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*Speaker: Honourable Ross Wiseman, MHA*

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

Admit strangers.

Before we start today's proceedings, I want to acknowledge some special guests we have in the gallery today, a couple of young gentlemen that I had the pleasure of meeting before the House opened.

We are very pleased today to have in our galleries Mr. Guy Nash, who is the Principal of McCallum School in McCallum on the South Coast. He is accompanied by two young students, Cameron Feaver and Zachery Nash and these two young students are two of an all-grade school of a total of eight students on the South Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador and they were CBC celebrities last night. Some of you may have seen them on the news last night. They are here to visit some of our post-secondary institutions as they explore their futures.

Welcome to the House of Assembly.

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

#### Statements by Members

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today we will have members' statements from the District of Humber West, the District of St. John's Centre, the District of Lake Melville, the District of Carbonear – Harbour Grace, the District of Lewisporte, and the District of Humber Valley.

The hon. the Member for the District of Humber West.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I stand in this hon. House to congratulate students in the LGBTQ Alliance at my former school, Corner Brook Regional High. This school-based group promotes awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and queer issues and was presented with a 2014 URock Volunteer Award recently.

Formed in 2012, the group actively promoted and participated in the Corner Brook Pride March and encouraged faculty and staff to show their pride on Pink Day – a day to promote anti-bullying awareness and acceptance of all students. They promote awareness building and have created a safe place for youth and their allies. They also conducted extensive outreach to regional schools and created a tool kit to assist student groups in establishing their own gay – straight alliance.

Recently, I had the opportunity to speak at the very first provincial high school Gay-Straight Alliance Conference held at Corner Brook Regional High with over 120 delegates attending this landmark event from around the Province. For their efforts they were presented with a URock award.

I ask all hon. members to join with me in congratulating all members of this group, as well as teacher sponsors Gerard Lowe and Stephanie Pennell, for their incredible and important LGBTQ awareness work that they are doing in the Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. Johns Centre.

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

On Wednesday, June 4, incredible, courageous people will gather at St. Teresa's Parish Hall in my district of St. John's Centre for an open town hall on mental health. This came about because people in my district were telling me about their experiences and what they thought was needed in order to better help people with mental health and addictions issues.

Some of the special guests who will share experiences and thoughts about where we might go are Andy Jones and Mary-Lynn Bernard, Mary Walsh, Mark Gruchy, Roger Baggs, and Paula Corcoran. These are people who can speak from experience and are amazing activists on mental health and addictions issues. They are determined to make things better. They bring expertise, passion, and hope to the table.

Along with their presentations, the general public will have a chance to talk about solutions they think might work. Together we will tackle tough issues, explore best practices, and develop recommendations to bring to government. Several community groups are also participating.

I look forward to listening to the people who are willing to work together for the benefit of our community. Who knows what may emerge from this gathering? Mr. Speaker, this is citizens' engagement at its best.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I rise today to recognize the Libra House and the Mokami Status of Women organizations for the great work they do for Lake Melville.

These organizations provide a service to our community that help women in their times of need find support. Through programs such as supportive living, idea sharing, and engagement of other cultural and religious organizations, they help women in our community find the ability and the strength to rebuild themselves.

The staff at these organizations should be commended for the great work that do on a daily basis. In fact, many of these employees treat their clients like they are a member of their own family. It makes for a comforting environment and a great experience whenever I have had the pleasure to visit.

I ask all hon. members of this House to join me in celebrating the great work of the staff of the Libra House and the Mokami Status of Women.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Carbonear – Harbour Grace.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize Dr. Lonzel Button, a general practitioner in Harbour Grace.

Dr. Button will be retiring from his practice at the end of June after thirty-eight years of service to the people of Harbour Grace and the surrounding areas. It is with a great deal of gratitude that I thank Dr. Button for his professional service to the community and to the many patients he has seen over those thirty-eight years.

Mr. Speaker, getting doctors to set up practice in rural Newfoundland and Labrador has been a challenge for many governments for a very long time. Having a doctor provide medical service to rural communities for thirty-eight years shows tremendous commitment worthy of praise and recognition.

Mr. Speaker, the residents of Harbour Grace and area will miss Dr. Button, but I am confident that the general practitioners will carry on the great practice that Dr. Button has established in the region.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in thanking Dr. Lonzel Button for thirty-eight years of service to rural Newfoundland and Labrador and wish him good health in his retirement.

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

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

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

**MR. VERGE:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to convey my congratulations to the graduating classes of Riverwood Academy and Lewisporte Collegiate.

I had the pleasure of attending both ceremonies, which were held in Wings Point on May 9 and in Lewisporte on May 23. Both ceremonies were professionally well planned and resulted in a momentous and memorable celebration for all the graduates and their families.

I wish to thank all the parents, teachers, and other community people who volunteered their time to ensure that the graduating classes of 2014 had a safe and enjoyable weekend.

