencies the university finds will be reinvested to its post-secondary programming, students and other priorities as the Province's only university continues to deliver world-class post-secondary education. With an ongoing tuition freeze, millions invested in research funding and infrastructure and planning for the future, Memorial University continues to set a course as a leader in post-secondary education across Canada and the world.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS DEMPSTER: I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

Mr. Speaker, the President's Report at Memorial University is an award winning publication, having earned top prize in the past by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education for its creativity and edgy presentation.

The marketing and communications division at Memorial itself is an award winning team of creative professionals. I think government could learn a lot from Memorial on harnessing its internal creativity for marketing and communications.

Memorial University is a world-class institution, having surpassed its fundraising goal during its Dare To campaign where over \$50 million was raised for the university. Memorial is poised for exciting growth. The story of a customized social work program for students in Happy Valley-Goose Bay is an inspiring example of how institutions can collaborate to overcome challenges like geography to prepare students for the future – our students.

As the member for a rural region, I hope to see more of this. I am not comforted by the minister's statement that an efficiency review at Memorial will position the university for the future. Memorial is not only an incredible incubator for today's youth; it is a great place to work.

Cutting investments to post-secondary education and research, not to mention the stalled commitment of this government to replace provincial student loans with grants, are a step backward. Memorial is instrumental to our Province in many ways, and cutting funding would be reckless and short sighted.

Thank you.

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

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

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: MUN students, faculty, and staff must be breathing easier because of the prospect that long overdue investments in buildings and facilities are in the works. Given the serious problems with asbestos and mould in the Science Building we are hearing about, the new investments could not come soon enough.

I hope the upcoming efficiency review is not going to have the same devastating results for workers and programs as the core mandate review of government departments and agencies did in 2012; however, Mr. Speaker, I do congratulate –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: – MUN on its 2012 Changemakers Initiative award for the social work B.A. program cited in Labrador. I hope we will see more initiatives that build on the designated Aboriginal seats program, with the goal of more Aboriginal students graduating from post-secondary institutions.

Thank you.

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

AN HON. MEMBER: 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.

Memorial University of Newfoundland and College of the North Atlantic are world-class institutions that we can be proud of.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KIRBY: By keeping tuition affordable, we are creating access for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians of all ages, but also attracting a great number of students from across the country and around the world. Those students also see the excellence in our public college and public university.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak to this government's tremendous success in creating partnerships with municipalities, corporations, and landowners across the Province to achieve conservation of wildlife through habitat protection.

The Municipal Stewardship Program is unique to Newfoundland and Labrador, and was developed to encourage municipalities to recognize the value of wildlife habitat found in and near their municipal planning boundaries by accepting a stewardship role.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a banner year as seven municipalities have signed or expanded their existing stewardship agreements. These include new agreements in Flatrock, Bonavista, Frenchman's Cove, Garnish and St. Lawrence, as well as expansions of existing agreements in Grand Falls-Windsor and Deer Lake. Mr. Speaker, this brings the number of municipalities that have signed municipal stewardship agreements with the Province to thirty-three.

The provincial government's municipal stewardship is a result of the Eastern Habitat

Joint Venture program – a partnership of governments, conservation organizations, and local people implementing the goals and objectives of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. This plan was signed by Canada and the United States in 1986, expanded to include Mexico in 1994, and pursues a partnership approach through habitat and species joint ventures. These partners work together to conserve wildlife habitat, including waterfowl, seabirds and sea ducks, but also for all bird species, right across North America.

Mr. Speaker, since the inception of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture, the department's Wildlife Division has administered and fostered this partnership in Newfoundland and Labrador and has taken a leadership role in working towards its goals and objectives.

The Department of Environment and Conservation will continue to work with the Stewardship Association of Municipalities to achieve future agreements.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the minister for a copy of her statement. I will say that partnering with municipalities to conserve wildlife habitat is important. I am glad to see that the Province is now up to thirty-three. I think that is important.

I recall signing a couple of those stewardship agreements myself, Mr. Speaker, so I know the importance of those.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, before government gets too excited, I will say that government's job on this has not been

consistent. It is good to partner with municipalities to conserve wildlife, but government has not been consistent in this area.

If you look at this year's Budget, with Mistaken Point and the cuts to positions out there –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. OSBORNE: – the bird sanctuary in Placentia – and I know they do not like hearing what I have to say. I know it strikes a nerve.

Mr. Speaker, even more importantly than this, I understand that they cut those positions because they cost money but something that is completely obscene is the reserve out around Burgeo where the federal government – and my colleague for Burgeo – La Poile has spoken on this – want to do a study that will not cost the Province one cent, not a cent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. OSBORNE: All the federal government wants the Province to do is to sign off on it. The federal government will do this study to put –

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. OSBORNE: – a coastal reserve out in Burgeo if the Province would sign off on it.

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement here today. I commend the thirty-three municipalities which have signed stewardship agreements with the provincial government –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MURPHY: – that have taken on the tremendous responsibility of preserving the wildlife habitat within their boundaries. It is a very important role for municipalities. Some municipalities have made this commitment in the face of development pressures on open space with a goal of preserving our environment for generations to come. Mr. Speaker, they will be dealing with future issues, for example, like fracking. It is an important issue coming up.

I hope the government recognizes this commitment by municipalities by ensuring that municipalities have sufficient operating resources into the future as well. It is pretty important.

Municipal stewardship of wildlife habitat needs to be backed up with a provincial commitment to finalizing the long-awaited protected area systems plan as well, the first step of which is to reactivate the Wilderness and Ecological Reserve Advisory Council. We look forward to hearing more from the minister on the Wilderness and Ecological Reserve Advisory Council in the future.

Thank you very much.

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 her statement. I would also like to acknowledge the work that the department has done on the Great Northern Peninsula through the Limestone Barrens Project in places like Flower's Cove, Sandy Cove, and Raleigh.

We need to preserve flora and fauna. We need to look at spaces like our ecological reserves and make sure they are resourced as appropriately as they can be.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, I asked the Minister of Justice about the \$17 million repayable loan at the St. Lawrence fluorspar mine. He clarified those statements today and it is in line with what we have seen in Estimates in April of this year, around \$700,000. The minister went on to say that the company has availed of other sources of funding from Natural Resources and other departments.

I ask the minister: What other departments and what funding has this company availed of? What is the total amount to date?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was asked in regard to the St. Lawrence fluorspar mine and the reactivation. It is a significant project that we are very close to moving ahead with in regard to any drawdown in funds. I indicated there was a drawdown on funds; the actual figure is \$637,000 for engineering and design.

It was delayed a little bit. The company went back and had to revisit the overall cost structure of the project. That has been done; that has been settled away. This year we are looking forward

to moving the project forward. It is great for the Burin Peninsula, a great project, and we are happy to partner with the private sector on that project.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A thirty-minute run dry is a key recommendation of the Transportation Safety Board's 2011 report into the Cougar crash. Over two years ago since that report, there is still no requirement for the thirty-minute run dry on helicopters offshore.

I ask the minister: When will we finally see a thirty-minute run dry as recommended by the Transportation Safety Board and Commissioner Wells?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have stated in this House a number of times our government's commitment and support for offshore safety and it being absolutely paramount and one of the main priorities of our government and I am sure for the people of the Province. For the people who work offshore, it is important that they be able to get to work, Mr. Speaker, and get home safely.

We did have a terrible tragedy in this Province, Mr. Speaker, that resulted in an inquiry. There were twenty-nine recommendations that came from that inquiry and we have been very clear, Mr. Speaker, that we support all twenty-nine recommendations. We have also been clear that the C-NLOPB has the expertise and experience to evaluate and address, not only I guess the offshore safety concerns, Mr. Speaker, and issues and be able to build a relationship with the industry but also in terms of working with Transport Canada as well.

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake about it, our government supports offshore safety and whatever it takes.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, supporting the recommendations is one thing. We know that the Transport Safety Board made that recommendation and Commissioner Wells, of course, supported that. We know now that the thirty-minute run dry is possible but we understand that the C-NLOPB has left this to industry or the oil companies in this particular case.

I ask the minister: Your position to support is one thing, but what are you going to do to see that we get thirty-minute run-dry capacity within so we can protect our offshore safety workers?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue our role and responsibility to advocate for the offshore workers, to advocate for safety and advocate for whatever safety measures that can be implemented. If there are measures that the C-NLOPB in particular feel is warranted and should be put in place and it can be done, Mr. Speaker, in terms of feasible, technical and it can work, we are going to support that, there is no question, and we are going to rely on the experts to make that decision.

Mr. Speaker, with the thirty-minute run dry, obviously, it is a topic of debate. I think we read recently that the capability may be there but there are also challenges with that as well. I do not think we need to lose sight of that, that there is no perfect system, Mr. Speaker. Any of the technology, we will leave it to the experts to

evaluate and implement if it is going to support offshore safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday we learned that the government scrapped seven forestry proposals from Central Labrador. These proposals included 450,000 cubic metres of wood that is currently being cut for the Muskrat Falls Project. It is currently being cut and stockpiled.

I ask the minister: Why did you walk away or dismiss those seven proposals?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, as minister, I want to acknowledge there are certainly tremendous challenges around the fibre supply and the wood that is available in Labrador. In my discussions with industry, they acknowledged that as well. We have worked with industry to try to find some solutions.

We did have an expression of interest. There were seven proposals received. There is an interdepartmental committee, Mr. Speaker, that does an evaluation on these proposals. Our goal is to be able to use this resource. It is a renewable resource. We want to develop that to make it commercially viable to sustain the timbre resources in Labrador for the benefit of the people of Labrador. That is our goal and that is the lens in which we evaluate the proposals. So far, Mr. Speaker, they have not met that requirement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I remind the minister that the 450,000 cubic metres of wood that is being cut to clear the Muskrat Falls Project is not renewable. That is enough wood to operate a pulp and paper mill, for instance, on the West Coast right now. Government rejected the seven proposals from an open RFP and now there are private discussions with other potential proponents.

I ask the minister: Were these potential operators that you are now in discussions with part of the original seven?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, we have had two calls for expressions of interest in the fibre supply, particularly the Muskrat wood. If there is a pulp and paper mill in the Province that could use that, we are more than willing to make it available to them, but they have not come forward. They have not come forward to get that because of the challenges in Labrador in terms of limited local demand, in terms of harvesting cost, in terms of a short shipping season. All of that has implications in terms of the viability of an operation in Labrador.

We had seven proposals, Mr. Speaker, that were rejected. We are talking to another proponent who came in after the EOI. Make no mistake about it, our goal is to be able to develop the timbre resources in Labrador to be able to take care of the Muskrat wood supply and certainly for the benefit of the people in Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, yesterday when I raised the need for bike helmet legislation, the Minister of Service NL shrugged the responsibility off on municipalities. The reality is that head injuries represent the most

severe injuries that occur amongst children and youth bicyclists and this government should be taking the lead.

I ask the minister: Why are you choosing to ignore bicycle helmet legislation and injury prevention?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the health and safety and well-being of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians is of utmost priority for this government. With all due respect to the member opposite, what is happening in our jurisdictions today is municipalities are taking the lead. We certainly are listening to our municipalities and what they are doing. They are taking the lead on this.

Fifty per cent of the urban municipalities, Mr. Speaker, in the Province have these bylaws in place. As well, we encourage anybody who is on a cycle or on a bicycle to wear their helmets. Safety is everybody's responsibility. We want to make sure that we live in a safe community, a safe Province, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that most people out there do understand and do get this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the minister responded in such a way because he answered my question. They are shrugging off the responsibility to municipalities; many who do not have the means to take care of this very important issue. We are one of only three provinces in the country that do not have this legislation.

The Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Paediatric Society, the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association, they all feel that legislation increases the use of safety gear, reduces the risk of head injury, and systematic studies show that the legislation quadruples the use of bicycle helmets.

I ask the minister: I am listening to the experts, why won't you?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, municipalities enact bylaws every day. This is a bylaw that they do enact on a regular basis. It is a good bylaw.

AN HON. MEMBER: No cost.

MR. CRUMMELL: There is no cost to the municipalities, Mr. Speaker, to enact these types of bylaws. Again, Mr. Speaker, it is the responsibility of parents to make sure they are making their children safe. It is common sense, and that is what this is all about. In order to encourage a safe culture within our communities, within our society, we need to take responsibilities, Mr. Speaker, on a daily basis and bring our children –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In September, the Department of Environment and Conservation allowed the organizers of Mud Immortal to use a provincial park to host their event. Mr. Speaker, we know there were safety issues, we know there was not enough water, there was little organization, and very little protection of the park. There were approximately 5,000 people in attendance, and

the minister only allotted four staff members to oversee those 5,000 people. The minister put those 5,000 people at risk. The minister put a protected area at risk.

I ask the minister: Why would government not have more oversight of an event with 5,000 people in a provincial park?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, a park is for recreational use as opposed to a protected area. So people use that for recreation all the time.

Mr. Speaker, the Mud Immortal event happened with about 5,000 people. As a result of that, and because it was somewhat of a unique event in one of our provincial parks, we are reviewing the policy to look at the contracts that groups would require if they are hosting such an event.

In doing so, Mr. Speaker, we still want to make sure that groups, such as probably the Boy Scouts or the Girl Guides, would still have access to our parks in a way that is user friendly so those groups as well are able to use the park.

Mr. Speaker, we will take the event that happened and we will make sure we develop a contract that reflects the needs that would be required under such an event. In doing so, we still want to make sure our parks are ready for the groups who use them most frequently.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Parts of provincial parks are protected areas and this event saw trampled pitcher plants and other sensitive areas. Mr. Speaker, this was a for-profit event that had so little oversight. Only

after an ATIPP request from our party, did we find out that government had no formal contract with the organizer. Without a formal contract, there was very little commitment from the organizer and no commitment from government.

I ask the minister: Why would you allow an event of 5,000 people –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. OSBORNE: – to take place in a provincial park without a formal contract, putting people at risk, putting a provincial park at risk, and putting the Province at risk of liability?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, as a former Minister of Environment, should know that the contracts were in place. If he was so worried about the contracts, he would have developed them while he was the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

Mr. Speaker, we encourage groups to use our parks; groups, whether it is school children, or schools, or classes, or Girl Guides, they use our parks all of the time, and we want to encourage the continuation of these groups being able to use our parks.

We also want to make sure that when there are events like the one that happened, Mud Immortal, that are outside the normal use of our parks, we want to make sure that we have an appropriate contract in place.

Mr. Speaker, the department is looking at the policy regarding these events and making sure we have appropriate paperwork in place.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, I did not need to develop a contract because I did not allow 5,000 people to trample over pitcher plants in sensitive areas.

Mr. Speaker, I will ask the minister again: Why did this government, why did the Department of Environment, allow 5,000 people into a provincial park without a formal contract?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, we welcome many people into the provincial parks in Newfoundland and Labrador. We want the school children, we want the Brownies and the Boy Scouts, and we want environmental groups to have access to our parks in a user-friendly way.

Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that the processes and the contracts that are set up encourage them to come in and use our parks. In saying that, the Mud Immortal was a unique event that happened in our parks. It is not something we are accustomed to in our parks, but it is something that we will look at and we will ensure –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS SHEA: – that we have the appropriate policy, paperwork, and contracts in place in case a group applies for a similar event in the future, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, yesterday when I questioned the minister on the delayed opening of the Fortune plant, he responded that OCI was living up their commitment to the people of Fortune.

I ask the minister: How can that be so when article 3.3 of the agreement states that OCI would employ 110 people full-time from the date of execution, and eleven months later the plant is still closed?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we entered into an agreement last December in regard to OCI, the good news of opening up the Fortune plant, a significant investment, and employment of over 100 people. There were about ten components to that. I went through some yesterday in regard to purchasing of a vessel, in regard to redfish. That vessel is purchased; it is fishing with the majority of crew on it, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians living in Newfoundland and Labrador.

There is a requirement for a \$1 million investment in the facility. When they started the work at the facility they recognized there was more work to be done. To date, there is in excess of \$1.5 million invested in the plant. That does not include other material and equipment that have been brought in, that is new investment. My understanding is very shortly there will be a dry run in production and in the new year the plant will be operating, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, last year the Opposition said we would not oppose this deal; we were cautiously optimistic in hopes that the government could do a deal. Clearly, they cannot do a deal. Another condition of the deal was OCI was to invest \$1 million in capital improvements at that plant within six months from last December.

I ask the minister: Has this commitment been met; or, if not, what are the penalties for this company not complying with the deal?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HUTCHINGS: With all due respect, in his preamble he could have incorporated the fact that I answered the question he asked before he even asked it. In excess of \$1.5 million has been invested in the plant as they went through it in terms of the agreement put in place. They recognized there had to be more infrastructure put in place.

As a Province, we are delighted that they are investing more than what they originally indicated. It means they are there for the long term, longevity of the plant, longevity of Fortune for the region, for the people. I am looking forward to the plant reopening, I said, in the weeks to come. It is a good project.

I do not know where the hon. member is again. He is against aquaculture, he is against Fortune, and he is against activities in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. He is all over the map; we do not know where he is, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, last week two hunters from Conche was rescued by Coast Guard auxiliary that took the initiative after the hunters were reported overdue. Captain Ralph Randall called for a Coast Guard helicopter and eventually had to risk his own life to save the stranded hunters. Contrary to JRCC reports, the helicopter did not arrive on scene at any time.

I ask the minister: Are you aware if a helicopter was dispatched, given it did not arrive on scene?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, our officials were in touch with the centre in Halifax. It is our understanding the protocols were indeed followed, and the appropriate aircraft was, in fact, dispatched.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is the chopper did not show up.

Mr. Speaker, situations of miscommunication such as the one in Conche are happening way too often. Lives depend on properly coordinated search strategies, Mr. Speaker, which is not happening.

I ask the minister: What are you going to do to ensure that the people of our Province have a reliable search and rescue service?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, in terms of the situation that the hon. member references, what is really important is that people were saved. It is quite common in these situations for the nearest vessels to respond, and whoever can get there the quickest should get there as quickly as possible.

Search and rescue is a high priority for this government. We continue to call on the federal government for increased search and rescue presence in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have raised that issue with the federal government at every opportunity. Mr. Speaker, I assure you, we will continue to do so.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, three hours and fifteen minutes is considered acceptable. This helicopter did not show up. JRCC had one dispatched.

I ask the minister: Does he know where the helicopter went?

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

SOME HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, this government's position on search and rescue services affecting the safety of those in the waters of Newfoundland and Labrador, our position has been very clear. We will continue to press for implementation for a twenty-four seven, 365 service. We will accept nothing less and we will continue to call on the federal government for increased resources and increased search and rescue presence in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In terms of this particular incident that the member is referencing, we were in touch in JRCC in Halifax. It is our understanding that the protocols were indeed followed, and we are glad that everybody is safe, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, one quick question, given the helicopter did not show up, I ask the minister again: Where did the helicopter go?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, when an incident is resolved, when people are rescued, when people are safe, obviously any aircraft or marine vessels

that are on their way to a particular site will turn around and go back to where they came from, Mr. Speaker. I fail to understand why the member opposite cannot comprehend that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, we have continued to raise the issue of search and rescue with the federal government at every opportunity. The Premier has shown tremendous leadership on this. I recently had a meeting with Rear Admiral Newton, who is in charge of JRCC in Halifax, to discuss our concerns. I assure you, I made it quite clear to him that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador expect nothing less than improved search and rescue services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, John Noseworthy recommended changes to the Income and Employment Support Act. One of those recommendations was to give staff the authority to make mandatory referrals. He cited one employment program offered by AES where less than 4 per cent of clients showed up.

I ask the minister: Will you amend the current legislation to reflect your own consultant's recommendations?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: Mr. Speaker, before I entered politics I clearly understood from the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, especially the people I served as a pharmacist, that sometimes they want to make a choice themselves. We take into account the consultant's reports and the recommendations but at this point in time on review, I believe, we believe, that people should have a choice. That is certainly the position we

have today, but we will be evaluating as we go forward and we will make a decision one way or the other at various times and continue to evaluate the issue, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, people who go off Income Support for more than thirty days to work have to go through the intake process again. Your own consultant, Mr. Noseworthy, called this a disincentive to attach to the labour market and recommended it be removed.

I ask the minister: Will you remove this barrier to employment from the legislation?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see that after some months, six or seven or eight months, whatever it is, that the Official Opposition has finally embraced the Noseworthy report.

I remember in the last session of the House various questions about wasting money and whatever, but I am happy to report to the House that we have implemented and actioned about 60 per cent of that report. We are looking at the rest of that report and we take the report quite seriously. As a matter of fact, it is quite beneficial in regard to the everyday operation of my department, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills. Certainly I will be looking at it in a go-forward basis, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile, a very quick question without preamble.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, my question is on the Medical Transportation Assistance Program. The financial burden is leaving many

people juggling the necessary cost, the upfront cost.

I ask the minister: Why are you allowing people who require medical treatment having to suffer financially just to get this medical care? Should there not be equal access?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services, for a quick response.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our Medical Transportation Assistance Program has been identified across this country as a superior program. In fact, it has been identified as one of the best programs amongst my colleagues when I go to various meetings with my federal-provincial-territorial counterparts. Our aim is to give help to those people who need help with any transportation.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

We are now seeing in this Province international companies hire strike breakers instead of negotiating with workers. Voisey's Bay Mine workers were on strike for eighteen months because Vale Inco was able to fly in scabs. Now the workers of Labatt have been on strike for eight months.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: When will she finally introduce legislation to ban the use of scab labour in this Province once and for all?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the member for bringing attention to that important issue. We are certainly very familiar with the ongoing labour disputes in the Province, particularly the one at Labatt. I have been engaged with that issue for some time, and my officials have been engaged. It is the policy and the belief of this government that any resolution to a dispute ought to be by mutual negotiation and conciliation, and ought not to be imposed by a third party. I stand by that.

I am also very familiar with what is happening in other parts of the country with respect to that type of legislation. I can say that, as far as I am aware, there are only two provinces that have moved in that direction. A third province moved and then backed away from it. There has been somewhere in the area of fourteen attempts on the federal scene to implement legislation that has been defeated.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In 2007, this government promised to look at implementing anti-scab legislation and have done nothing. Anti-scab legislation would help workers and their families to avoid months of lost wages and encourage both sides to bargain in good faith so that labour disputes do not drag on needlessly for months, and over months in many cases, over a year.

I ask the Premier again: Will her government keep its promise and introduce anti-scab legislation, or were they just politicking during election time in 2007?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I think very clearly we have met our promise. As the member said, we promised to look at it and we have looked at it. I cannot be any clearer than I am going to be right now, that we have no intentions of bringing in anti-scab legislation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I know the workers in this Province are going to be really comforted by that answer.

A helicopter company is in the Province trying to drum up business with the offshore oil operators.

I ask the Premier, Mr. Speaker: Does her government have any influence with oil companies to ensure safety requirements remain the primary concern in the purchase of helicopters that ferry workers offshore?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, if she is asking if our government will choose which helicopter company is going to be providing the services offshore, the answer is no. We are not doing that.

Transport Canada has strict regulations for certifications for helicopter operations. Mr. Speaker, the C-NLOPB is the governing body, the experts that work with industry to develop offshore safety.

Collectively, Mr. Speaker, when there is an opportunity for a contract to come up, companies will bid, proper evaluations will be done, which will include, no doubt, the regulations from Transport Canada and the requirements for offshore safety that the C-NLOPB has in place on behalf of the people

working offshore. Mr. Speaker, no, our government is not going to select the contract.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Then would the Premier recommend to regulators a committee consisting of workers, regulators, and the oil companies to review the purchase of any new helicopters?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, not that long ago – she was talking about campaigning in 2007 or 2011, I am not sure – wanted to tear up the contracts of oil companies. That is how she wanted to treat business. Now she wants to insert herself into how they select contracts.

Mr. Speaker, these contracts are big contracts. It is about offshore safety. They are highly technical. Transport Canada has oversight and certification in certifying these helicopters, and the C-NLOPB has oversight with expertise to look at what is the safest, best investment, the best contractor to provide that service. No, Mr. Speaker, we are going to leave that to the experts. We are not going to bring this to the House of Assembly. We are certainly not going to ask politicians to stand up and decide which helicopter is best to fly (inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Labrador-Island Transmission Link has passed its federal environmental assessment. Concerns remain that Nalcor plans to use Agent

White to clear vegetation along the power lines right-of-way, even though 97 per cent of the cancer-causing poison ends up in groundwater.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Environment and Conservation: What plan does her government have, her department have in place to monitor Nalcor's use of this dangerous chemical?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, Agent White is not a chemical that is prescribed to be used in Newfoundland and Labrador, or in Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: I beg to differ, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Tordon 101.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Environment and Conservation if she will commit to ensuring full public notification of all Nalcor's use of Agent White including advance notice, areas sprayed, and the amounts of herbicide deployed?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, it is important to know that Tordon 101 is not Agent White. Agent White is not used in Canada or in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Has Nalcor done an analysis of the cost effectiveness –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MURPHY: – of mechanical methods of vegetation control; and, if so, is it publicly available or will her department make that publicly available?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, as with every aspect of the development of Muskrat Falls, Nalcor will follow the rules and regulations as set out by the environmental assessments and will be subject to the policies that are prescribed by the Department of Environment and Conservation.

That will be done, whether it is including pesticides or any other work that is being carried out by Nalcor.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Third Party, for a very quick question.

MS MICHAEL: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: What makes her and Nalcor think they will be able to control the cost of their Muskrat Falls Project, which was approved by Manitoba Hydro when the Manitoba Hydro (inaudible) –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

A quick question.

The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources, time for a quick response.

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, we are very confident in the work of Nalcor. Our government, on behalf of the people in Newfoundland and Labrador, are committed to

developing the lowest-cost option for power in our future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The time for Question Period has expired.

I want to respond to a point of order that was raised yesterday by the Member for St. John's South when he raised a point of order with respect to comments made by the hon. the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education and Skills with respect to actions by the Member for St. John's South during the vote on this year's Budget.

I have checked Hansard and the Member for St. John's South voted against the Budget in May, 2013.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled An Act To Amend The Schools Act, 1997, Bill 28.

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

AN HON. MEMBER: Another notice.

MR. SPEAKER: Another notice?

The hon. the Government House Leader, Notices of Motion.

MR. KING: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice under Standing Order 11, I shall move that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, December 2, 2013.

Further, I give notice under Standing Order 11, I shall move that the House not adjourn at 10:00 p.m. on Monday, December 2, 2013.

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, 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 cellphone service in the Town of Trout River, which is an enclave community in Gros Morne National Park; and

WHEREAS visitors to Gros Morne National Park, more than 100,000 annually, expect to communicate by cellphone when they visit the park; and

WHEREAS cellphone service has become a very important aspect of everyday living for residents; and

WHEREAS cellphone service is an essential safety tool for residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS cellphone service is essential for business development;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to partner with the private sector to extend cellphone coverage throughout Gros Morne National Park, and the enclave community of Trout River.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that cellphones are as common today in most places as any other form of service. A cellphone, in most areas, is now being seen as more of a necessity than a convenience. I would bet that all members of this House carry cellphones; some probably carry two cellphones.

The people of Trout River are asking government not to spend any money, not to invest anything, not to do anything except partner with the private sector to help extend cellphone coverage to the Trout River area and also to other areas of Gros Morne National Park.

How much less expensive of a request, of a petition, can this possibly be? Mr. Speaker, it is a request for government to partner with the private sector to extend the service that the residents themselves will pay for. Mr. Speaker, it is a simple request. It is a well-founded request, and I am pleased to present this petition.

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 Labrador-Grenfell Health employs a nurse practitioner at St. Anthony, able to take appointments and operate a full scope of practice for which nurse practitioners are licensed to operate; and

WHEREAS Western Health at Port Saunders and Norris Point on the Great Northern Peninsula has similar nurse practitioner practices; and

WHEREAS nurse practitioners have advanced education and training beyond the registered nurse level and provide comprehensive care ranging from health promotion and prevention to diagnosis and treatment, including other diagnostic tests, prescribing pharmaceuticals, and performing procedures within a legislated scope of practice; and

WHEREAS nurse practitioners are alleviating physicians shortages in rural areas across Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador, by operating clinical practices in collaboration with physicians and other health practitioners, leading to better access to services and shorter wait times;

WHEREAS residents from Eddies Cove East to Reefs Harbour deserve to have regular nurse practitioner clinics that is available to other residents of the Great Northern Peninsula;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to ensure that a nurse practitioner clinical practice be established at the Strait of Belle Isle Health Centre to be fully integrated with clinical practices of physicians.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, at this facility, under the employ, is a nurse practitioner unable to operate the full scope of practice, unable to take appointments. It is causing increase in delays in getting better patient care. There are many times when this facility does not have the full complement of physicians. This is a way to make sure that there is continuity of care, and that residents in the region can see a nurse practitioner, people who have – and what we see in many rural health centres, we see where physicians have quick turnover and they leave.

The nurse practitioner currently employed at this centre is a local resident, has a commitment to the region, has a family there, and likely would stay for the long term. These types of things need to be considered when we are looking at

being able to provide care, because they have that knowledge and they have that ability to work in a team. This is a way to get better value for our health care dollars. I think it is something that should be implemented, and can save the health care system money.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. KIRBY: 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 current government regulations deny busing services to students who live closer than 1.6 kilometres to school; and

WHEREAS parents have expressed concern that children living within 1.6 kilometres of school face dangers in walking to school, such as congested streets and busy intersections, especially during winter weather conditions; and

WHEREAS the \$75,000 review of the school transportation system completed by Deloitte recommended that the Department of Education consider reducing the 1.6 kilometre eligibility zone for kindergarten and elementary students; and

WHEREAS the \$75,000 Deloitte report also noted that only 10 per cent of those surveyed for the school transportation system review agree that the current 1.6 kilometre policy is reasonable for students and families; and

WHEREAS parents are continuing to demand more flexible policies to meet to the current needs of school children;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to change the outdated 1.6 kilometre school busing eligibility policy in order to ensure safe travel to

school for primary and elementary school children in the Province.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, there is no question the Minister of Education can sing a song but he did not get this report for a song, I say; \$75,000 is a significant expenditure for this review.

The petitioners who signed this – if you look at the communities here New Harbour, Dildo, South Dildo, Green's Harbour and Hopeall, these are people who rely on school busing services for their children and agree that it is unreasonable to expect those little ones to walk that distance to school, especially in bad weather.

This is not just rural districts either, Mr. Speaker. If you go up Thorburn Road in the District of St. John's North, you will encounter what is classed as one of the most dangerous intersections in all of St. John's, at Mount Scio and Thorburn Road. There are a number of individuals, pedestrians who have been struck there.

I am very concerned we are going to have problems there again this winter. I am very concerned that it will involve small kids from the neighbourhood who are required to walk to school because the school bus, that is half or three-quarters full of kids, passes by them because of this regulation.

If we can change this regulation before the winter comes in, it would be a great idea, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS the task force on adverse events recommended an amendment to the Regional Health Authorities Act to provide legal protection for employees reporting occurrences or adverse events; and

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

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This is an important petition, Mr. Speaker, that I am very happy to stand and present. While the

presenter does not have to agree with the petition that comes forward, we are obliged to put petitions to the floor if they follow the rules of our House by people who bring them forward. I have to say that I am very happy to bring this one forward and I absolutely support what is here.

Government, in 2007, said it would put whistle-blower legislation in place. They have done it in bits and pieces so that we find in the Environmental Protection Act, for example, there is whistle-blower legislation. In the Labour Standards Act we have a piece of whistle-blower legislation. In the occupational health and safety, that is the one where we have it under the Labour Standards Act. Also, in the Personal Health Information Act we have whistle-blower legislation. Recently, we just passed, last week on November 22, An Act Respecting Food Safety In Food Premises which also has whistle-blower legislation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: I find it very strange government is willing to put these protections in particular pieces of legislation. The ones they have put it in are very important because they all have to do with public safety in one form or another, but most of our legislation does. That is what our legislation is all about is the public good. Having protection for people –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the member her time has expired.

MS MICHAEL: Okay.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

assembled, the petition of the undersigned humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS until 2013, calcium was applied to provincially-owned gravel roads in and around communities to suppress dust; and

WHEREAS dust suppression is very helpful for residents experiencing health conditions like asthma and allergies; and

WHEREAS the cost of administering the calcium program is very affordable to government; and

WHEREAS dust suppression is an effective way of improving safety for the travelling public;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador beginning in 2014 to reinstate the calcium application program on provincially-owned gravel roads in and around communities.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I believe ever since the gravel roads were put through my area anyway, we have always had calcium on the part of the road that was government owned and this year that was cut for a nominal amount of money. What a huge, negative impact it had on our residents in a number of different areas, which I will quickly outline.

Health, we have a growing population of people with asthma and allergies. Actually, it was in June while I was campaigning in Cartwright down the government stretch in twenty-five degrees of heat, and it was like I was in a winter snowstorm the dust was so bad. I was very saddened that night to find out a little girl, seven years old, was medevaced out of that community. I thought: How many medevacs would we have to have, to make up for the cost of what the calcium would have cost to put into place?

Then we look at the environment. Mr. Speaker, we know we have aging demographics. We know most people in our region are seniors and a lot of them burn wood. They hang their clothes on the line to try and save money, but they were not able to do that with the calcium.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS DEMPSTER: Also, it is a big safety issue, Mr. Speaker, when you are walking and there are kids out on the road and you cannot see because of the dust. I had a number of calls this summer from people who had to stop walking. We have to look at the growing obesity and the prevalence of type 2 diabetes and things like that. We are talking about communities that have no or very little recreational facilities. We need to do all we can to encourage them to get out and walk.