I would invite all members of this hon. House of Assembly to join with me in extending our sincere congratulations and best wishes to the graduates of Lewisporte Collegiate and Riverwood Academy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I rise in this hon. House today to honour a close friend of mine, Mrs. Jean Kelly of Howley, who recently passed away at the age of seventy-eight.

Jean and her husband Ronald were married fifty-nine years, a union that gave them five wonderful children. Jean lived an amazing life and her love for Howley was evident in her contribution to her hometown. She spent twenty-five years as a municipal councillor with the town, an accomplishment of which she was recently recognized. Jean spent many decades volunteering for many community groups in her community and throughout the Humber Valley region.

Jean also served on regional development boards including: the Grand Lake Centre for Economic Development, the Humber Economic Development Board, and the Great Humber Joint Council.

She was a passionate advocate for rural Newfoundland and Labrador. Every day of Jean's life was committed to fighting for issues and concerns that were dear to her heart and her community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this hon. House today to join me in acknowledging the tremendous life of Mrs. Jean Kelly of Howley.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Before I acknowledge the ministers, I want to welcome some other guests to the galleries as well. We have joining us today Diane Molloy, who is the Executive Director of the Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association. She has with her today the Board Chair, Ms Bev Walsh.

Welcome to the House of Assembly.

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

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

#### Statements by Ministers

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

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

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

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize the Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association as they prepare to host foster parents from throughout the Province for their annual symposium in St. John's this weekend.

This year's provincial symposium themed, *Touchstones of Fostering*, is taking place from May 30 to June 1 and will bring together foster parents, social workers, representatives of foster care associations, and community partners from across the Province to participate in workshops. It will also be an opportunity for foster parents to network with their peers, share experiences with one another, and celebrate being a foster parent.

The provincial government recognizes the vital role that foster parents play in our Province's child protection system. They offer a safe and supportive environment that nurtures the health and development of children and youth in-care. That is why, Mr. Speaker, we remain committed to supporting our Province's foster families, as well as further strengthening our close working relationship with the Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association.

In *Budget 2014: Shared Prosperity, Fair Society, Balanced Outlook*, our government invested an additional \$50,000 to the Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association bringing its total funding allocation to over \$369,000. This additional funding will help the association strengthen the capacity and the role of local associations across the Province by providing enhanced supports in such areas as networking, peer support, communications and problem-solving in order to assist in the recruitment and retention of foster families.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that through our Foster a Future recruitment campaign, we are continuing to increase awareness and recruit new foster parents. To date, over ninety new foster homes have been approved which have created over 145 new placements for children and youth. It was just last week that the campaign was recognized by the International Association of Business Communicators with a Pinnacle Award of Merit.

I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating the Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association for planning this year's symposium. I am certain the symposium will be an incredible success for everyone involved and, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to attending tomorrow evening.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. On behalf of the Official Opposition, I would like to welcome all delegates of the Foster Families Association as they convene this weekend, and thank Ms Molloy for being here with us today.

The annual symposium held by the Foster Families Association provides a critical networking and peer support opportunities for foster parents, social workers, and other stakeholders. Foster families play a critical role in providing a safe space for children in

challenging home environments. Many of these children have experienced significant trauma in witnessing domestic violence and substance abuse, experiencing neglect, as well as physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

The program for this weekend's symposium addresses some very serious topics that foster parents often contend with as fallout from trauma, from eating disorders to sexual behaviour in children and teens.

Government's Foster a Future campaign is a much needed one, as foster families are key to the effective delivery of Child, Youth and Family Services. I would also like to say that I know a number of MHAs on both sides of this House have foster children, and I congratulate them for doing this much needed service.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish all delegates of the symposium the very best. I want to say thank you for your hard work and dedication on behalf of the children of this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Congratulations to the Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association for a tremendously successful year. I hope that this annual symposium will once again be an outstanding event and, as in the past, be informative, useful and yes, even fun.

Congratulations on bringing ninety new foster homes on stream, placing 145 children. It is so important for children who have gone through traumatic home events to be able to stay in a family setting. I thank and I celebrate the families who open their hearts and their homes to children. Their generosity and commitment can save lives, providing support, guidance, love and hope.

I wish the association the very best this year in their enhanced role, providing support and services to foster families and local associations across the Province. You have done an incredible job. Have a great symposium.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House to recognize the work of the Atlantic Provinces' Cybersafe Girl Initiative.

Mr. Speaker, the objective of the Cybersafe Girl Initiative is to engage young girls and their parents or guardians on the issue of cyber-violence and to highlight the seriousness of the issue and how to address it. In addition, tips on how to mediate violence against young girls being perpetrated on the Internet and through other technologies are shared with the public. It was developed as an education initiative targeting children, youth, and parents or guardians on the associated risks and trends related to social media.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to attend the Atlantic Ministers Meeting earlier this week in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, where Atlantic Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women met to discuss regional approaches and developments in the social, economic, legal, and cultural advancement of women in Atlantic Canada.

During the meeting, ministers discussed several topics of importance, including women in leadership and gender-based analysis. The second phase of the Cybersafe Girl Initiative was also launched which focuses on the effects that hypersexualization can have on the self-esteem and self-confidence of young girls.