Mr. Speaker, I believe when you look at all the deterrents that this lack of calcium cost we certainly would be wise to continue because it is a very good investment into the area, and it is a petition that I plan to bring forward from now to the spring.

Thank you.

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 of 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 service 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 Bide Arm is in receipt of broadband Internet services in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to get petitions from residents of Bide Arm and the Northern Peninsula East because they recognize the importance of working together to make sure the infrastructure in terms of telecommunication resources are available to all residents on that side of the peninsula, as well as when it comes to infrastructure and other needs. It is about working together in a regional collaboration that we can achieve.

If we have broadband Internet for a community of Bide Arm, which was a town previously and now is an amalgamated town as well, it would be a means to greatly promote tele-learning using various centres. We could expand the role of the College of the North Atlantic by having students attend on site, whether it is through distance education or at a site in Bide Arm, for example, where the students would not have to travel over two hours to St. Anthony. They could participate via video and stream, and be able to have that opportunity. This could be a

way in which we could save money by creating new opportunities in rural communities.

Also, there is a federal government program we had previously called Broadband Canada, in which 225,000 households received broadband Internet in unserved and underserved areas. The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador received zero coverage under that program. I am hopeful that under the new federally and with the Rural Broadband Initiative a town like Bide Arm will see coverage.

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 humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS with the passage of Bill 29, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (Amendment) Act, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has weakened citizens' access to information and reduced government transparency; and

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has moved towards greater secrecy and less openness; and

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is breaking its own commitment for greater transparency, accountability, and freedom of information, which it said at one time was the hallmark of its government;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to repeal the passage of Bill 29.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I particularly would like to speak to the issue of the Family Violence Intervention Court. We know that the Family Violence Intervention Court was cut in the last Budget and we have repeatedly asked for the report. There was a report that was done on the Family Violence Intervention Court.

It was a report where all those involved in the operation of the court and those who were clients of the court were interviewed, and there was an assessment done of the court. We have not been able to get a copy of that report. The response has been that it is covered under Cabinet secrecy so it is exempt from access to information.

Mr. Speaker, it is beyond me why a report of one single individual program within the Department of Justice, a program that was working well – because we know elements of that report. We know that the Minister of Justice has said that program was working well. It is beyond me why that would be covered by Cabinet secrecy. It makes no sense whatsoever.

It is a report that showed that program was working well, it was fulfilling its mandate, and it was doing what it was supposed to be doing. Why, Mr. Speaker, would that be covered by Cabinet secrecy? What other reports on programs are covered by Cabinet secrecy?

That should be a report that is in the public domain. This was a public program. There is no commercially-sensitive material. There is no sensitive material that highlights individuals and for privacy issues. Why that report? It makes no sense that a full report like that would be given to Cabinet and that all of Cabinet would be concerned of it. It was a small program that cost \$500,000. It is obvious, Mr. Speaker, that Bill 29 is not in the best interest of the people of this Province.

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 humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS Cartwright is an existing port of call for the *MV Northern Ranger*; and

WHEREAS Cartwright is connected to the Trans-Labrador Highway, providing access to truck freight destined for the North Coast of Labrador; and

WHEREAS Cartwright could eliminate unnecessary travel and cost for freight destined for Northern Labrador now being trucked to Happy Valley-Goose Bay; and

WHEREAS there has always been and continues to be commercial trade between the South and North Coasts of Labrador;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to designate Cartwright as a shipping port destined for the North Coast of Labrador, beginning with the 2014 shipping season.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we had hoped to open up Cartwright this year as a shipping port, but two previous ministers responsible said it is not an option. It is probably a little bit too late to push for this year – the *Northern Ranger* is on her last trip. Mr. Speaker, we have until 2016, as this government across the way is committed to, to having a new ferry in place.

So we have two more seasons with the *Northern Ranger*. You can look at pictures of the Trans-Labrador Highway; you can listen to the statements made by my hon. colleague for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, Mr. Speaker. It is impossible to drive trucks over that highway at the best of times, not to mention equipment that is brand new and the wear and tear on that equipment, not to mention the increased cost.

Mr. Speaker, in this petition, the very first statement says that Cartwright is an existing port of call for the *Northern Ranger*. Now, if you look at the democratic process, the government elected (inaudible) ministerial positions, and the ministers are responsible for the areas that they have been designated. There is a minister that is responsible for Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Speaker. The petitions that we have submitted, this is not the first time that I have spoken to this petition. My hon. colleague from Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair has spoken to the same petition, and the names on this petition are the names that the minister is responsible for. I would like to point that out very clear, that the minister is responsible for the names on this petition.

So, the people who live in the area that have access to Cartwright are asking the minister to open up shipping for a vessel that already uses the community as a port of call, and I ask him to do that before the next season.

Thank you.

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 humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS residents of the Southwest Coast must travel the Trans-Canada Highway between Channel-Port aux Basques and Corner Brook for work, medical, educational, and social reasons; and

WHEREAS Marine Atlantic ferries dock at Channel-Port aux Basques at various hours on a daily basis resulting in extremely high volume of commercial and residential travellers using this section of the TCH; and

WHEREAS the world-renowned Wreckhouse area is situate along this section of the TCH; and

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador initiated a twenty-four hour snow clearing pilot project in 2008 that excluded the section of the TCH from Channel-Port aux Basques to Stephenville.

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to include the section of the TCH from Channel-Port aux Basques to Stephenville in the twenty-four hour snow clearing project.

As in duty bound your petitioners will every pray.

Mr. Speaker, you know I have entered this petition on a number of occasions and it is on today, actually before we came into the House, we are getting reports that the highway between Port aux Basques and Stephenville has been shut down. While it is not due to snow today, it is due to the fact that there is 180 kilometres worth of wind in the Wreckhouse. We have flooding; we have the road washed out. It can be a very treacherous area, even in the best of times. The fact is when you mix snow into that equation we have an area that becomes virtually impassable, as it is right now. That is why I continue to raise this.

I put a request in with the minister's department to have a meeting, to sit down and discuss this again because I think the numbers and the logic support making this initiative active in covering this section of the roadway. To date, I have not heard back. I am hoping that if the minister's staff is listening they will make sure to get that done.

I appreciate the former Minister of Transportation, when he was there he made sure I had that meeting. The current minister has been very accommodating on every other request that I have had, so I do hope to meet and discuss this. I think it is a very important issue. The fact is you can continue to present these petitions, they do get action.

We are having a very tough time out there today. That is why I am hoping we can discuss this issue now before the winter season really and truly sets in.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services, to ask leave to introduce a bill, An Act Respecting Adoptions, Bill 27, and I so move that it now be read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services shall have leave to introduce a bill, An Act Respecting Adoptions, Bill 27, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 27, 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 Child, Youth and Family Services to introduce a bill, "An Act Respecting Adoptions", carried. (Bill 27)

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting Adoptions. (Bill 27)

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

When shall the bill be read a second time?

MR. KING: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 27 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. KING: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I move that An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act No 2, Bill 13, seconded by the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador, be now read a 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 that Bill 13 be read the third time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No 2. (Bill 13)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No 2", read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 13)

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

MR. KING: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, that An Act To Repeal the Health Care Association Act, Bill 26, be now read a 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 that Bill 26 be read a third time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Repeal The Health Care Association Act. (Bill 26)

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 To Repeal The Health Care Association Act", read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 26)

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

MR. KING: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, this time I call from the Order Paper, Order 9, second reading of a bill, An Act to Amend The Insurance Adjusters, Agents and Brokers Act. (Bill 21)

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

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I moved, seconded by the Member for Bonavista North, that Bill 21, An Act To Amend The Insurance Adjusters, Agents And Brokers Act, now be given second reading.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 21, An Act To Amend The Insurance Adjusters, Agents And Brokers Act be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Insurance Adjusters, Agents And Brokers Act". (Bill 21)

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

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Consumer Commercial Affairs Branch of Service NL is responsible for the regulation of insurance in the Province. The Insurance Adjusters, Agents and Brokers Act ensure business licensing and appropriate practices among insurance adjusters, agents and brokers of insurance in this Province. Currently, there are 3,923 individuals licensed to sell insurance in Newfoundland and Labrador.

An issue has arisen with the interpretation of the legislation concerning the reporting requirements for insurance agents and brokers. Mr. Speaker, these amendments will clarify legislation and wording in the act for the purpose of maintaining current practice that has been in place since 1996. In making this clarification in the wording of the act, Service Newfoundland and Labrador will maintain a lower regulatory burden on insurance agents and brokers.

Mr. Speaker, this issue was raised in the Auditor General's 2013 report. As a result, we have reviewed the legislation and determined it needed to be amended in order to more clearly reflect current practice. The current practice that is accepted throughout the country is not to require the filing of financial reports from licensees who do not hold consumers' premiums in trust accounts.

As such, these changes to our legislative language will keep Newfoundland and Labrador in-line with the rest of Canada. As the provincial insurance regulator, Service NL does not believe there is a risk to consumers because

these individuals do not maintain trust accounts. When dealing with these individuals, consumers pay the insurance companies directly.

Mr. Speaker, if all licensees were required to file financial statements regardless of whether they maintain trust accounts, government would have to penalize those individuals and companies who fail to report. This certainly is not the intention of the act nor is it a reasonable regulatory practice. These proposed amendments will ensure the original intent of the legislation and current practice is properly reflected in that financial reports will only be required from those agents and brokers who do hold consumers' premiums in trust accounts.

Secondarily, Mr. Speaker, these amendments also provide that where similar requirements exist both in Newfoundland and Labrador and in other provinces where an agent or broker conducts business, the Superintendent of Insurance may grant an exemption from financial reporting requirements for the effected companies in this Province, therefore reducing red tape created by duplication.

Mr. Speaker, that is all I have to say on this bill. These are pretty straightforward and simple changes. I look forward to hearing what other people have to say. Again, this is a typical piece of housekeeping that comes up on occasion. I look forward to the support of the House on this.

Thank you.

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a pleasure to rise today and speak to Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Insurance Adjusters, Agents and Brokers Act.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister said in his remarks, this is nothing very complicated. It is more of a housekeeping bill. The changing of the legislation is there to reflect the current practices within the government. The reason this legislation is coming forward is probably

because of the Auditor General's report in January of this year. This report identified a number of concerns with respect to the regulation of insurance adjustors and the problems that have come out in the division. If you read the Auditor General's report, it does point that out.

Under the current legislation all agents and brokers need to be licensed by the government, Mr. Speaker. The Auditor General said that the legislation was not clear and that everyone would be required to report to the superintendent. I think that government does not see the need for anyone who does not hold trust accounts to file reports with them. I think that would be just increasing a burden. This amendment with this bill reflects the current practice. It is an appropriate step to addressing the amendment.

Over 4,000 insurance adjustors, agents, and brokers are all licensed with the government under the act. I think this legislation removes the need for all of them to file financial reports, Mr. Speaker. Again, this would increase the burden of the department, so it is clear housekeeping and something that is already ongoing within the department.

I think the groups that deal with insurance are mostly with auto and mortgage insurance that utilize trusts, and not much with the accident or the sickness side of this legislation, Mr. Speaker. Right now the reporting is done twice a year. This gives government an opportunity to detect any issues with trust accounts at an early stage and to try to address them.

Mr. Speaker, there are some questions about issues. What if issues are filed with the financial reports? This is not something that the government would broadcast. As a matter of fact, they would try to deal with them very quickly, and I think that is purpose of this legislation. If there is an issue that is found, the plan is resolve it very quickly so as not to harm the people who are involved in investing or their insurance companies themselves.

I am sure the focus would be to try to determine why it happened and certainly do whatever process to try to resolve the situation, whether it be conference calls, meetings, on-site visits, or whatever strategy that would be best applicable to any issue that may arise.

The other amendment to the bill allows the superintendent to provide exceptions on people or groups that are filing reports – the two largest groups, being insurance adjustors, agents and brokers, in the Province that utilize this trust are actually Newfoundland based and Ontario based. They deal in multiple jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker. If you are from out of Province, you may have some regulatory reporting in place. In this case, the superintendent may feel that it is covered in another jurisdiction and there is no need to report.

Mr. Speaker, there are over 4,000 insurance adjustors, agents and brokers, all licensed with the government, and I think it would be certainly an overburden to have them all come forward at once filing financial reports. I think this legislation is being put in place with the changes to try to alleviate unnecessary burdens that will come out with biannual or semi-annual reporting, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, this is just pretty much housekeeping and we certainly will be supporting this bill. Anything that the member said in his Ministerial Statement that cuts through red tape and saves us a lot of unnecessary work, that fall within the regulations and fall within the trust of insurance companies, agents and brokers is something that we would support.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): The hon. the Member for Bonavista North.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is indeed a privilege to stand today to speak to Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Insurance Adjusters, Agents and Brokers Act.

MR. LANE: No, Sir, the privilege is all ours.

MR. CROSS: I am sure by the time I am finished the pleasure will be all yours, I say to the Member for Mount Pearl South.

As the minister alluded to, this is sort of a regulatory amendment that is clarifying some wording and it maintains a practice that has been in place since 1996. The minister also referred to the fact that there are almost 4,000 individuals in this Province who are representatives. They are representatives of either agents or brokers.

For most of the people who buy insurance – and every single one of us know we buy insurance for our vehicles and our houses; we buy life insurance. What happens when we buy that insurance, the person we are actually paying the money to is not the insurance company or the insurer. That person is a rep. Now, it could be a rep for an agent, and the agent is a one-on-one relationship whereby the agency that that rep is working for is actually the insurer. So when we talk about an agent, that is what that one refers to.

We also talk about brokers – and this is just so that all of our viewers as well can understand the language of what we are talking about. When you refer to a broker, a broker is someone who goes to three or four different insurers and tries to find the best deal for the consumer. Sometimes it is the cheapest deal, but sometimes you can have a more appropriate deal, depending on your claims history or depending on the choice that the consumer would want. So, therefore, we know that that broker looks for what conceivably is the best deal for the person who is seeking insurance.

The other word that we need to define here is the insurer, and that is probably the larger entity or company. It is not 3,923 insurers in this Province; that number is quite less. It is probably the insurers and the agent or the broker that this refers to.

When the agent or the broker accepts money, Mr. Speaker, either money coming from the person seeking insurance, the consumer, and

holds it for a short period of time before it is passed on to the larger company, or it could be coming the other way from an adjusted claim that the money is coming back through an agent or through a rep to a consumer – then there are times when this money is not paid directly in other ways. So it is held in a special trust account. That is what we are referring to here in this amendment, Mr. Speaker, is when there is actually a trust account set up and it is held. Right now, the revision, the last revision, shows that this has a limit of fifteen days before it is either passed on to one or the other in this trust account. While this money is held it must be monitored. It is in the monitoring of this that we need to adhere to this restriction or this recommendation from the Auditor General.

The monitoring that we are going to do will adhere to the Auditor General's request. It will comply and mean that there is safety to the consumer, and also to ensuring companies that the movement of this money is done at an appropriate time. By knowing there is a report that has to be done, this is a deterrent for any delays or mishandling of the funds. This means all the business acts appropriately and it moves through the proper channels at the right time.

The Superintendent of Insurance has the right to offer an exemption to certain agents. They do not have to file a report. If this was clear-cut and the wording said everybody must file a report, then you have a lot of people who do not even have trust accounts would have to file a report at the end of the year. By granting the ability to make this exemption, then the Superintendent of Insurance allows someone who does not actually handle any money and keep it in a trust account, relieves the burden of having to file a report.

If there is a larger company that is part of a bigger corporation that does business in some other jurisdiction in the country – and the member opposite referred to the fact that some of the insurance companies here, the insurers deal with Ontario, then if they are filing a report in Ontario that covers the small portion of business they do here in our Province, in Newfoundland and Labrador, what happens is

they do not have to file a second report. If it is showing all of the activity that is happening in Newfoundland and Labrador on the report they are doing there, they do not have to do a separate report here. It gives the superintendent the ability to do this.

It is quite clear, and as our minister alluded to, it is pretty straightforward. Just in summarizing, there is safety to the consumer and the insurer through this. There is a deterrent to any mishandling of funds. Purely from an industry perspective, there is really no change in business here. The business model and the business plan just flows as normal. It is talking about a reporting period, but the actual business does not change.

The officials in the department this morning when we were doing the briefings were quite confident with the standards we have set up here in the Province for this. That these checks and balances are in place and they are reducing any unnecessary activity.

We feel quite confident that this legislation is protecting the consumer and the insurer. It respects our Auditor General's wishes. It is something I can very easily support, and I assume most or all of our hon. colleagues assembled will support this legislation amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I take pleasure to come to my feet again and talk briefly on Bill 21. There does not seem to be anything major to it but there are a couple of points. First of all, we had a great briefing this morning from the staff. I would like to commend the minister on the quality of staff he has working right now in that office. Again, thanks to the officials in the department.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's East, is your mike on, I ask the hon. member?

MR. MURPHY: Yes, Sir, it is.

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

MR. MURPHY: Okay. I do not know if you heard me or not, Mr. Speaker, so just to repeat, I want to thank the minister for the briefing this morning. It was a good briefing. It was pretty quick and everything. There is not too much detail to this particular piece of legislation that we are dealing with here today, the amendments in question, but I want to thank the minister for the briefing from his staff. He has good staff there, so thanks to the officials of his department.

Mr. Speaker, there is really not too much to this, like I said. What they are doing is addressing a section of the Auditor General's report of 2012 when the Auditor General came out and said there were a few problems here that needed to be addressed. It was the Financial Services Regulation Division of the Consumer and Commercial Affairs Branch at Service NL that is responsible for regulating individuals and companies that provide financial products and services to the public. The Auditor General came forth with a couple of these points that he wanted his department to delve into and the minister is handling that.

The first amendment dealt with "change to the annual financial filing requirements so that it only applies to those individuals, partnerships and corporations that are licensed as agents, brokers and representatives and maintain trust accounts". It seems pretty straightforward what they doing here. To the staff point, the writing from what the Auditor General is saying, the change has to do with a clarification here in the standards of reporting.

I think the amendment is a good one. We will, of course, be supporting this, but at the same time when it comes to consumer protection, it is the consumer's money that is being handled here

for a certain period of time by a go-between if you will, an adjustor, an agent who would be covered under this particular act.

Mr. Speaker, we do not see any problem as regards to what is being done here. I just wish sometimes government would pay a little bit more attention to other places where consumers are getting money from either a financial institution where somebody else is a go-between.

For example, when it comes to payday loans, we would certainly like to see the Department of Service NL tackle that particular issue in the future. Hopefully they will, so we can get some more protection for consumers in that particular field when it comes to dealing with their money. Again, it might seem outside the purview of this bill here now but just to bring it to the minister's attention on that, that we would like to see them address the payday loan problem that is out there, too.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. the Minister of Service NL speaks now, he will close the debate.

The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Everybody seems to have gotten exactly what we are trying to do here, Mr. Speaker. They captured the essence of this amendment very well.

I just want to clarify one little point there. These amendments also recommend that where similar protection requirements exist both in Newfoundland and Labrador and out of Province where an agent or broker conducts business, the Superintendent of Insurance may grant an exemption from financial reporting requirements in Newfoundland and Labrador for

the affected companies, therefore reducing red tape.

For example, Mr. Speaker, I just want to make sure everybody is clear on this. If an agent or broker operates in Ontario, they have the same reporting requirements in Ontario. If the superintendent is satisfied that we can rely on those reporting requirements, then the superintendent may exempt the agent or broker from reporting to us. Mr. Speaker, that is one other little change, other than the clarifications that we did.

Mr. Speaker, the agents and brokers will be pleased. With this clarification, industry is going to be happy. There is not a change in policy here, just a clarification.

So I will rest my case, Mr. Speaker, and hopefully we will move to Committee.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Is it the pleasure of the House that the said bill be now read a second time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Insurance Adjusters, Agents And Brokers Act. (Bill 21)

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

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

MR. KING: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, “An Act To Amend The Insurance Adjusters, Agents And Brokers Act”, read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 21)

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador, that the House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 21, An Act To Amend The Insurance Adjusters, Agents And Brokers Act.

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

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

All those in favour, ‘aye’.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, ‘nay’.

Carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Littlejohn): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 21, An Act To Amend The Insurance Adjusters, Agents And Brokers Act.

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Insurance Adjusters, Agents And Brokers Act”. (Bill 21)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Yes, Mr. Chair.

I have a question of the minister: Does this mean that some people who handle other people’s money in the Province are not required to have trust accounts?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Chair, I will take that under advisement and get back to the Member for St. Barbe.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Chair, if there are certain individuals who could hold other people’s money without using trust accounts, has the Province provided any protection for those people that they would be protected in case of the bankruptcy of those individuals?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. CRUMMELL: Again, Mr. Chair, I would take that under advisement as well. That is a legal matter that I am not familiar with; but, for sure, we will have a response for the Member for St. Barbe that would be satisfactory, once I have the right information.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Chair, I understand that the purpose of this bill is simply to exempt from filing those people who are not required to have trust accounts to hold other people’s money. Is that correct, I ask the minister?

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye’.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Carried.

On motion, clause 1 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: A bill, An Act To Amend The Insurance Adjusters, Agents And Brokers Act. (Bill 21)

CHAIR: Shall the 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 bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move that the Committee do now rise and report Bill 21, An Act To Amend The Insurance Adjustors, Agents And Brokers Act.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 21.

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 (Verge): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for 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 Bill 21 without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 21 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MR. KING: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Ways and Means to consider a resolution on Bill 24 respecting The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the Speaker now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Ways and Means.

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'.

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): Order, please!

We are now debating a resolution and Bill 24 respecting The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957". (Bill 24)

Resolution

"That it is expedient to bring in a measure further to amend The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957, to provide for the advance of loans to and the guarantee of the repayment of bonds or debentures issued by or loans advanced to certain corporations."

CHAIR: Shall the resolution carry?

The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is certainly an honour and a privilege to get up on my feet here once again, Mr. Chair, and speak to the Loan and Guarantee Act. If I may have a little bit of latitude, I would like to send a little bit of congratulations out to my daughter who successfully got her driver's licence; it seems a little fitting.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: Earlier on while we were discussing, in today's proceedings, Bill 21, we talked about insurance and all of that, and I would just like to give a shout out to the Young Drivers' programs that exist in our communities across the Island and the Labrador portion of the Province. Basically it gave us a little more peace of mind, if you will, Mr. Chair, that she was going to be a safe driver out there and she learned all the rules and was going to respect them, too.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: Not to mention since we were already discussing insurance as well the fact that she did complete the course and received her certificate, it also gave the folks a little break on the insurance too when adding her to our vehicle. I am saying it is a good idea for everybody.

With that, Mr. Chair, I just wanted to get up here and talk a little bit about what we are seeing back in the District of Lake Melville in regard to Muskrat Falls. I believe last week I got up and I had a few words to say about the employment levels, the Labrador Aboriginal Training program, a few of those things, Mr. Chair. It is still growing in terms of the numbers. It is not only Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, but, specifically, Labradorians and people from my district are getting some gainful employment from the project at this point in time, Mr. Chair – a great thing to see.

In terms of the Labrador Aboriginal Training program, I would just like to talk about that a little bit. To date – this is still a wonderful

program – we have invested \$30 million in to that program. We are seeing 200 people, 200 Aboriginal members, of our Province are in training programs right now in order to better themselves, get access to some of the jobs that are going to be created by this project; and, of course, increase, as I always get up here in this House and say, the quality of life for themselves, their families and gives them the ability to have a higher level of disposable income, if you will, to enjoy the amenities in our great Province, to travel through our great country and to also be charitable, which we are known for in Newfoundland and Labrador, and to take care of their loved ones as well, Mr. Chair – a wonderful thing.

If you look at the time period that lapsed with the Labrador Aboriginal Training program between 2010 and 2012, we have had 333 Aboriginal people graduate from the training programs within the partnership, and an additional 180 individuals received on-the-job training through wage subsidies. We have a total of 500 beneficiaries from the various Aboriginal groups that are out there participating in the program, and that is just a two-year period. What we are seeing is we are providing yet again another avenue for Aboriginal people from smaller, rural communities, and in some cases isolated communities, to come down to get next to places like the College and next to the project itself, and also get in there, get some real skills, and make use of some of those wage subsidies in order to make it easy on the people who are going to give these kids a shot, if you will. Not always kids; we do have some adults who engage in the program as well.

It is a wonderful thing. Whenever we can take somebody, help them on a path, and show them the way to having gainful employment, to becoming happy and healthy members of society through that work, and having a positive effect on their families, no amount of investment can be considered a waste of money and no involvement from our government could ever be considered a waste of time, Mr. Chair. I would just like to say that.

We certainly on this side of the House, and indeed all members in this hon. House, want to see the very best for our youth and the very best for those people with a desire to continue in their education in terms of moving up the ladder, if you will, and in terms of changing their career path. When we have an Aboriginal component to that, Mr. Chair, we certainly see a lot more positivity within the Aboriginal groups and Aboriginal community. It is indeed a wonderful thing to see.

In talking a little bit more about the Muskrat Falls Project, there has been some talk in the House and of course in the media about the wood that has been cut for the transmission lines. I can say for one, Mr. Chair, in my community and in the communities within my district, what we are seeing is people are going out. They are getting that carrying permit. They are going over and they are taking those logs. In some cases, some people are sawing the logs and getting some real great lumber. People are building cabins on account of that, building sheds, doing renovations around the house, and that kind of thing.

We are also seeing people get together and help some of the seniors in our community, too, Mr. Chair, by delivering a little firewood, by helping them get through the chilly Labrador winters that we have. Of course, we have great electricity rates up there, but still people, especially some of our elders, love to have the comfort that a woodstove provides. It certainly is a different kind of heat, if you know what I mean. A wonderful, wonderful fire glowing in the night always makes for a great evening for people as well. I tell you what, coming into the holiday season it is certainly a wonderful thing to see.

It is great to know that people are going to see this as an opportunity in order to get themselves some sawlogs and get their firewood for the winter. Even though we are having a little bit of snow, the temperatures are certainly warm. What we are seeing up in Labrador is people are unable to get into the country, into those wood stands, and go after the firewood. In this challenge of dealing with the amount of timber

we are talking about, we are seeing an opportunity for people adjacent to the resource as well, which is a wonderful thing.

Mr. Chair, if I may, I would just like to talk about the employment in the district and what we are seeing directly related to Muskrat Falls once again. The last time I got up in this House I talked about all of those jobs and I talked about people getting over across the river, as we say it locally, obviously Muskrat Falls only being around thirty kilometres from my front door. What we are seeing is people in Nalcor, we are seeing people with these contractors, and we are seeing local people coming together and what they are doing is they are working through the registration process on the Web site.

So for all of those people out there wondering how to get access to jobs at the site, at Muskrat Falls itself, Mr. Chair, people are going to muskratfallsjobs.com, they are registering, and they are putting up a profile. What they are doing is they are talking about the jobs they might be interested in. It is giving them a chance to put their skill sets down and show these contracts and show Nalcor what they have to offer. What you have then is a process where they are engaged, they come in, and they talk about the opportunities that are before them.

Like I have always said, we are starting to see some progress; the numbers are continually going up. For example, the last set of numbers I talked about in the House, Mr. Chair, we talked about the number of people over on-site. We were talking about the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador and I believe the last set of numbers I looked at was around 1,152 workers. Right now we are up to 1,273. Only a little bit of time has lapsed and what we are seeing is more people are getting hired and more people are looking to get over there because of the opportunity for the fabulous wages that we are seeing.

Mr. Chair, the process is working. No process is perfect so sometimes you have to keep pressing for these individuals to get over there. What I say to the people is the same message I have carried right through from the sanction debate

through to today: meet us halfway. If you want to get over there and you want to work, go see your MHA, talk to Nalcor, talk to these contractors, get on that Web site, follow those jobs, and connect with the unions. It is very easy.

You can get on the Muskrat Falls job site and you can get a list of all the contractors who are currently working who have bid on and secured a contract. A lot of them, I might say, Mr. Chair, have Aboriginal partners from back home as well, which is another wonderful thing to see. You can see what jobs are out there and you can see who these people are. They have the contact information laid right out there for you. All you do is you give them a call, you let them know and they will tell you which union and which job you have to talk to. You go talk to those people, you talk to the contractor, you get your shot, make the most of it, and you will see that we do have a lot of homegrown people over there who are making a way for themselves because of this project and are taking advantage of the opportunity.

So not only are we going to have a lot of people working over there, but we have set ourselves up to have a project that changes the dynamics of what we have to offer in terms of the energy in this Province. What you will see is further development resulting from that power.

Certainly, the environmental aspect is always first and foremost on the minds of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in terms of what we are displacing and what we are taking out of the atmosphere from Holyrood. By having clean, green energy and by harnessing the water that is flowing down that river anyway, Mr. Chair, we are certainly going to make a positive impact on the environment in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Of course, myself being of Aboriginal decent, one thing we have always talked about in our family growing up as we hunted, fished the land, and traveled throughout the great wilderness of Labrador, we always made sure we made as minimal impact on where we were, the smallest footprint possible in order to make sure that we

did our own little part. Whether that was cleaning up the campsite or making sure that you never left any garbage and always make sure your fire was out, whatever it is, we all have to do our little part. I would like to say that I am very proud to be part of a government that is doing such a major, major part of looking out for our environment by moving the clean hydro here as opposed to burning dirty oil over and over again to try to meet our energy needs.

With that, Mr. Chair, I would just like to say that it was my pleasure to stand in the House here today, speak to the Loan and Guarantee Act, give a little bit of an update about what is happening in the District of Lake Melville, and speak on behalf of the great people who reside there.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is certainly an honour to rise to speak to the Loan and Guarantee Act. I certainly listened to the comments by my colleague from Labrador who sits on the other side, talking about the Labrador Aboriginal training program and the many benefits that come with it, Mr. Chair.

We had training programs in the past, Mr. Chair, that were successful. We do have quite a few people who are Aboriginal from Labrador and from the Province certainly who are employed at the Vale site in Voisey's Bay. Certainly, the growing pains that we went through then, I am sad to say we are going through the same ones now. Sometimes unions are a blessing, but in many cases when it comes to local employment, the fact is that unions like to look after their own selves first. A lot of new members are missing the opportunity and are not being given the opportunity to access employment at the Muskrat Falls site.

We can talk about Aboriginal training programs all we want. I have to say they are good initiatives. People do get their foot in the door with training behind them and with qualifications, Mr. Chair, but there are still a number of people, and I am sure the speaker before me, the Member for Lake Melville, the Member for Labrador West, and a lot of the members in this hon. House are flooded with requests from people who have tried to access employment at Muskrat Falls, but have been denied.

Certainly, a large margin of these numbers, I know in my case and I am sure in the case of the previous speaker, have had people come to the door with the qualifications, with Aboriginal status, and still not being able to get jobs at Muskrat Falls.

I follow the reports from Nalcor quite consistently, Mr. Chair, and you do see an increase, sometimes it is marginal, sometimes it is significant – to realize now that Nalcor is out on an employment strategy trying to get people to sign up for jobs at Muskrat Falls certainly gives more opportunity. Mr. Chair, a lot of times that opportunity is denied because you cannot get union status, and you have to be part of a union to get employment at Muskrat Falls.

That is not just a case for individuals who are accessing employment, Mr. Chair, that is also for companies within the region that are trying to secure contracts at Muskrat Falls. The perfect example is a local company, Big Land Geomatics that had the contract to do a lot of the surveying, only to be told their contract was not going to be renewed because the employees they had were not part of the union. Not only that, this company was told that if they wanted to bid on contracts they had to hire unionized employees, and more often than not these employees came from either out of the region or out of the Province. So, there are stumbling blocks. We would like to see them overcome, Mr. Chair.

Another example we brought up in this hon. House, Mr. Chair, a few weeks ago was a contract that was taken away from Great

Western Forestry and given to another non-Aboriginal company – I think the name was Johnson's – with no RFP coming forward. Well, Mr. Chair, there was an Innu company there on site that had done work previous, received a triple-star rating from SNC-Lavalin and Nalcor, and never got a chance to bid on the project.

If we are looking at fairness and looking at hiring Aboriginal companies first, then Labradorians, then provincial, then outside of our Province, Mr. Chair, I would certainly like to see that format delivered as promised, not to continuously have loopholes appear where Aboriginal companies do not get that right. They do not have that access to bid on contracts. It is taken away, and these are two classic examples.

In my district, Mr. Chair, we are looking at the hectares – I cannot remember, I think it was 485,000 of wood that is stockpiled. The government did make an announcement two weeks ago that there was no commercial interest in the wood and that it was there for the taking. It is pretty unfortunate for some people who would love to have that wood that the announcement was made two days after the deadline for shipping to the North Coast of Labrador; two days later.

Mr. Chair, it could have benefited a part of Labrador that is not benefiting from this project. As a matter of fact, they are being faced with a 25 per cent increase in hydro rates. I remember in a Twitter conversation with the Minister of Municipal Affairs a few years ago, who told me then that there would be no increase. There would be no increase, and now there is a 25 per cent increase being put forward to the PUB.

Then again, Mr. Chair, they talk about accommodating everybody's interests in Labrador, whether it is financial or environmental and the ability to consult, the duty to consult. Well the Nunatsiavut Government approached the government opposite with a duty to consult on environmental impacts.