Research indicates that in 2009, 87 per cent of Canadians thought that advertising was too focused on young women being sexy and not enough on their abilities and intelligence. This second phase provides information on how hypersexual images can affect young girl's perception of body image. It also provides tips

for girls and families on understanding how these images can affect girls and ways to develop a positive and healthy body image.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to educating and raising awareness to combat cyber-violence against young girls, and to reducing violence against all populations in the Province through the Violence Prevention Initiative.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. Technology progresses at an ever-increasing rate and society must remain on their toes to keep up with not only how these technologies are used, but abused as well.

It is estimated that roughly 80 per cent of North Americans use the Internet, and its presence in many of our homes have added a new dimension to bullying and other forms of violence against women. The anonymity afforded by cyberspace makes exploiting women over the Internet seemingly less consequential. Not only do girls experience tremendous pressure from media to look and act a certain way, girls pressure one another, and raising awareness of how the Internet can be used to exploit women and girls is critical.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not point out two major hypocrisies of this government when it comes to violence against women. Number one, they cut the Family Violence Intervention Court when anyone who knows anything about the impacts of domestic violence, would tell you that girls who witness violence at home often grow up to become victims in their own intimate relationships.

Number two, this government kept a record on sexual exploitation secret and then chastised the media for covering it. The former Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and violence prevention said even to talk about the

issue, would put people at risk. This is a very dangerous message to convey around sexual violence, given the role that silence plays in perpetuating it. Is raising the awareness a good thing or a bad thing? According to this government, it really depends on the day you ask.

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

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

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

I too thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. I applaud the Atlantic Provinces for working together on the Cybersafe Girl Initiative. The statement talks about women in leadership and gender-based analysis.

Government can help to set examples like ensuring there is gender balance on the boards that it appoints. For instance, the Nalcor Energy board of directors has seven men and one woman. Of the fifteen elected trustee positions on the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District board, only three are women. When we look around this House the lack of representation of women is striking and stark.

Government must support the advancement of women on all levels in order to advance equality so women hold decision-making policies in our society. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the decision to close the Family Violence Intervention Court would have been done had there been more women in this House.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Program is a community-based charitable initiative which helps financially disadvantaged youth participate in organized sport and

recreation. Since 2005, this program has helped over 700,000 youth throughout Canada get involved in sports such as hockey, swimming, soccer, and ballet, including more than 34,000 youth right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Jumpstart initiative has successfully developed a network of over 3,100 community partners, including the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada, YMCA-YWCA, as well as local parks and recreation departments. Through these partnerships, the program continues to provide financial support to families with costs associated with registration, transportation and equipment.

Jumpstart Day will take place this coming Saturday, May 31, and more than 250 Canadian Tire stores across the country will organize events ranging from charity barbeques to hockey demonstrations to raise money for their local Jumpstart chapter. All customer donations to Jumpstart go directly back to the home community. Last year, our government participated in the signing of a proclamation to recognize the first Jumpstart Day in Newfoundland and Labrador, and \$350,000 was provided to support this very worthwhile program. We remain fully supportive of this initiative, and I am delighted that we will provide \$350,000 once again this year under our Poverty Reduction Strategy. In fact, Mr. Speaker, our government was the first in the country to be recognized as a key provincial partner with the Jumpstart Program.

Mr. Speaker, initiatives such as the Jumpstart Program are essential in our continued efforts to increase accessibility to organized sport and recreation programs in our Province. The program complements the goals of the Province's recreation and sport strategy – Active, Healthy Newfoundland and Labrador – which places great emphasis on the value of sport and recreation in our communities.

I invite all residents of this Province and members of this hon. House to recognize Jumpstart Day on May 31, and support the program in its efforts to provide our youth with opportunities to enhance their lives through sport and recreation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of the Ministerial Statement. Mr. Speaker, members on this side would like to congratulate all of the organizations and groups that participate in this Jumpstart Program. To the government for putting in \$350,000, good job. Anything that we can do to get our youth out moving and help some people who would not participate any other way is a great initiative.

As we all know, obesity in youth is a major concern and programs like this is what gets youth out and being active. Diabetes is a major concern. I even know the government is trying to facilitate speed skating in schools out on the West Coast, which I think is a great initiative by government. Anything that we can do to help the government promote youth and sports, I say congratulations, good job. Keep up the work because if we can keep our youth active it is going to make for better seniors and better people.

Government, make sure that our youth are well taken care of and through these types of programs they are. Good job, keep up the work for the youth and I support anything that you are going to do for youth in all the financial contributions you can make.

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

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

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

I too thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. It is good to hear about the success of the Jumpstart Program and that the Province is once again going to support this initiative to allow children to get involved in sports.

It is great that traditional organized sports are not the only activities that are supported. For example, the St. John's R.E.A.L Program, which

is a Jumpstart partner that has been around for several decades, supports art and drama programs as well as karate, fencing, and wall climbing. So, there is something for everyone.

Despite these initiatives, we do have a serious problem of inactivity among children and youth which has become a health issue. I encourage the minister to work with his colleagues in health and in education to get more physical education time back in our schools.

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.

Earlier this week, government announced the signing of the Impacts and Benefits Agreement with Alderon Iron Ore. Strangely, it did not release the agreement.

I ask the Premier: After the signing ceremony just two days ago, when will we expect the release of the final agreement?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, that is a fair question.

Certainly in line with our commitment for openness, Mr. Speaker, we fully intend to make the agreement public, and will do so in just a few days. There are a couple of issues that the company has raised, that we are trying to work through, but beyond that, Mr. Speaker, we are looking forward to making it fully public because it is a great agreement for the people of the Province. It builds on success and other benefits agreements, particularly around apprentices, around gender and diversity, Mr. Speaker, adding forty child care spaces for

employees, as well as an education component within the agreement that would help us build capacity hopefully in the mining industry as well.

So, it is a great agreement and we are certainly looking forward to making it public. It is just a matter of working through a couple of issues with the company.

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

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

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

We look forward to seeing that final agreement that was signed just a few days ago. There will be some questions, of course, that come out of it.

Ironically, this week government said that the Alderon project would result in \$18 billion to the provincial GDP and \$2.6 billion in the provincial taxes and royalties, but in the project description by Alderon it says the project would contribute \$26 billion to the provincial GDP and \$4.6 billion in provincial taxes. That was in the project description.

I ask the Premier: Why is there an \$8 billion difference between your numbers and what Alderon is saying?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, our involvement with the Kami Iron Ore Project has been extensive, and quite a bit of discussion with the company, and not only try and support the company in advancing this project but obviously recognizing our responsibility to maximize the benefits for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Mr. Speaker, there may be some difference in numbers. I would have to check in terms of exactly what numbers the Alderon company is using, but I suspect it could very well be the fact that they are looking at Phase II. Our numbers are probably looking at Phase I. Phase II would be an additional 8 million tons a year, and

certainly would add employment and revenue for the Province as well.

I will certainly check on it, the difference in the numbers, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Earlier this week we had asked the minister – as a matter of fact, we have asked the Minister of Fisheries a number of times now about ice compensation for fish harvesters and plant workers who are without income because of the delay of this year's fishing season. So clearly the minister is not able to make any headway at all with the federal government.

I ask the Premier: What are you going to do to bring this critical issue facing Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to the federal government?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, indeed, back in 1999 and 2007 the federal government stepped in when there were serious ice conditions in the Province. Again this year, based on what we have seen in terms of ice conditions, unusual ice conditions, actually, in terms of the amount on the South Coast of Labrador, certainly the Northern Peninsula and Green Bay area. Some of those fisheries have opened. There are others that are still struggling in regard to getting open.

We made representation to the federal government. It is under their jurisdiction. I implored them to act now because we have some cases where there are families – all incomes coming from the fishing industry is a concern to us.

This morning I spoke to Minister Shea. I said to her the importance of this. We expect it to be acted on. She said they are still reviewing it, but

I said action needs to be happening now. I did say as well that in regard to particular fisheries they needed to be extended. She said she would honour that and have those extended if the need is there.

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

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

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

That really leads into my next question here. The Premier and the minister often say, as we all understand, the fishery in this particular case is a federal issue. We have seen the Province get involved in federal issues in the past. The minister says that he was talking to the minister again this morning.

I ask the minister: When would you expect to get an answer for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador where this is the only source of income and it is delayed? When will we expect an answer for the provincial government to get involved?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of issues we are dealing with now; the ice compensation, and in regard to LIFO and our stand we have taken in the all-party committee, and certainly the members on the other side. We have taken a very active role on that, a collective role in terms of one voice for Newfoundland and Labrador. There are a few other issues.

Based on that and some of the response we have, the Premier has directed – and we will be setting it up – a request to the Prime Minister to meet with the Prime Minister on a couple of couple issues that are of extreme importance to this Province. I and the Premier, at his instruction, will be requesting a meeting with the Prime Minister to deal with these important issues that are extremely important to Newfoundland and Labrador and extremely important to the fishery.

That is why we have been so active in advocating changes that the federal government needs to make and step in, in areas like ice compensation. It is their jurisdiction. They need to step up and they need to step up now, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Often in the past, we always know, this argument with the federal government could go on for quite some time. It is not unusual for the Province to step up and help disadvantaged families in Newfoundland and Labrador.

My question is: Would you, the provincial government, get involved to support the families who are in critical need of help right now?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we are on the record in the past in terms of many of our fishery programs – the plant worker adjustment program, over \$10 million that we have helped in terms of reintegration, in terms of the community, in terms of plant rationalization, in terms of other programs they do, and in terms of assisting all those in the industry. In regard to this particular case, we believe fundamentally that this is an issue the federal government needs to deal with.