As of right now, Mr. Chair, the mercury level in Lake Melville is 0.3 parts per million. That comes from the Upper Churchill because Muskrat Falls is not yet online. It just needs to go 0.2 parts more per million – the past Minister of Environment and Conservation said when it reaches 0.5 parts per million Health Canada guidelines will kick in. I have spoken to this many, many times.

Given the fact there are 14,000 fathoms of fishing gear that go out on Lake Melville every summer – a subsistence fishery, I might add, a food fishery – and no plan in place because this government and Nalcor maintain that there will be no environmental impacts downstream of the project site, less than twenty miles away, when we saw impacts from the site that was over 300 kilometres away.

Just a few comments, Mr. Chair, on how good this project is, that I have heard time and time again from a government that has to be right at all costs. My fear is the cost is going to cost this Province for this government to be right.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Education.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I had my seat moved this year, Mr. Chair. I have been told that I have to stand in a certain way so the camera picks you up. Apparently earlier on when I moved in this seat and I stood, most of the time my back was to the camera. I do not know if they prefer to see my face as opposed to my back, but I am going to try to keep my face on the camera.

Mr. Chair, it is a good time in this Province. As I sit here day in and day out – and the role of Oppositions, is they have to do what they do. Mr. Chair, I cannot think of a better time in this Province. No matter what society you are in, there are going to be times when certain people will face challenges. Our role as MHAs is to work with those people and attempt to find

solutions. Mr. Chair, often we find those solutions.

I have often believed in this, Mr. Chair, that the truth becomes revealed through your actions. I only have about eight minutes and I am going to go into education. I recently have spoken about the projects we have done in education. I have gone further into the projects that are ongoing in this Province and the projects that we have undertaken.

We have – and I have to turn my back a little bit just so I can see the folks I am speaking to. We have undertaken fifty-six major projects in education, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Those, Mr. Chair, are projects related to infrastructure. I am going to take a few minutes – \$620 million. We have twelve new schools that have been built. Twelve brand new, state-of-the-art schools.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: We have nine more schools that are under construction and in the planning phase. We have twenty-six major extension and renovation projects that have been completed. We have another nine extensions, renovations, and rebuilds that are underway, fifty-six projects totalling \$620 million – \$620 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Chair, I am not one who will get up and belabour past governments, what they did, and what they did not do. All I can say to you is that we started down the road of improving infrastructure. Think back. Many of us will think back to the days when schools had to be shut down because of mould. Schools had to be shut down when there were vapour barriers, pieces of plastic here, with water running down into the corridors. What we did is we undertook a planned process of making sure that our students were in safe, healthy buildings. That is exactly what we did.

We hear some of the folks who will get up and say this is needed, that is needed, and that we are doing things around political grounds. Mr. Chair, I am going to read off to you, and I ask all members in the House to listen to where these twelve new schools were built: Leading Tickles, Mobile, Placentia, Baie Verte, L'Anse-au-Loup, Torbay, Port Saunders – now I am getting from the Member for St. Barbe a thumbs up. He will do that off camera, but he will not get up and praise us for doing it in his district when he is on camera. He bemoans, he groans, and he accuses us of not doing things right. He has that – oh, thus he rises.

MR. BENNETT: A point of order.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe, on a point of order.

MR. BENNETT: I acknowledge that they did build a school in Port Saunders, but it did not save the seat.

CHAIR: There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Chair, let me remind the member that we never give up. There is a next time. You see, there is the difference. He is indicating that we built a school to win a district. We did it for the children.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: It is like the phrase that is used over in my department quite often: It is all about the children. We are not going to build a school in Port Saunders to win a vote, Mr. Chair. We are building it because it is necessary and it is about the children.

I am going to go on. The next one: Port Hope Simpson, Paradise, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, another one in Paradise, Carbonear, and a brand new one that opened, an \$18 million facility that opened in St. Anthony. The students moved into it this week.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Chair, let me get into the ones that are underway. We have another one that is being built in the Member for Cartwright – L’Anse au Clair’s district. It is not about politics. It is not about politics; it is about doing what is right.

In St. John’s, a new one is being built, the new West End High School, all well underway; Conception Bay South, one underway in planning; Gander; Paradise; Portugal Cove-St. Phillips; and we have another one in Torbay.

Mr. Chair, when I talk about extensions, I am not talking about you are going to build on a porch. No, we are not talking about building on a porch. We are talking about multi-million dollar extension and upgrades to every one of these: St. Bernard’s in Witless Bay; E.A. Butler in McKay’s; Corner Brook Central High; Exploits; Botwood Collegiate; Regina High; Gander Collegiate extension; Leary’s Brook; M.S.B. Academy in Middle Arm; St. Andrew’s in St. John’s; Roncalli in St. John’s; Wesleyville; and Portugal Cove.

Mr. Chair, I would invite the members opposite to take a visit to some of these schools. When we speak to other jurisdictions and I speak with other fellow ministers from across Atlantic Canada and across Canada, they see us with envy. They see us as a Province who is investing in the future, and that being in schools and education, like no other province in this country.

No other province in this country is investing in education to the tune that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, our government, is investing in education, Mr. Chair. I can say that and I take pride in standing as Minister of Education day in and day out acknowledging our investments in education.

Now, it took me eight minutes, Mr. Chair, to speak about infrastructure, which I could go on with. I could stand up here for the rest of the evening and speak to all other investments that we have made in education. I would invite the Education critic for the Opposition Party to get up and if he wants, I will pass him over my list

so he can continue with my list of investments that we have made in education. I look forward to him getting up and acknowledging that this government has invested in education like no other.

I think you for the time, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will just stand to speak on this bill today. I am going to have a few words, but first of all I just want to say to poor Jack Harrington, who was thrown under the bus yesterday by the Premier, anybody who offers his name to put forth in an election deserves credit and praise, because that is the democratic process. When the Premier stands up and says that he never had the dynamic personality, he never had the roots, I just let the Premier know, he grew up in Carbonear, he was born there, still got family there.

Mr. Chair, I will just to let you know that Jack Harrington is a great man. He is a good man. It is not very nice to be thrown under the bus, but anybody who puts their name forward deserves credit for doing that.

I am just going to have a few words, and you can see it is only ten minutes. I just want to speak a small bit on the hospital in Corner Brook. I just want to read the quote that the Minister of Finance, the Member for Humber East, said in this House of Assembly. When I heard it, I said it cannot be what I just heard, so I went out and I got Hansard.

“So when you say you want a PET scanner and we want radiation, yes, we do. I support the call for that...” That is the Member for Humber East in Hansard, the Minister of Finance, and that is what he said in this House of Assembly under the quiet – that is what he said in this House of Assembly.

He said, "...but we have to do things in order." It is a priority thing, Mr. Chair. So I can tell the minister here now – and that is in November 14; anybody in the Province who wants to read it can go read it. That is what he said in this House, Mr. Chair. He supports it.

I just want to remind the people of Western Newfoundland what happened to the long-term care facility that this government built. There is no doubt there is a need. What did they do? They cut it by 100 beds – 100 beds, Mr. Chair.

What are they doing now with the new hospital? Making one part of it, as the minister was saying, into four buildings. Mr. Chair, do you know what they are doing? They are building 100 beds to be connected to the new hospital. This is what I am talking about the planning; this is what I am talking about the design.

If you do not have the design now to have the PET scanner and the radiation unit in the hospital, it will not be done. We should have learned from these mistakes. It is obvious, we are building another 100 beds that we cut four or five years ago – that this government cut, Mr. Chair. What is happening now? The Minister of Finance and the Member for Humber East stood up in this House and said: I support the call; I support it.

If the member really is concerned and wants to back up his words, stand with me and the members on this opposite right now. Stand with us and demand that these services be put in the new hospital that is going to be serving all of Western Newfoundland, Labrador, and the Northern Peninsula for the next sixty or seventy years. It is pretty hard, Mr. Chair, when you see the minister standing up and saying that.

Mr. Chair, we just go on with some other things that the minister – "Right now we are focused on getting the additional long-term care unit built, the new long-term care unit up at the hospital. We will continue with all these projects; we will work at them... I know in dealing with the hospital, they have a lot of priorities. The problem is you have to take them and you have to say what are your major priorities..." to have

them focused. We will get to them one at a time.

Mr. Chair, there is a firm commitment from this member that the PET scanner and the radiation – and if you read all of his Hansard, November 14 anybody, he is talking about all the physical structures in Corner Brook which are needed. What he is saying is because we need to do these physical structures first, the PET scanner and radiation unit is being put behind. We have these other priorities in Corner Brook.

This is where we are talking about the health care. This is what we are talking about, the health care in this Province that he is putting behind these priorities. I will read it once more just in case the ministers opposite want to listen: I support the call for that but we have to do it all in order. How can you not do it in the order if you do not put it in the design in the hospital? That is my question, Mr. Chair. You cannot have it both ways – you just cannot have it both ways.

I just received the Stantec report again a while back. Let me just go through some of it, Mr. Chair. We are just talking about here the time frame. Everybody here was saying, oh, I am fear mongering. I am always standing up here fear mongering. Anybody who wants a copy of the Stantec report, contact me and I will send them a copy.

In the Stantec report the earliest this hospital can be built is 2020. I have been saying that now for five years. We will not see it because there has been nothing done. The Stantec Report itself, which took me almost three or four months to get, government public documentation, but it took so long through the Freedom of Information I finally received it and it was saying what I have been saying all along, that this hospital has been delayed, delayed, and delayed.

I will just go to another point on it, Mr. Chair. I see my time is getting short, but I will go to another point and I have been saying this. They started construction on the groundwork in 2008. In 2011 tractors were sent up there on the site.

The Minister of Finance, the Member for Humber East, and the Member for Humber West was out: The hospital will start in 2012; tractors going up there in 2012. Guess what? In the report, do you know what the report said? Stop all further construction on the site because there is not even the design selected by Health and Community Services. Stop all construction on the site. That is what the report said. Can you imagine?

AN HON. MEMBER: Was that in the brochure?

MR. JOYCE: Up in the brochure, the PC brochure, construction will start in 2012. Tractors sent up in 2011. I challenge anybody in this House to tell the people in Corner Brook they were not convinced that hospital was going to start in 2012. When I stood up as the lone wolf, oh, I am fear mongering and, oh, I do not know.

Look at the tractors. Look what the report says. Stop the construction. Stop giving the people the false sense that the hospital will start because there is no design done on the hospital, Mr. Chair. These are not my words. This is what the government commissioned and that is what they came back with. When the Member for Humber East and the Member for Humber West stands up and sends the tractors up there in October 2011 just before the election, now we know why.

Mr. Chair, I will just go to another few small things in this report that I was criticized for. When I said there was no consultation, I stood in this House of Assembly and I asked two or three different members about consultation. Everybody said: Oh, yes, there was consultation; everybody was consulted.

I have a copy of the report, Mr. Chair. Page 13 of the report: There has been no consultation with the people at the hospital for the long-term care facility. As I said, when I was telling people there was no consultation, here is the government's own report. What I have been saying and what the people in Corner Brook

have been telling me is that there has been no consultation – absolutely none.

When I was saying that I knew what I was talking about. I was talking to the people, the front-line workers, and the Stantec report proves it, Mr. Chair. I can tell you, if they expect me now to sit down and stop talking about this hospital in Corner Brook when the proof is even saying to the government, what you have been saying to the people in Corner Brook, what you have been saying to the people in Western Newfoundland, and what I have been saying all along is that this hospital is being delayed. It is being used for political purposes and it is on a regular basis. Every part of this report that I have been saying is absolutely correct.

So when the Minister of Health wants to stand up and say there was consultation, she should get her money back from Stantec because they are saying there was not. They went out and met with them. They said they were not. So if the minister says there were lots, get your money back from Stantec because obviously they are wrong then. Two of you cannot be right.

Mr. Chair, here is another one. You want to talk about construction. Page 23, there was no project schedule ever developed for this project. Here we are saying it is going to open in 2014 or 2015. Stantec – there was no project schedule to start the construct or to start the design of this hospital in Corner Brook.

The Member for Humber East can stand on his feet now and tell me if I am wrong. The people in Western Newfoundland, in Corner Brook, were expecting that hospital to start. When I get the Stantec report, they did the report after the election in 2012-2013, what happens? There is no project schedule, Mr. Chair, yet I was told that I was wrong. I was wrong. I was absolutely wrong.

Here is something else that I found, Mr. Chair. On page 28, the government is giving all of these commitments to hospitals. Do you know what the Stantec report says? They are only guesstimates. There was no design done, nothing accepted, there was nothing approved, and there

was no money even put in the Budget forecast before 2012, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, I see my time is getting short. I can see I am going to be back again. I say to any of them here, anybody in this House of Assembly who wants to stand up and say this report is wrong, come back and say it because it is the government's report. If the report is wrong, get your funding back from Stantec, because they are the ones who wrote this report.

CHAIR: The hon. the member's time has expired.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Placentia – St. Mary's.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. F. COLLINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I had a ten-minute presentation prepared, but having listened to my colleague, the Minister of Education, speak a few minutes ago, I want to pick up from where he left off. Certainly, with the list of place names he went through in Newfoundland where new investments are going to be made in education, he was sounding very much like the old Newfoundland song, *The Ryans and the Pittmans*, as he was going through all the place names. Certainly his comments, I would say to my colleague, is not something you should turn your back on, if I might use that word.

Mr. Chair, speaking of investing in infrastructure, six or eight months ago when we brought down our Budget we were accused of spending money recklessly, spending money hand over fist like drunken sailors, and putting this Province into a detrimental position, spending so much money on infrastructure.

The economy of this Province today is built on private investment, but private investment does not just happen in a happenstance manner. Private investment is enticed and enhanced

through government setting the table to cause that private investment to come in.

Mr. Chair, nowhere is that truer than in the Placentia region.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. F. COLLINS: I wanted to speak for a few minutes about the Placentia region and the investment this government has made in order to attract private investment. Mr. Chair, I set up a law office in Placentia in 1996 and that was after a couple of things had happened. We had one of the most affluent areas in the Province in the Argentia and Placentia region. We had the Argentia navel base, we had the phosphorus plant in Long Harbour, and we had the fish plant in Placentia.

Mr. Chair, the base closed down, the phosphorus plant closed down, and the fish plant burnt down.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. F. COLLINS: We went from a very affluent society in that area to an area, Mr. Chair, where the infrastructure was crumbling, where the stores were being boarded up, where people were leaving in droves to go to the mainland, and the situation was nothing short of gloom and doom in the Placentia area. I witnessed that first-hand in 1996 when I went out there. When the base closed in 1994, the Argentia Management Authority was set up to attract business to the Argentia and Placentia area, and they have been at that diligently for the last fifteen years.

Mr. Chair, today the Argentia and Placentia area has turned around in a dramatic fashion. It culminated only a few weeks ago with the announcement made in Placentia by the Premier, Nalcor, Suncor, and Husky Energy of the great \$2.5 billion project in Argentia.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. F. COLLINS: Mr. Chair, as I mentioned earlier, in order to entice private investment it is my understanding that the private capital investment in this Province this year runs in the vicinity of \$11 billion and \$13 billion. It is private investment that is driving our economy, but that does not happen just over night. Placentia is a great example of that.

In Placentia, the government invested tens of millions of dollars, probably over \$100 million if you put it all together, in roads, Highway 101, Highway 100, and Highway 202, to get access to the hydromet plant in Argentia; a new school in Placentia, \$13 million; millions and millions of dollars in the water and sewer infrastructure; and another \$40 million not that long ago in a project that is already undergoing out there for the new \$40 million bridge.

Mr. Chair, the money is invested and it is paying off. Today, we are seeing \$2.5 billion project coming into Argentia on the top of a \$5 billion project in Long Harbour. The Placentia, Long Harbour, Whitbourne area has benefitted from all of this.

Mr. Chair, as I mentioned, in terms of infrastructure, when we say we wasted money and threw away money, we had to build our infrastructure in this Province. We had to rebuild it. That is why the Minister of Education talks about all the new schools that have been going on. Placentia is a good example of that. We had to rebuild our infrastructure to attract private investment. What I just talked about is a good example of that: our roads, our schools, our bridges, our water and sewer development, all of that to enhance and entice billions of dollars of private investment in that area.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. F. COLLINS: That is why we invest in infrastructure, Mr. Chair. That why we spent our money. That is where our money went over the last few years. That is why we spent money, billions of dollars in infrastructure, and it is

paying off in dividends today in spades in places like Placentia.

Mr. Chair, a month ago when we went out to Placentia for the announcement, you could not get a seat in the Star Hall in Placentia, which is the biggest facility out there. You could not get a place to park. There was a buzz of excitement going through the community about the new developments going on in Argentia.

A \$2.5 billion project with a graving dock that is going to have a gate that is going to make it reusable – in other words, we are building capacity. We are building capacity in the oil industry that this project can be reusable for more projects of this type, for repairs to rigs and whatnot, a great facility that would make Argentia one of the best ports on the Island.

Mr. Chair, from that, from the West White Rose extension, this Province will get an extra \$3 billion in royalties, a total of \$7 billion from the whole Husky development. Mr. Chair, our 5 per cent equity investment does that for us.

We are opening up our exploration licences to smaller companies. The seismic exploration work off Labrador shows great potential for the oil industry, so there are going to be more of those platforms being built, more rigs to service, more of this work going on.

A few years ago we thought that our oil industry was going to run out in ten or fifteen years. Well, we know now that is not the case. This bodes well for what is going to happen to this Province.

Mr. Chair, I want to take my hat off to the people in the Placentia region who stuck it out during the poor times, during the late 1990s and the early part of 2000. The Argentia Management Authority, for example, who was given a mandate to market Argentia. Marketing a community and marketing a port is not an easy task, and it can be a very disappointing task.

I equate it to reeling in a fish. You have so many fish you reel in; you can reel it in until you get the big one into the landwash, but all of a

sudden you lose them. That is what happens in marketing a community. You get big clients on the line, and the last minute you lose them – you have a lot of balls in the air, but none of them land.

Well, the ship finally came in in Argentinia in the last month or so, and it is going to make a dramatic difference in what is happening out there. It is due to the planning and the negotiation skills of this government, and the vision of this government. What a future – the Premier is right on when she says the best is yet to come. She is right on when she says the best is yet to come.

Mr. Chair, the Town of Placentia and the surrounding region, Long Harbour, and Whitbourne, I call it the Golden Triangle. One time you used to call it the Golden Triangle in Placentia Bay, but my Golden Triangle in my district is Placentia, Long Harbour, and Whitbourne, because these are the areas that are benefiting from the work out there.

Mr. Chair, when the parties went out there last month for this announcement, it culminated ten years of growth and optimism and positive development in that part of the region. The people are very proud today and very positive. What a turnaround from what we saw ten years ago, when, as I said earlier, infrastructure was crumbling, businesses were boarding up, and people were going to Alberta, and so on.

Today, they have a state-of-the-art Arts and Culture Centre, they have a state-of-the-art high school, state-of-the-art water and sewer, state-of-the-art roads in that area as well, and, Mr. Chair, the future can only look brighter.

This government over the last five or six years has invested heavily, spent billions and billions and billions of money in infrastructure development in this Province. We have been criticized for it loudly in the last Budget. We spent ourselves into oblivion, spent like drunken sailors, and as a result they had the cutbacks. We were accused of having no plan.

Well, Mr. Chair, we spent on infrastructure because we had to. The Minister of Education pointed out just a few minutes ago, we spent on infrastructure because we had to entice and enhance private investment coming into this Province in the billions of dollars every year, and nowhere is it reflected more so than in the Placentia-Argentinia region. I am so proud to be a member of the government who was instrumental, played a role in all of that, and we are seeing the dividends today.

Now, Mr. Chair, my time is up, but I could talk about that region for a long time. It gets to the vision of this government to invest and to enhance, to get equity shares, to talk to big companies, to negotiate big deals for the Province that are the best for the Province.

This deal in Placentia and Argentinia with the gated graving dock is going to pay dividends in the future and it bodes well for the future of our oil industry. Mr. Chair, it is going to turn that region into a hub of industrial activity that I am very proud of.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

I am glad to get another opportunity during the discussion of the Loan and Guarantee bill to speak again. It is very interesting to sit here and listen to the government talk and expound about all of the investments that they make in the Province.

What they seem to forget and which really, I do not understand how they seem to forget it, is that what they are doing as government is managing the money of the people, and making sure that money is used for the good of the people. When they stand here in the House, Mr. Chair, they sound like a bunch of philanthropists who from their own pockets are doing all these wonderful things.

When I hear the minister list all of the schools that are being built and the ones that are being fixed, et cetera and he goes on and on, I hear other ministers standing and doing the same thing, and I hear the Member for Placentia – St. Mary's just adding to the list, all I can think of is of course you are doing that. That is what you are supposed to be doing. That is what you are there for.

You are supposed to be managing the money for the good of the people. They say it as if somebody has to thank them because they are doing what they are doing. This is what blows my mind. Look at us, aren't we wonderful because we are doing what we are supposed to be doing.

A while ago in this House I used an analogy and I am going to use the analogy again. What they are doing is like a parent saying to a child: I fed you three meals today, aren't I wonderful? I invested in you, because I fed you three meals. Oh, I repaired the roof on the house this year, aren't I wonderful? I invested in you. The parent is doing what the parent is supposed to do in those cases.

When I hear the word investment, I hear it as a word that is being used to try to bowl people over by the use of the word investment. Investment has all kinds of meanings. We can invest our time in somebody. That is a positive thing. We can invest our lives in somebody. That is a positive thing. We can invest money in something. That is an economic use of the word investment.

When the government uses the word investment, I think that is the only meaning they have. We are investing our money. Look at what we are doing. We are doing such wonderful things for you, thank us, thank us, thank us. When what they are doing is what they are supposed to do.

They do not like it when it gets said to them, maybe there are other things you should be doing as well that you are not doing. They do not like it when we do that. They get upset when we do that, but they have to stop and think

about the fact that we do not sit here thanking them for doing what they should be doing.

When we talk about putting a plan in place we mean putting a plan in place. Putting down what exactly it is you want to reach at the other end and how do you get to that plan. Like the sustainability plan, for example, that came out with the Budget. That is not a plan. That is not a plan at all. It is just listing the budgets for three years, the fact that two years are going to be deficits and when we get into the election year in 2015 all of a sudden miraculously we are going to have a surplus budget. Nice timing, great timing.

Then, after those three years, there is nothing else. Yet, it is called a 10-year sustainability plan. This government does not know what the word plan means. They have no idea what plan means.

AN HON. MEMBER: What is your plan?

MS MICHAEL: When I am in government you will get my plan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MS MICHAEL: That is when you get it. That is when you get it.

You are the ones who are there and you do not have a plan. You are the ones who are responsible. You want to think you are the ones who are doing the good for people. You are the ones who are supposed to have a plan and you do not have one. You have no idea what to do. If you did not have the money from oil and the money from mineral royalties you do not know what to do to raise money for this Province. You have no plan.

Your only plan is Muskrat Falls and Muskrat Falls is still a question mark, and a big question mark. That is the only thing your sustainability plan says is Muskrat Falls. That is your big investment. You have invested the lives of these people in something that is not proven.

CHAIR (Verge): Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources, on a point of order.

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Chair, our plan was to develop our natural resources for the benefit of the people of the Province. That is why we have money. That is why we are doing things. We do not sit around and wait. We do not sit around and wait. We develop our plans, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

There is no point of order and that is for sure, because it is out of order for them to say that is sufficient as a plan.

The mineral resources are there. The oil is there. The oil companies are doing the work. The minerals are in our land. The mining companies are doing the work. That is not a plan; that is a reality. They did not plan that. The oil was there before they became a government. They came into the oil production era. They did not plan it. They did not plan the minerals up in Labrador, or the minerals anywhere else in the Province. Those minerals are there.

Companies come, companies ask to use them. Companies go through environmental assessment processes. They do not plan what is happening. They are just sitting back raking in the money, which they should for the good of the people, doing that and spending it on what they are supposed to be spending it on. Except some of it is being spent where an awful lot of people do not believe it should be spent.

When they talk about – and this is what their sustainability plan says when they talk about the big answer after the oil industry, the big answer is Muskrat Falls, and Muskrat Falls has so many

question marks right now with regard to its viability, with regard to the ability of Muskrat Falls' energy to be sold outside of this Province. They have so many holes in that plan that we have no faith. The people of the Province have no faith in that plan because it is not a plan, and if that is their plan that is pathetic.

When you look at their sustainability plan that is the only thing they have in it, is we are investing billions in Muskrat Falls and this is going to be the windfall when the oil is gone. Do you know what? The people of the Province are not buying it any more. We are not buying it. We are very concerned about what our future twenty years down the road holds in store for us. I cannot believe they think that is the answer, Mr. Chair. I cannot believe they want us to keep thinking it is going to work.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: I say to them, you had better start getting really serious about the future. You had better start putting in place a plan that is going to keep communities that are not on the Avalon Peninsula alive, because the communities on the Avalon Peninsula, yes, they are doing fine. They are benefiting from all of the production that is going on. They are benefiting from the oil industry in particular, but we have an awful lot of communities out around on our coasts and in Labrador that are not benefiting and they are not going to benefit. This government's message to them is that they do not care. They use the words community development and they do not have one plan for community development in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

They got rid of the Rural Economic Development Boards, some of which were doing fantastic work in our communities. What have they replaced the Rural Economic Development Boards with? Tell me, what is your plan to replace the Rural Economic Development Boards? No plan – no plan – for the future of the communities around our coasts and no plan for the people living in them. Their only plan is:

Isn't it wonderful that the workers can go off to Fort McMurray and make money to bring back home to their families and bring back home to their communities?

All they do is sit and take the benefit of something they have no control over, and that is the natural resource development. They did not put the oil in the ground, they did not put the minerals in the ground, and they did not put the jobs out in Fort McMurray, and that is what this Province is living off right now, their revenues from the oil, their revenues from minerals, and the revenues that are coming to the communities because of workers who are commuting to places that have jobs with better salaries. That is their plan, and they are satisfied to have it that way, Mr. Chair – they are satisfied to have it that way. That is why people are not happy with this government.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

I could not resist, Mr. Chair. I just had to get on my feet, especially after the hon. member across the House in regard to her rant. It was in my mind a crazy rant at that, let me tell you the truth, because I certainly could not understand it. I am quite honest with you.

She started out by talking about how interesting it was for government members to get on their feet in the House of Assembly and reference the good things that are happening in the Province. I thought we were all politicians in this House and I thought it was a good thing to remind the people of the Province what we are doing. I think each and every one of us does it in our districts, I say to you, Mr. Chair. I think we all get out there and do that.

I ask the hon. member, and I am able to and I will sit down in my seat, if you get on your feet and tell the people of the Province that when you take government that you are going to guarantee them right here today that you are never going to make an announcement in this Province. Get up on your feet and tell them. Make that commitment here today. I ask the hon. member, get up on your feet – get up on your feet.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to speak to the bill this afternoon. Certainly there have been lots of announcements made in my particular district and work done, but everything is not done either.

I have spoken to Bill 24 a number of times when we talk about finances, financial resources, how they are being allocated, and looking at doing things like multi-year planning as a route to go. That is something we need to look at. We need to look at planning for the long term. Having a 10-Year Sustainability Plan is not necessarily a bad thing even through governments have a mandate of just four years. In many cases, governments could extend that life beyond four years and get re-elected, but what we need to see is that plan, like looking at health care, for example.

In the District of The Straits – White Bay North, we have one of the oldest populations in Newfoundland and Labrador. In that particular area we have the John M. Gray Centre that has a wait-list, they have people who are at Charles S. Curtis Memorial Hospital, and people who are being discharged rather than having the ability to

get the long-term care that they need. Those are the types of things that really need to be looked at over the long term. We need to have a plan. It is going to take time to put the bricks and mortar in place, yet there is no announcement on the horizon to look at long-term care and look at how we address our aging population for the District of The Straits – White Bay North.

We have health centres in the White Bay Central region and in the Flower's Cove region. There are personal care facilities in both of those areas as there is in St. Anthony. There really is no plan as of right now to look at extending long-term care in St. Anthony or looking at piloting at smaller health care centres, like they have done in Port Saunders, to have third level long-term care. That is something that needs to be looked at.

We need to have long-term care to meet the needs of people in Newfoundland and Labrador. That is government's obligation to do so. They have an obligation to look after Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, but right now I am not seeing a clear plan as to how they are going to look after my constituents in The Straits – White Bay North when it comes to long-term care. I need that clarity; I need that clarity from the Minister of Health and Community Services.

People are asking those questions. They ask me that question as their representative. There are a number of questions when it comes to health care, when it comes to the recruitment and retention of surgeons, and when it comes to the resources. Government has made a great investment when it comes to dialysis in St. Anthony –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MITCHELMORE: – and looking at meeting the needs there in St. Anthony, and looking at upgrading the equipment. It is doing the training for the staff there so that on new machines, on the improved machines that will be there that the minister came to St. Anthony to announce, we will see an improvement in service.

There is a critical mass of people from the Straits region of the Province who have to travel to St. Anthony. It is becoming more and more and the need is starting to get greater. We are going to have to look at how we can add a satellite dialysis station to those units to the Strait of Belle Isle Health Centre.

In the planning of the Strait of Belle Isle Health Centre, which is a new multi-million dollar facility that is going up in Flower's Cove, to my knowledge there was no public consultation throughout the process. There was no public consultation about looking at the future health care needs and what people need in the region to do that assessment, to have that public input, and to have a new hospital put in place and not look at any different type of service that is being offered than currently at the current centre.

The White Bay Central Health Centre has palliative and respite care. That service is not going to be offered at the Strait of Belle Isle Health Centre. Why aren't we offering that service so that when people have relatives and they have family who are in their last dying days they cannot be closer to home? That is the strategy government says they are offering. They want to have care close to home. So act on it, do it, show that you are doing it, and take care of the people in The Straits – White Bay North.

I have been elected to represent the people of The Straits – White Bay North and I will continue to speak out on their needs and their concerns. That is something that I have been elected to do. I will continue demanding that we see more and more investment in The Straits – White Bay North. That is something that is very pertinent when we look at the aging population, when we look at the health care, and when we look at taking care of seniors.

When we look at the private member's motion that came forward yesterday, there was a lot of talk of seniors. We need to have that plan, we need to have that rollout plan, when we look at long-term care and how we are going to address the critical shortage of beds that are there in that area. That is something that is highly important.

When we look at making investments we have to make them so that we can get better value for our health care dollars. There is a nurse practitioner currently employed at the Strait of Belle Isle Health Centre. As I presented a petition today on behalf of constituents, that nurse practitioner is unable right now, I do not know why, to take appointments and operate a clinical practice on a Monday-to-Friday basis, as they operate in many other jurisdictions and even within Labrador-Grenfell Health, to look at working with the physicians that are there to improve health care, improve health outcomes for the people of the Straits region.

That is something that needs to be looked at. The people are speaking out. People are very frustrated that the same level of service is being offered within Labrador-Grenfell Health, at other health centres, within Western Health. You have the employee on staff and it is not being offered, and it is something that people are being very frustrated over. It is something that needs to be addressed and it does not have to cost additional money. It can actually save money and it can actually improve health outcomes for the people of the Strait of Belle Isle Health Centre.

We look at where we need to go – and I am looking forward to the mid-year financial review. I am hopeful that the deficit is going to be lower than projected, based on the appreciation of the American dollar to the Canadian dollar and the higher price of oil, because we are so dependent on that revenue stream. Where are the investments in making sure that other resources in the District of The Straits – White Bay North is being used and being able to create further employment, when we get into secondary processing of fish product or whether we look at going back to a mine, a marble mine, that was started years ago? They were developing that. Now the company is just sitting on those resources.

The former Premier of this Province had stated: Well, companies should not have that right to sit on a resource and not develop it, like Hebron. Now we are seeing Hebron being developed that should generate billions of dollars worth of

revenue over the life of that project to the Province. Why are we allowing companies to sit on mines and not develop them? Is there something that can be done? Is there further enticement? Is there dialogue that can be had to encourage that development, to create jobs, to make sure that the economy on the Northern Peninsula is sustainable over the long term when it comes to looking at mining and mining potential?

We look at other areas where there has been exploration and where there has been development. There is a lot of opportunity on the Great Northern Peninsula. Why are we not seeing those types of investments come forward, that encouragement from government? With the potential of the CETA negotiations and CETA in principle looking at shipping to the European market place, St. Anthony is the second international container shipping port in Newfoundland and Labrador.

It is already there, it is designated, and they are doing international shipping into the European market, containerized shipping. They do it on a biweekly basis through EIMSKIP. That opportunity is there for further development. We should be capitalizing on that and looking at all the opportunity that does exist in the Town of St. Anthony and surrounding areas. There is significant opportunity when we look at how we use our resources and how we plan.

Right now, we need to see a better plan from government. We need to see more details and better communication coming from government and explanations. I would like to know when more long-term care beds are coming to the District of The Straits – White Bay North. The response that likely will come is: Very soon, soon, it is something that we have not considered, or we are considering.

I would like some further clarification as to if this is something that government is seriously looking at. Will we see bricks and mortar go down within the next five years? Is that something that government is willing to stand on its feet and make a promise that this going to

happen for the people of The Straits – White Bay North?

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, Mr. Chair, I had to take the opportunity to get on my feet again. I thank the hon. Member for The Straits – White Bay North for his comments today and his constructive criticism, but I will go back to the hon. member with the NDP.