In regard to the EI fund, the amount that is in that fund – it is a robust fund. In the past they used a duplicate process in terms of helping those involved with the industry. As we go forward we know it is a priority. We will continue to monitor it. It is a federal government issue. They need to step up and they need to deal with it now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, we have troubling news for this Province with the announcement by Marine Atlantic that they will not be implementing a full summer schedule. This means there is and will be a decline in traffic, bad news for both the Province as a whole and for the many workers who will not be recalled this summer. This is undoubtedly one of the repercussions of the federal government decision to continue to provide insufficient funding for what is essentially our highway to the mainland.

I ask the Premier: What has your government done to lobby your federal counterparts to ensure that this constitutional service is properly funded?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, our position as a government has been consistent, that the federal government must meet its commitment under the Terms of Union. We need a reliable, effective ferry service to meet the needs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

We will continue to lobby the federal government to ensure that it lives up to its constitutional commitment.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I am certainly glad to hear that.

This decision has drastic consequences for the entire Province, whether it is the tourism sector, trucking industry, or displaced Marine Atlantic employees. Marine Atlantic service affects every single person in this Province. I would also note that Marine Atlantic's current funding arrangement expires next year.

I ask the Premier: Will you commit to sending a provincial delegation to Ottawa to ensure the federal government not only maintains the service but will improve it for the benefit of this Province and for all those who wish to come here?

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

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

**PREMIER MARSHALL:** Mr. Speaker, as the minister said, we will make every effort to ensure that the federal government lives up to its constitutional responsibilities to the people of this Province.

The minister and the all-party committee, for example, here in this House have met and have made representations to, I believe, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and to the Senate Standing Committee on Fisheries.

The minister, again, spoke to the Minister of Fisheries today and I will be seeking a meeting with the Prime Minister to discuss a number of issues, especially the shrimp allocation quota, to discuss those issues on a bilateral basis between the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Government of Canada.

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

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

**MS DEMPSTER:** Mr. Speaker, six weeks ago the Minister Responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing said it was too soon to say whether the vacant Paddon Home could be converted to affordable housing in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, a community facing a housing crisis. He said at that time that an engineering evaluation would have to be completed.

I ask the minister: What is the status on the engineering evaluation?

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

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is only focusing on one solution. We are looking at many solutions in regard to the action team. There are various solutions in regard to that issue in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

I have had numerous conversations with the MHA for the area as well. He certainly has promoted the Paddon Home as a solution, but it is incumbent on me, as the minister – and also I asked Newfoundland and Labrador Housing – to look at all the options, the best options, to meet the needs of those particular people who were displaced at Newman's.

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

**MS DEMPSTER:** Mr. Speaker, Happy Valley-Goose Bay is in a housing crisis, yet the Paddon Home has been sitting vacant for four years. This is shameful, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the minister – I say to him, enough skirting the issue – when will you announce the plans for the Paddon Home?

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

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Mr. Speaker, this is a real serious matter with regard to the displaced people from Newman's. I had an action team on the ground the very day that they were being displaced, when they were leaving, that very morning. I had a heads-up about a few hours before, and we had people on an aircraft and in the area.

They have been working through this process with all the stakeholders in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, along with the MHA in the area, and certainly we will find a long-term solution. I am not at liberty to say today that we will be using the Paddon building, but it is absolutely an option in going forward.

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

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, the Rural Broadband Initiative announced in this year's Budget had a deadline of January, but that was extended to the end of February. Given months have passed, telecommunication providers need approval to get the job done on time and on budget.

I ask the minister: When will you announce the millions of dollars dedicated to these projects so these communities desperately in need of broadband and cellular coverage are serviced?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct; it is millions of dollars. We, as a government, have certainly invested millions and millions of dollars in terms of the broadband initiative. We have leveraged well over another \$100 million in terms of what we have put in as a provincial government.

Right now, for example, in high speed, we are up over 95 per cent in the Province. We are very committed to this project. Again this year, there was a call made in regard to broadband; we received a number of proposals. My understanding is that they are being reviewed by the minister and her department. Certainly, very shortly, we will be in a position to announce those and move these initiatives along, which is driving broadband in Newfoundland and Labrador, which we have been committed to and certainly continue to be committed to in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, the longer these projects are delayed, you are denying people vital services.

Mr. Speaker, with nearly 200 communities unable to access broadband and many geographical regions without cellular coverage, a clear plan is needed to address these gaps.

I ask the minister to table in the House, as committed, the communities in the Province served by broadband. Will she table government's plan to address poor cellular service in the Province, as committed?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, our plan is to continue with the initiatives we have, and the massive investment into telecommunications and the broadband. As the hon. member knows, this is certainly driven by the CRTC. It is regulated by the CRTC and Industry Canada. We could sit back and do nothing, but we have not chosen to do that. We have chosen to be hands-on, and certainly work with those rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. For example, we are up to 95 per cent now in regard to high speed.

If we look at recent projects down on the South Coast, we invested and partnered with Conne River, a couple of carriers, ourselves – I think it is something like \$4.5 million project in that region on the South Coast, another example of what we are doing and how we are investing.