She talks about surpluses and deficits. What she certainly pointed out to me, and I think all members in this House, other than herself, is she does not have a clue how a deficit is determined or a surplus is determined. She was talking about 2015 all of a sudden we are going to go into a surplus position, all of a sudden, all by itself, and that kind of stuff.

The main thing I want to talk about, Mr. Chair, is the way she simplified our resources. They are in the ground, she said, and the people come in, in regard to the companies, and they take it out. All I have to say to the hon. member is how you take them out – how you take them out – and the royalties that are attached it and the work and the jobs that are given to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. That is not a simplistic matter.

Now, in the meantime, the thing that I want to talk about the most, and I only have a few seconds, Mr. Chair, is the Energy Plan. Our Energy Plan is a full document, but she did not get on her feet and she did not talk about her plan. Do you know what her plan is? Two sentences – two sentences – in her 2011 document is what it is.

Get up on your feet – get up on your feet – and let us see your plan because you have no plan. Your plan was to tear it up. That is what your

plan was, tear it up and tax the people of the Province. Get up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

It is certainly a pleasure to stand up following that performance. Again, we are debating the Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957, a very important piece of legislation. I have already had an opportunity to talk about the other colossal failure that the Immigrant Investor Program has been, to date. So, I do not really want to belabour that. The government has accepted the failure that the program is, and we will move on – I hope for better things, and I am sure they do, too.

So, there are a number of topics that we could talk about; I have marked a bunch down, Mr. Chair. We could talk about the ferry strategy. We could talk about the Corner Brook hospital, which my good friend, my colleague for Bay of Islands has done in a very able way, reminding the government of the broken commitments when it comes to Corner Brook hospital. I could talk about the ER wait times. ER wait times is a very important topic. Again, I had an opportunity – I listened to the minister speak on it and I have had my say on it. There are a number of issues.

One of things that I did want to bring up, actually very important to notice this morning, was in the *Western Star*, and it talked about a trial that is going on out in Corner Brook and the trial had to be postponed because there was no Crown attorney present to handle that. Again, I think this comes back to the concerns that I have raised now for six to eight months. I think we still have limitations in that system. I think it is related to the cutbacks of Budget 2013.

Again, I can talk about that, but what I wanted to do was talk about a topic that I have brought up in this House on two occasions in the last couple

of days, and that is the introduction of bicycle helmet legislation, hopefully, in this Province.

Now, the funny thing is, actually, the Minister of Education stood up and said, during his speech today, and said, it is all about the children – it is all about the children. Do you know what? That is a great way to have it. It should be all about the children, which is why I have suggested that this government actually listen to their own rhetoric and do the right thing and bring in this legislation. If you look at the comments that have been given to me by the Minister of Service NL, as well as previous ministers, the fact is that they have no intentions of putting in this type of legislation.

Now, let us just keep one thing in mind, Mr. Chair. During this current session of the House of Assembly it has been absolutely very fluffy in nature. It is a lot of legislation that is either cleanup or is good intentioned. Let us just look at the other pieces of legislation that is brought in by the Minister of Service NL, which was the pull-over legislation. I will even quote the Member for St. John's East when he said that it is very simple legislation. I think his comment was you have to legislate stupidity. What I am saying is in that case it was common sense. It is common sense, no doubt. It is common sense but this government felt the need to legislate it because we are still having accidents and issues.

I am proposing that this Province follow the lead of seven other provinces in this country and introduce bicycle helmet legislation for children that is proven to work. However, this government wants to shrug it off and put it on municipalities.

If you just look at the commentary right here today, I listed the number of important groups, groups that the Minister of Health knows full well. That is why I was hoping she would take the lead on this and not the Minister of Service NL, because he is content to sit back and do nothing. Really, that is what they are doing, nothing. They are just going to shrug it off saying 50 per cent of urban municipalities have this. Fifty per cent of urban municipalities is a

fairly small number when you look at the number of communities in this Province.

We are talking about legislation that if imposed reduces the amount of ER times for children with head injuries by 30 per cent. It quadruples the use of bicycle helmets. It has been done in seven other provinces. The NLMA has called for it, the Canadian Medical Association, the Pediatric Society, experts. Any time we ask questions, especially in the health field, government says we are listening to the experts. The experts say do it and we say no, no, in this case we know good enough.

I do not know why they could not bring in this legislation. It is a feel-good piece of legislation because it makes sense. It is common sense that we should have a law here that covers off these children and reduces the number of kids who are dying, or injured, or left in traumatic situations because of bike injuries. However, we are going to put it off on municipalities. We could talk about the fact that municipalities just do not have the means to cover this off. This is a government that is content to not follow the lead when it comes to this very vital piece of legislation.

The minister when he stood up – actually, the beginning of his second comment was: municipalities enact bylaws every day. This is a bylaw that they do enact on a regular basis. Those statements make absolutely no sense. They are nonsensical. The fact is this is a necessary piece of legislation. I would hope the members opposite would exercise their humanity and realize the good sense that this legislation makes. I do not see why anybody would be opposed to it.

My question to the minister, and perhaps he can answer this for me if he gets a chance to speak or somebody could speak to it, I do not care: Why would you not put this legislation in? Give me a good reason why you would not put it in. Do not say because municipalities can do it. That is not a good enough reason. There is overwhelming reason, statistics, studies, commentary, common sense that says overwhelming reasons why we should do this.

Yet, we say, municipalities can do it. That is simply not the case. Municipalities do not have the ability to handle this.

I call upon the minister to please, please put this on the docket. I know you are not going to get it done this time. It would have fit in with the apostrophes and commas session here, everything all good news stuff again. It is more of a time to rehabilitate the image in light of tough times.

We have asked for other legislation. The whistle-blower legislation has been promised on, I do not know, two or three occasions. It was promised and promised but we have not ever seen anything. They will stick it into a piece of health, what was it, the Food Premises Act. We will stick the whistle-blower legislation in there, but we cannot do what we promised on numerous occasions to the people.

From what I can gather, I heard a Cabinet minister said once that those were not promises, those were platforms. It is funny, one of the senior ministers in this government stood up and said basically do not listen to our platform, do not listen to our Blue Book because it is only a platform. Perhaps that minister had the good sense to – anyway, I will move on. You get my point.

The point is how can we take your word when you say it might not happen, because we only like these ideas. We are not saying it is actually going to happen, even though we promised it is going to happen; promises that the people on the West Coast have listened to on numerous occasions, whether it be the Corner Brook hospital. Again, I am not going to expound on that because my colleague has done a good enough job. For the people out there, we always call it the Corner Brook hospital but remember it is a hospital that services the entire West Coast, portions of the South Coast. It is absolutely amazing.

The fact is we already know you cannot have a baby on the South West Coast of this Province. You have to drive the 216 kilometres to Corner Brook. God forbid, if you are going to go into

labour at night because you are not going to have the snow clearing. You are not going to get the snow clearing that is promised to so many other areas.

MR. LANE: (Inaudible).

MR. A. PARSONS: I hear the good Member for Mount Pearl South talking, the expert on CETA and the expert on rural parts of the Province. It is that mythical area that he likes to talk about and expound on: oh, rural Newfoundland and Labrador. The fact is he represents Mount Pearl South.

What I would say to you, and I am going to take a quote from the good Minister of Advanced Education, get on your feet and tell me about it. Tell me about why that section of the roadway that just had 180 kilometres worth of wind today should not have twenty-four hour snow clearing.

I heard the Minister of Health have a few words there. I can keep going on that. I can keep going on cystic fibrosis and how we are behind the rest of the western world when it comes to newborn screening. I can keep going about that, the fact that we do not have the same standard of care that virtually every other province has because we do not have the good sense to follow what the experts say. I could talk about that. I could talk about how this Province, when we talk about diabetes we talk about dialysis, and we should be talking about prevention and wellness. We could be talking about that and the cost again.

I am wasting my time because I can hear the chirping out of my ear from the Member for Mount Pearl South. I hear the chirping over there, but the problem is he is doing it sitting down. He should do it standing up. Put it on the record. Put your name on it.

I am going to guarantee you that he does not rise to his feet and address my concerns today. I would put money on it if I could. I am just going to say he is not going to get to his feet today and address the important concerns of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, that urban and rural have. That is my job to put it

out here. I challenge you to get up and address it.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Order, please!

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to stand this afternoon and have a few words about this bill and a number of other items that are important to people of the Province.

I am always enlightened and enthralled by listening to the Member for Burgeo – La Poile have his little rant and throw out a variety of issues. I do not hear a lot positive or a lot of support for the good things that are happening but I guess as people home would recognize, that is the role of Opposition. They do not tend to put out new policies and solutions; they just try and highlight the problems. I appreciate that.

MR. A. PARSONS: A point of order, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile, on a point of order.

MR. A. PARSONS: Just to correct the member across, I did raise the idea of bicycle helmet legislation which is a positive idea, which this government could do but they do not seem to listen to it.

CHAIR: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate your ruling on that non point of order there.

Mr. Chair, we hear a lot of people talking in this House, particularly when we get into bills like this where we have a wide range of latitude on the topics that we can talk about. As I said a few moments ago, I will move away a little bit from my colleague from Burgeo – La Poile, but we have heard a lot of members talk about what is going wrong in the Province and what they see as challenges for the Province and all of the ills.

There is not a lot of discussion about what it takes to run a province, Mr. Chair, and not a lot of talk about what is involved for a government when you come to power and the challenges you face and how you grow and develop the economy. I want to take a few moments to talk about that because we have been in government now since 2003, and one of the things we recognized as a government from our early days is, first of all, the importance of managing the Province's finances and getting our fiscal house in order.

People in the Province who are listening to this debate in particular would remember the tough, challenging times that we had in the early days of governing; but the other thing we recognize is that in order to grow the economy, you have to have a vision of where you want the Province to go and what you want to see happen.

Our vision was very clear from day one and it has not deviated today. Our vision is about growing the economy in Newfoundland and Labrador by using our natural resources, by making changes in the fishery where we can, and that has not been without tremendous struggles. I had more than a year as the Minister of Fisheries and saw a lot of fish plants close, but things have to be done to right size the economy. Our government has continued to focus on that. We continue to focus on making tough decisions when they have to be made, because they have to be made; but we also focus on looking at how to develop the Province.

It is one thing to get the finances in order and it another point to grow the economy, but then you have to look at: How do you invest in Newfoundland and Labrador? What is it that needs to happen? We have had some very

significant priorities. We believe in investing in people through social programs, so we are investing in health, for example. My colleague is on her feet every single day in this House of Assembly talking about the investments we made in physical facilities across the Province.

In my own particular district, for example, we have a new health care centre and a several million dollar renovation to a long-term care home; but, more than that, we are investing in the people who run the health care system. That is what is most important. It is not about the facilities; it is about the quality of care that the people receive.

We are doing that, Mr. Chair, right across Newfoundland and Labrador and that is what is very important. We are doing that because we believe in rural Newfoundland and Labrador and we believe that if this Province is to develop, we have to invest in our people.

So, we invest in health care, and we are investing in education. My colleague the Minister of Education and the Member for Burin – Placentia West talked earlier today about a litany, a huge list, of schools and major school renovation projects that have been ongoing in this Province for the last number of years.

That is happening, Mr. Chair, right across Newfoundland and Labrador; but, more than building schools, we have taken steps to help those in need, those who have challenges in their household, financially challenged, by providing free textbooks for children. We eliminated school fees and every one of those moves put money back in the hands of parents and families.

What is more important, I would suggest, the elimination of school fees and the provision of free textbooks, besides putting money back in the hands of families, it reduced a terrible burden of stress on those families. I was with the school system for many years and I know what it is like when you have families who have low incomes, in some cases single-parent families, and the struggle day to day to meet their financial obligations and ensure their children are ready for school and well prepared.

They are no different, Mr. Chair, than the richest of people in the Province; they all want the same things for their children. They want them to have the best of clothing, they want them to be fed in a healthy manner, they want to make sure they get a good, comfortable roof over their head, a good, comfortable bed to sleep in, and they get a good education. When you are living in a situation where you are challenged financially, it puts a lot of stress in a household.

Besides putting money back into the hands of those people, I believe one of the more significant things we did was eliminate a big stressor on parents who were struggling to make ends meet. It is not just through education. My other colleague for Gander talked earlier about the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Again, continuing to invest in social programs in this Province has been a key focus for our government.

We also recognize, besides investing in social programs and investing in people, we had a huge deficit of infrastructure. We had schools to build. We had hospitals we had to build, repair, and renovate. We had bridges to build, long-term care health facilities to build, roads to fix and to pave, and we had a significant challenge there. Even though our colleagues across the way like to heckle about that sometimes, the reality is we have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on those kinds of investments. So we invest in people and we invest in our infrastructure.

The other thing we have continue to do, and I am just mindful of my time, is we invest in economic development throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. I will just give you a couple of examples because, as I said, I am mindful of the time. People like to say there is nothing happening in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. We hear it from members opposite on all kinds of occasions. They are obstructionist to anything good that is happening in the Province. They are obstructionist to that and they swing the other way only when it benefits them.

In the Town of Grand Bank, the biggest community in my district, we have a thriving

company, Dynamic Air Shelters, down there doing tremendous work. They have a steady employment level of about seventy-five to eighty-five, give or take. It goes as high as 110 at peak seasons. They are doing tremendous work all over the world making inflatable shelters. Our government has invested our time and energy to support and grow that company.

It was only about two months that I heard the CEO of the company, who is based out of Calgary, talk about the tremendous support that allowed the company to grow and flourish in a community like Grand Bank on the South Coast of Newfoundland because of the supports, leadership, direction provided, and the policies that supported them by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. That speaks volumes, Mr. Chair, in my opinion to the commitment we have in growing the economy in rural Newfoundland.

I also have a strong presence of the fishery in my district. Regrettably, both the NDP and the Liberal Party policies have been out against what we have been trying to do down there. I will give you an example. In St. Lawrence, it is very much, in my opinion, the model of what we need to have in Newfoundland and Labrador for a fish plant, and that is multi-species. They are into processing crab.

We worked with them to get a licence extension to process whelk. Last year they got into doing some cannery. The most recent was a transfer of a sea cucumber licence into St. Lawrence. As I said, unfortunately members opposite of both parties were dead out against that. In spite of that this government stood and supported the people of St. Lawrence because we recognize what that is doing for that community.

Likewise, we talked earlier today in Question Period about the Town of Fortune. Our government invested in the OCI operation in Fortune. We took a tough decision, a decision that was not popular with many people in Newfoundland and Labrador – it was totally blocked by members opposite and we have press releases we can show you to prove it. The

reality is we did it because we think it is the best thing for the people of Newfoundland.

Instead of leaving fish in the water unprocessed and no jobs created, today we will have in very short order a state-of-the-art facility in the Town of Fortune. As we speak there are about twenty-five people working there. I was in the plant probably a week-and-a-half or so ago. They are getting ready to process yellowtail; they are lined up to do some cod fish. There is very little of that being done in the Province these days. It is going to be a tremendous operation, not only for the people of Fortune but for the surrounding communities as well.

AN HON. MEMBER: A new vessel.

MR. KING: Thank you, and there is a new vessel purchased as well by the company to support that operation. It is always sad from my perspective when we hear members opposite stand up and block those ideas and say they do not support those ideas – members from other parties. In my view and the view of this government is if we can create one job in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, it is an investment worth making.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR (Littlejohn): The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

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

I am very happy to stand and speak to this bill. What I would like to focus on right now is the situation of seniors in our Province and the issue of housing. We all know, Mr. Chair, that we have seniors who are couch surfing. None of us in this House know that is acceptable; we all find that totally unacceptable. We all know constituents in our different areas, particularly seniors, who are having a hard time with housing. We all know that is a problem.

We all know even family members who we really care for who we are worried about in terms of their future housing needs. There have been multiple studies done in Atlantic Canada and also even locally in St. John's where seniors have identified the greatest concern they have in their lives right now is either their present housing condition or their future housing condition. We all know that, and I know that everybody in this House of Assembly, every single person in this House of Assembly, wants to make sure that every senior in this Province is adequately and safely housed. We all want that. We want that for our neighbours, we want that for our families, and we want that for our constituents, but we have a problem. We have a problem and that problem is growing. There are a number of different forces that are impacting to make that problem even worse and it is not going to get any better unless we have some very specific and drastic – at this point I think we have to have some drastic intervention.

We know that we have the fastest proportion aging population in the country. The fastest growing proportion of our population is aging faster than anywhere else in Canada. We also know that we have the highest percentage of seniors in the country, the highest percentage in Newfoundland and Labrador, who are in receipt of the OAS and the GIS. That means we have the highest percentage of seniors who are living either at the poverty line or below the poverty line.

We also know that the federal government has made changes and they are saying that they are moving the eligibility age for OAS and GIS to sixty-seven years old from sixty-five years old. That is going to take effect in the year 2023. That is less than ten years from now because we are almost out of 2013. We are going to have, again, the fastest-growing aging population, the highest percentage of seniors who are in receipt of OAS and GIS, and then we are going to get also this group of seniors, once they reach sixty-five, who will not be eligible for OAS or GIS for an additional two years.