We are going to continue to do that, Mr. Speaker, because the people of Newfoundland and Labrador deserve that service, and we are going to work with them to make sure they get it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. KIRBY:** Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education has directed guidance counsellors not to use new international standards for diagnosing learning disorders until the 2015 school year. The new broader DSM-5 standard for learning disorders is intended to ensure that fewer individuals go unidentified.

I ask the minister: Isn't it unethical for your department to block the use of this new diagnostic tool for learning disorders and thereby expose students to preventable risks?

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

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

**MR. KING:** Mr. Speaker, any time we bring in a new program or a new initiative in education, there are multiple layers and multiple steps that have to be followed. Probably one of the most important things we need to do is educate teachers, provide proper and adequate professional development so they understand the new program or the new curriculum.

The document the member references now is certainly going to be a valuable tool for us in assessing children on a go-forward basis and into the future; but one must remember that we are only at the first step of making guidance counsellors, in particular, aware of that particular resource. We also have a very strong responsibility as a government that when we bring in a new program, we have to have the resources to fully resource the program.

At this point in time, we are very much in the awareness stage of making teachers and counsellors aware of the program. We will move forward in due course with resourcing the program.

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

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

**MR. KIRBY:** Mr. Speaker, school guidance counsellors and educational psychologists themselves are governed by a code of ethics to provide the best possible standard of practice. By blocking the use of the DSM-5 diagnostic approach, this government is asking our counselling professionals to provide an inferior standard of care to students.

I ask the minister: Why are you asking these professionals to breach their ethical code and further compromising student learning in the process?

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

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

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

The only breach in ethical code that would occur is that if we brought in a new assessment to guidance counsellors and instructed them to use it without providing them with adequate attention and information around how to apply the tool, Mr. Speaker. We have to ensure that guidance counsellors and educational psychologists understand what this new program is about and are aware of how to apply that assessment to children; otherwise, we certainly are encouraging them to be very unethical.

At this point in time we are doing the education process. We will continue to do that. As a Department of Education we have a responsibility to ensure all children in the Province are treated fairly and equitably. That means ensuring teachers, counsellors, and educational psychologists have the appropriate resourcing of the system and professional development they require to implement that program. When that piece is done, Mr. Speaker, we will move forward with the next layer of that program, which is resourcing it and applying it to the entire system.

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

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

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, last week the World Trade Organization ruled to uphold the ban on the import of Canadian seal products based upon moral grounds as set out in the EU seal regime. The WTO decision points out that the EU seal regime permits seals to be taken as part of a marine resource management plan.

I ask the Minister of Justice: Has he made representation to the federal Department of Justice to develop a legal framework for a marine resource management plan similar to those of Sweden and Finland, so we are able to effectively manage our seal population while complying with the European seal regime?

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we are still in the process – the federal government as well – in regard to the WTO Appellate Body. The ruling that was made is on the moral issue in regard to the GATT trade rules.

The appellate mentioned that this was in contravention of the GATT rules and an interesting application. How the EU will continue with their ban now is interesting. We will work with the federal government as we move forward. In regard to seals – the hon. member mentions – it is a huge concern to us in terms of the overall marine environment right now. We are up to anywhere from 7 million or 8 million seals.

We have supported the industry over the past number of years. Two years ago, 100 were taken, but we need to realize there is a 400,000 total allowable catch for seals. It is very important to the ecosystem and we need to move forward with it, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear the Minister of Fisheries will work with the federal government. I am wondering about the justice side because of legalities.

Mr. Speaker, the harp seal is a top predator in the marine food chain. It is estimated that the harp seal population is rapidly approaching 10 million and that one adult harp seal consumes 1.4 tons of seafood annually, and that starvation may soon be a real possibility for many of them.

I ask the Minister of Justice: Will he commit to immediately assemble a task force from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, our Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, and

the provincial and federal Departments of Justice, to develop a sustainable marine management plan for seals that complies with the European Union seal regime?

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

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

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

Again, Mr. Speaker, the marine environment in regard to those that are engaged in the sealing industry – but not just the sealing industry, the whole ecosystem, whether it is shrimp, crab, cod, other ground fish, pelagics - the whole ecosystem is of huge concern in regard to how the interaction exists.

We have worked with DFO, continue to work, and looked at expanding markets, certainly looking at Asia and what is happening there. We are having success in regard to those markets. In North America, in northern domains, in terms of seal products and that sort of the thing we are seeing an increase, and that bodes well for everybody involved in the industry.

In regard to the hon. member, the marine system is extremely important to us, obviously from an ecosystem point of view related to seals. We continue to work and continue to make sure that we make the decisions, and lobby the federal government and make the best decisions for the whole ecosystem and for all those industries that are affected by it, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the port of Cartwright, government's own press release dated October 26, 2010 stated that in terms of acceptance, there would be no change to current configuration of passenger and freight services provided by the *Northern Ranger* out of Cartwright.

I ask the minister: Why are you not following your own policies, and refusing to allow freight

to the North and South Coast to be shipped through Cartwright on the *Northern Ranger*?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, as you know, a new RFP came out for the fleet arrangement on the North Coast as well as the South Coast of Labrador. Part of that strategy is to decide what way the freight will move along the South and North Coast of Labrador. In that RFP, we have new ships coming in. We have a whole new management system coming in.

Until that is put in place, the RFP comes back and we actually sit with the people who are actually awarded that tender – we will sit down with them then and we will decide the best management practice for the South and North Coast; and if Cartwright is in that picture, then we will certainly look at that.

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

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** I am glad to hear that the minister is looking forward to revisiting that issue, Mr. Speaker.

There is a considerable demand for freight movement between the North and South Coast and logistics show that Cartwright would be a natural fit, given it is already a port of call. It would also mean significant shipping cost reductions for both business and consumers.

I ask the minister again: Will you now start following your own policies and reinstate Cartwright as a shipping port for the North and South Coasts?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we realize the importance of getting the freight back and forth on the North Coast of Labrador and we also realize the intricacies that are involved in that. That is why we have an RFP out to make sure that we try to improve on the system. With the new RFP, there is a new fleet going to be in there. There is a new management system, a new freight system, a new passenger system.

Once that RFP comes back, as I stated in my last answer, we will sit down with the people who are awarded the tender and figure out the best routes to take. If Cartwright is in there, we will certainly look at that, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's South, for a quick question.

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

The exterior renovations to the Confederation Building were supposed to cost \$20 million. It is 150 per cent over budget and two years behind. The blue windows were supposed to stop light from coming in.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Please get to your question.

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

I ask the minister: The windows did not work properly; you had to purchase blinds. What was the cost of the blinds?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if it is the colour of the windows that he says is not working, but the purpose of the blinds is for energy efficiency, as is the tint that is in it. It is all in the package.

It is over \$20 million, as we all know. During Estimates, I shared photos with the hon. member so you would realize why it is over.

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

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

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

Last year's \$150 annual cap on adult dental care effectively made the program useless to many, as evidenced by the \$2.5 million left in the program at that end of the year. In Estimates, the minister referred shamelessly to this dismal result as savings to the program.

I ask the Premier: Why, yet again, has this government seen fit to save money on the backs of the Province's most vulnerable people?

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

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

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

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

The hon. member is quite aware that the dental program that we introduced, it is the first of its kind in Canada. When we introduced that, there was a significant uptake to this program.

Last year, what we brought in was a maximum allowable benefit. Much like any type of insurance program, anybody who purchases a private insurance program – and the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program is an insurance program for certain members of the population, and it has allowable benefits from the program.

We put an allowable benefit of \$150 for dental care last year. We have increased that to \$200 this year. As I have said before, and I have said here in this House, we will evaluate and continue to evaluate this new and groundbreaking program for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

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

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

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

Yesterday in Question Period the minister said that the \$750 funding allotment to seniors eligible for dentures was enough to allow a senior citizen to have their upper teeth done one year, and their lower the next. It is unbelievable.

I ask the minister: Does he understand that a person's mouth just does not work that way?

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

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

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

We are certainly getting an understanding of how her mouth works, I will assure you of that, Mr. Speaker.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, there are people in this Province who benefit from the seniors' denture program. Three years ago, there was no such program for them. The seniors had to completely bear the burden of dentures entirely on their own.

Three years ago, we introduced a new denture program for seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is a denture program that is used by many adults who are qualified for that, who qualify under the guidelines of the program, and it is for seniors as well. It is a new program. It is a groundbreaking program.

We are evaluating that. I can tell you that the entire budget is utilized on the denture program. We are continuing to work with denturists throughout Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure that this is in the best interest of their practice as well.

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

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

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

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

I invite the minister to speak to any dentist or denturist who will tell him the obvious nonsense of what he said yesterday in the House. The

minister must know or ought to know that the long-term savings to the health care system of providing basic dental care to those who need it warrants the up-front cost.

I ask the minister: Given his government's concerns regarding rising health care costs, how could they be so short-sighted when it comes to dental care?

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

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

**MR. DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, dental programs and denture programs – they are two separate programs for people in Newfoundland and Labrador, especially those who cannot afford or are challenged in obtaining those services themselves by their own means – are very important to the people. This is a very, very important topic.

Mr. Speaker, when this program rolled out there was a significant uptake in the first year. We remember it. It was discussed many times here in the House of Assembly. There were many questions here in the House of Assembly about the uptake on the program. One of the things that we did hear from denturists and from their representatives was that it was a challenge for laboratories, from their own labs here in the Province, to deal with the demand.

What we have done now, and through this process, we are approving about 200 applications per month. This allows a steady flow of business through those programs. We want to get the program out; we want people to get those services.

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

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

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

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

We are in a housing crisis Province wide. I have repeatedly asked the minister if he would consider a specialized rental assistance program

for seniors similar to the one in BC where the rent supplement is portable and goes directly to the senior so they have a right to choose the best location to live. It makes total sense.

I ask the minister: Why will he not do this?