We are talking probably seniors who do not have adequate income. That is going to be on

our shoulders as a Province. We know that. How are these people going to live? Again, one of their major concerns is affordable, accessible housing and we do not have that housing stock. We know that and the reason we know that is because the majority of people on the wait-list for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing right now are people who need either a one- or two-bedroom unit. A lot of them are seniors. Our wait-list in that category, in fact, is not diminishing; it is actually growing.

We have a growing problem, and a problem that is not going to be fixed by market forces. We know that. Let us look at what is happening in market forces. We know that the rents have increased at least by 4 per cent, a minimum of 4 per cent, every year over the past eight to ten years. That is a significant increase. We also know that our seniors' income is not increasing. We know that in places like St. John's, Gander, Clarenville, and Labrador – Labrador is even more so a problem – to have a rental unit of one bedroom is a minimum of \$800 per month – a minimum. That is just for a very, very basic unit.

Here we have the highest proportion of seniors in receipt of OAS and GIS, which means an average income of \$14,800. Yet so many of these seniors have to be housed and we know they really cannot get anything under \$800 a month and more likely than not it is going to be more than \$800 a month. If your income is about \$15,000 a year and your rent is \$800 to \$900 a month, plus you have to have heat on top of that, it is over \$1,000 a month just for basic shelter and all you have is \$15,000 a year. That means you have \$3,000 a year to live on. It is not possible, we all know that, and we all know that this is not sustainable. There is no doubt about that. We all want to make it better and we have to look at how we are going to make it better.

I think there is something simple that can be done that will cost the government no extra money and that is to make the Rent Supplement Program portable. We know for seniors how important it is for them to be able to live close to family, to friends, to perhaps their church, and to

their services. Right now we have, again, seniors who are on wait-lists for single, one-bedroom apartments.

If in fact they are lucky enough after a few years of being on the wait-list and if they are lucky enough to be able to get a rent supplement, it might mean although they have lived all their lives for instance in St. John's Centre that in fact their rent supplement might be out in Mount Pearl. They have no family in Mount Pearl, their church is not in Mount Pearl, and their doctor is not in Mount Pearl, but they have no choice because the rent supplement is attached to a unit rather than giving them the rent supplement so they can try to find a rental unit that is close to their family, their friends, their doctors, their activity, and their neighbourhood. What is happening in those kinds of situations is that we add even greater living expenses because it might mean that they have to take taxis. We do not have a great regional bus service in this area.

We have seniors whose children have moved to, for instance, Carbonear. Maybe the seniors were living in Blackhead or maybe they were living in Broad Cove, but their children are living and working in Carbonear. So that senior wants to live in Carbonear, close to their family and close to their services. Again, the rent sup is not portable, which it makes next to impossible for them. If the rent supplement was portable, then they could rent an apartment in Carbonear so they would be close to family and they would be close to services.

This would not cost the government any more. It would not cost a penny more. It is more dignified, it is more respectful, and it is also more cost effective because seniors then can choose where they are going to live. We know that many of our seniors, because of the high cost of rent, are in need of the Rent Supplement Program. To not do so I think is penny-wise and pound foolish. What is happening is their day-to-day living is more expensive because they cannot rent close to where they are.

It is something I would encourage the hon. member who is responsible for housing to

seriously consider, a specific specialized Rent Supplement Program for seniors so they can determine where they are going to live and so that they are living in safer conditions because they could live close to family, friends, and services. Nobody is at a loss for this. Nobody loses. It is a win-win situation. It is a win situation for seniors.

Many of us know that many of the seniors in our communities want to live closer to their families. Let us make that happen. It is not going to cost anything more. It is more beneficial. It is more beneficial to our social services. The Medical Association did a study on the social determinants of health and one of them is accessible housing close to their community. It would be a smart move for this government to make.

CHAIR: I remind the hon. member that her time has expired.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Finance.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MARSHALL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to take part in this debate which is a debate on the loan and guarantee bill. I am not going to go into what that is all about because I think we did that enough last time. It gives us an opportunity to talk about whatever we want to talk about.

What we hear in the debate is we hear members of the government standing up and saying how wonderful we are, look at all the great things we have done and accomplished and listing them out. Then we hear the Opposition stand up and talk about the things that we have not done, and continue to blast the government for things we have not done without mentioning too often the things we have done.

I think we are all satisfied that everybody is here and that we want to advance the hopes, the dreams, and the aspirations of the people of this Province. We just seem to have different ways in thinking about how we can do it. We all want to do it. The question is in many cases you need the funds to do it, you need the money to do it, and you cannot do it as fast as maybe you would like to do it.

I talked here the other day about schools. I talked about how the high school in Corner Brook was redeveloped at major cost, a wonderful, beautiful facility. Now the junior high school there is being developed. That work is being done now. There is money in the Budget this year and next year to do that work and that is great. Even before that is finished we are already looking at what is the next step. We know then that we have to redevelop another former junior high school G.C. Rowe in order to make room for K-12 students, then more down in J.J. Curling down in Curling, and then a new school to replace C.C. Loughlin Elementary.

Yes, work is going on and yes, more needs to be done. We have to do it a step at a time and do it to get there. It is the same with long-term care. I know the Member for The Straits – White Bay North talked about when he expects to see long-term care beds on the Great Northern Peninsula. I know in my City of Corner Brook that we built a 236-unit long-term care facility after a lot of requests, a lot of demands, and a lot of lobbying for that facility. At the same time there were four protective care residences that were built and twelve there – that is another forty-eight beds.

There is a lot of favourable opinion about those units. I have heard examples of people who may have been in a home or were getting home care. They went into these protective care units and how they responded to the friendships they had there and the wonderful people who look after our seniors there.

Also, the Minister of Health told me she is coming out in January. She is going to open up the restorative care section. That is another

fourteen beds, restorative care units, in Corner Brook.

Now, Mr. Chair, with respect to the new hospital, which the Member for Bay of Islands talked about, it is not just a hospital; it is really a campus of buildings dedicated to future care, both acute care and long-term care, for the people of Western Newfoundland. Basically, what happened is that during the original planning, the original programming and planning for that facility, a review was undertaken and it was determined that more long-term care beds were still needed. I cannot remember the exact percentage, but there were a number of people in the acute facility who really did not need to be there.

MS SULLIVAN: Twenty-five per cent.

MR. MARSHALL: It was 25 per cent; I thank the Minister of Health. Twenty five per cent were taking up acute care beds that really did not need to take up acute care beds; they need more long-term care beds. So, the government has made the decision that we need another 200 long-term care beds on the West Coast of Newfoundland, and it was decided that the first thing we should do is to build another long-term care facility in Corner Brook that would be 100 beds. In addition to that, there is going to be a logistics building; then, in addition to that, there is going to be the acute care facility; and, in addition to that, there is going to be a hostel, and they are all going to be connected.

It is on a very large piece of land, I might add, and there is lots of room there for expansion. I know that we will want more things for health care for the West Coast. Mr. Chair, there is demand for radiation units, there is talk about PET scans, there is concern about the medical transportation; but there are other things as our population continues to age, and our population, unfortunately, continues to decline, there are going to be more things that we are going to need to meet the health care needs of the people of the West Coast. I am going to support those things and I know the Member for Bay of Islands will support those things, but you cannot

just click your fingers and say it is going to be here tomorrow.

We are working on the long-term care facility and the logistics unit; that will be the first thing. Then the acute care facility and the hostel will be the second thing, and then we can move on. By then, there will be a new thing – maybe it is a PET scanner.

My gut reaction right now is that the radiation units will be more important than a PET scanner, because there is certain things you have to have in every region. Take dialysis, for example, you cannot have people travel every week for their care, so dialysis is needed throughout the Province. There are certain things that you might need once a year or twice a year, and you can get away with going on a trip to take care of those things, but not if you have to do it a lot. That is the difference.

So I certainly would support the enhancement of health care on the West Coast. I certainly believe that we need radiation units there and we will get there, but we have to do it a step at a time. We are working on four, maybe five buildings right now. The decision has not been made as yet as to whether the logistics building will be in the long-term care; maybe they will do it in one building and we will end up with four, or whether there will be five buildings.

Mr. Chair, while I have a few minutes left, as we come to the end of the week – I heard the Leader of the Third Party talking about capital investment. Unfortunately, I had to leave; I had to go out to sign some documents. Capital investment is extremely important. When we talk about growth in the economy, when we talk about GDP – and I always remember the line of the late Robert Kennedy who said: You cannot eat GDP.

GDP gives us an idea of how our economy is growing. It gives us an idea of the size of the economy and it lets us know whether our economy is growing, which is a good thing, or whether it is contracting, which is not a good thing. Because when it is contracting for a period of time, you are into a recession.

Mr. Chair, what is driving our GDP, what is driving the growth of our economy right now is capital investment. It is happening in a major way. This year it is about a 10 per cent increase; last year it was a 30 per cent increase. We are leading the country; we are number one in the country in terms of rate of growth. The rate of growth of capital expenditures here is greater than the percentage of growth in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MARSHALL: That and consumer spending is driving the GDP in this Province. We are actually leading the country in rate of growth of GDP.

Now, it did drop last year. Remember last year when the oil industry effectively shut down and there was nothing being produced, nothing coming in and we had a drop in our GDP, but now our GDP has rebounded because of capital investment. Capital investment is the Hebron Project, the Muskrat Falls Project, it is the commercial buildings and the residential buildings, the construction that is taking place. What that is doing is driving employment. People are finding work. Our employment numbers are the highest they have ever been. People are working and that is a wonderful thing

Not only are they working, but people are also getting paid more than in the past. There is a demand for skilled labour. There is a demand for people – there is a shortage of workers, so average weekly wages are climbing and that is great thing. People are working and they are getting more wages, so personal incomes are going up.

Guess what? One of the things we did as a government is that we lowered personal income taxes. We had the biggest reduction in personal income taxes back in 2008. We did it again in 2009 and we did it in 2010 and 2011. What does that mean? People are making more money, they are paying less personal income tax, and they have more disposable income. They have money in their pockets to spend, they

can pay their bills more readily, and they can save for their retirement more readily.

With that, Mr. Chair, the House Leader is telling me sit down, so I will. I look forward to continuing debate in the rest of this session in the new year.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for the Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Chair, I just stand for another few minutes to have a few words.

Finally, not very often do I take credit for myself, but I am finally going to take credit that I got the Minister of Finance, the Member for Humber East, saying that we need a PET scanner and a radiation unit. I congratulate the minister again after saying it two weeks ago in this hon. House, finally getting up again, saying we need it, and he is going to support it. I thank the minister for that. It took a long road, but I am glad that he finally said he is going to support it.

Here is my concern, I say to the minister, and I am going to check these facts out. Here is the information I got today. I am going to check it out. I am not saying that it is right or wrong, but I am going to check it out. Saskatchewan just opened a PET scanner. I think it was in May or June. Guess what? They do not have a cyclotron built yet. They are bringing it in from somewhere outside. Now, that is the information we just got and I am going to check on that because that was one of the big drawbacks, I say to the Minister of Finance, the Member for Humber East.

MS SULLIVAN: (Inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. JOYCE: That is one of the reasons why we could not have a PET scanner in Corner Brook, because we could not get it brought in.

I ask the Minister of Health, can I please have the courtesy? It is an important issue. If you want to say something –

CHAIR: I remind the hon. member to speak to the Chair.

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Chair, can you ask the Minister of Health – I am sorry I am touching a bad nerve with her because she stood up the other day and said we could not have it because we did not have a cyclotron. If she wants to stand on her feet she can do it, but do not go interrupting me when I am talking about an important issue and having a discussion in this hon. House. She has an opportunity, so just relax; you will have your opportunity. You can stand up right after me if you want to.

I am going to check that out because when I asked questions this week in the House, they said we could not because we are going to need a second cyclotron. I am checking out if the one in Saskatchewan opened in May. I just got the announcement that one will be built and operational by 2015 up in Saskatchewan. I will get all the information.

I say to the Member for Humber East, I am glad that we are all on the same wavelength. I always said from day one, what we need is to sit down and have an educated discussion on this, what we need, what we are going to need, and where we are going to go from here.

Mr. Chair, I am not going to be critical, but I remember the long-term care facility, and I am sure and I am confident on this, if the Member for Humber East – and the reason why I refer to him is because I know him and he is an honourable person – if he had to understand or if the information was put in front of him at the time that the long-term care was cut by 100 beds when there are people in the acute care beds waiting, it would never have been done. I am convinced of that because I know the hon. Member for Humber East and I know he has a lot of pull around the Cabinet table. I know he is sincere and he would not want to see people in Corner Brook not in the long-term care beds. I really feel that.

This is why I am bringing this information out. Gradually it is coming out because gradually I am getting the information and beating back all the misinformation that I was given, especially when I got my hands on the report, Mr. Chair. Of course, like I said to the minister, if the report is wrong get your money back. Everything I am stating here today is in this report.

I say to the Minister of Finance, the Member for Humber East, I will check out that information because if that information is correct about Saskatchewan that is the other argument they were saying why we could not have a PET scanner in Corner Brook. If that is correct, the information I have, and I am not saying it is but I received it today, but I am going to check it out because I did get the announcement where it is up and running and that they are going to start developing a cyclotron in Saskatchewan.

The other thing, Mr. Chair, I will bring to the minister's attention is that no matter what we say or how we debate this now, this hospital will not open until 2020 or 2021 at the earliest. The absolute earliest is 2020. What we should do is make plans to have it in the design of the hospital so that in 2021 when it is operational, for sure in the next seven eight or nine years that is the type of equipment that we are going to need in the hospital. That is the type of equipment that is for the future.

Do not say, well, we will add on to it because by the time it is built in 2021 or 2022, Mr. Chair, we are going to need it. Let us do a bit of planning. Let us go ahead and say, yes, by the time six or seven years is when it is going to be used, the hospital, let us forget the rhetoric about who did what, but we find out on the move that we need it. So in 2020 or 2021 that is when it is going to open.

Are you thinking we are going to need a PET scanner then? That is the big question, when every new hospital built in Canada in the last four or five years has a PET scanner. Do you think we are going to need one in six or seven years? That is the question.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible)

MR. JOYCE: Yes, it is right, I say to the Member for Humber East. I can name one in Calgary just built, PET scanner. I can show you the ones in Quebec, a population of 55,000 in some places and 100,000 in some other places, Mr. Chair. I understand, I say to the Member for Humber East. I will show you the information where it is done on geography in Quebec not on population. When you stand up and say, oh, they need another four, you are just making light of it, when the Minister of Health was up and said, oh, they should have another four.

What they did is they did it on geography. I say to the Minister of Finance, I will give you the information on Quebec and how they did it on geography and how there are people up there with a lot less population than the catch basin in the Western region of Labrador. I will show you that.

In closing, Mr. Chair, I will just say thank you for the support to the Member for Humber East. Thank you to the Minister of Finance. Finally we are working on the same page. Finally we are going to get something done with Corner Brook. Finally, I say, together we can stand up and get this done for the people of Western Newfoundland.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 24 respecting The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957.

CHAIR: Shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957". (Bill 24)

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: 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: A bill, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957. (Bill 24)

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 Bill 24 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 Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report the resolution on Bill 24.

CHAIR: The motion is the Committee rise and report the resolution on Bill 24.

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 (Verge): The hon. the Member for Port de Grave.

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Ways and Means have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of Ways and Means reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred,

have adopted a certain resolution, and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

When shall the report be received?

MR. KING: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that the resolution be now read the first time.

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

Carried.

CLERK: Be it resolved by the House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows:

“That it is expedient to bring in a measure further to amend The Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957, to provide for the advance of loans to and the guarantee of the repayment of bonds or debentures issued by or loans advanced to certain corporations.”

On motion, resolution read a first time.

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

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that the resolution be now read the second time.

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

Carried.

CLERK: Second reading of the resolution.

On motion, resolution read a second time.

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

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation, for leave to introduce a bill entitled –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation, for leave to introduce a resolution on Bill 24 respecting the Loan and Guarantee Act, 1957, and I further move it be now read the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, Bill 24, and that the said bill be now read the first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. the Government House Leader shall have leave to

introduce Bill 24 and that the said bill be now read the first time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Justice to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957", carried. (Bill 24)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957". (Bill 24)

On motion, Bill 24 read a first time.

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

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask leave by both parties just to finish reading this resolution in before the day ends.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Leave.

MR. KING: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, that Bill 24 be now read the second time.

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

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957. (Bill 24)

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957", read a second time. (Bill 24)

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that Bill 24, respecting the Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957, be now read a third time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 24 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'.

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957. (Bill 24)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill has now been 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 To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957", read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 24)

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank all members for their co-operation in getting through this bill today.

With that, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the House do now adjourn.

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

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

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