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

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Mr. Speaker, I will answer quite simply. It is because it does not make any sense, because it is not working in BC. Newfoundland and Labrador Housing would not have the right to go in and inspect the actual residence. Then we would have an issue in regard to discrepancies and standards that would have to be in place in regard to us providing the Rent Supplement to a senior. I would like to have, as the minister responsible, the right to go in and inspect before it is occupied, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MS ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, seniors are adults who know how to make decisions on their own – for goodness sakes.

Mr. Speaker, the residential tenancy act review consultations were completed in 2012. On April 7, I asked the minister, when was he going to release the report with all its recommendations?

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister once again: Why is he not releasing the report of the residential tenancy act review with all its recommendations? Is he hiding something?

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

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

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member across the way knows me well. She knows that I would never hide anything from her.

Mr. Speaker, the report that is coming forward in the next little while from my officials, I expect to see on my desk in short order. I have asked that question as well. As soon as it is on my desk and I have a chance to review it, I certainly will take it into consideration in terms of what to do with the report after that.

Mr. Speaker, I have not received that report myself is the simple answer, and I am looking forward to seeing that.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre for a quick question.

**MS ROGERS:** All right, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the minister once again: Where is the report for the housing and homelessness review that was completed seven months ago? What is he hiding?

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

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

**PREMIER MARSHALL:** Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Newfoundland and Labrador will be pleased to know that there is over \$5 million in the Budget this year to help combat homelessness. We increased the amount by an additional half a million in this year's Budget.

The minister has gotten up from time to time to talk about what we have done this year with rent subs, what we have done to help people on low incomes, people with disabilities, to have their home readied for energy efficiencies and more. We have to deal with the federal government to have a couple of hundred new homes done. Dealings with housing is very important to this government, and we will –

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

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

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** On a point of order.

**MR. SPEAKER:** On a point of order, the hon. the Member for St. John's East.

**MR. MURPHY:** Mr. Speaker, during Question Period, in answer to the Leader of the Third Party, a comment was made by the Minister of Health that he understood how her mouth works. It sounded a little bit degrading to me. I would ask the minister if he would withdraw his remarks.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services, to the point of order.

**MR. DAVIS:** I withdraw the comment, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

#### Notices of Motion

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I give notice under Standing Order 11 that the House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, June 2, 2014.

I further give notice that the House not adjourn at 10:00 p.m. on Monday, June 2, 2014.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Government House Leader, notices of motion?

**MR. KING:** Yes, further notices of motion.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Labour Relations Act, Bill 22.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider a resolution relating to the raising of loans by the Province, Bill 23.

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

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

#### Petitions

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

**MR. LANE:** 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 there are extreme overcrowding issues in St. Peter's Elementary and Mount Pearl Senior High, a direct result of poor planning by the Department of Education; and

WHEREAS the solution imposed by the English School Board to deal with this now crisis situation will have a devastating impact on many students, families and teachers in Mount Pearl Senior High, Mount Pearl Intermediate, St. Peter's Elementary and Newtown Elementary; and

WHEREAS there are other less disruptive solutions which can be introduced to alleviate this overcrowding issue including capital investment as a preferred option as well as catchment area realignment; and

WHEREAS the English School Board was not provided with the financial flexibility by the Minister of Education to explore other more suitable options; and

WHEREAS the government has intervened in poor decisions in the past such as in 2005 in Bishop's Falls, reversing the closure of Leo Burke Academy.

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

Newfoundland and Labrador to intervene in this matter, commit appropriate resources to the English School Board and instruct them to develop more suitable options.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have now presented this, I cannot remember how many times but several times to say the least. I still have a stack of these petitions to present. The recent ones came from a Grade 4 student of Newtown Elementary who went door to door in his neighbourhood and collected petitions from people in Mount Pearl in the Newtown area who have major concerns with the decision that has been made. As indicated in the past, this could have been avoided had there been proper planning done. Of course, we know that proper planning is not something we see from across the way too often in many categories, including education.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that I have to keep presenting this. It is unfortunate the minister has indicated that he will not intercede in this matter, even though interestingly enough it has been done in the past when there was a by-election on the go. I am not sure what that would have had to do with anything. I will let people judge that for themselves.

On behalf of the many families and students impacted by this terrible decision, I will present this petition today and I will continue to do so until the House is closed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

WHEREAS the Family Violence Intervention Court provided a comprehensive approach to domestic violence in a court setting that fully understood and dealt with the complex issues of domestic violence; and

WHEREAS domestic violence continues to be one of the most serious issues facing our Province today, and the cost of the impact of domestic violence is great both economically and in human suffering; and

WHEREAS the Family Violence Intervention Court was welcomed and endorsed by all aspects of the justice system including the police, the courts, prosecutors, defence counsel, Child, Youth and Family Services, as well as victims, offenders, community agencies and women's groups; and

WHEREAS the recidivism rate for offenders going through the court was 10 per cent compared to 40 per cent for those who did not; and

WHEREAS the budget for the court was only 0.2 per cent of the entire budget of the Department of Justice;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to reinstate the Family Violence Intervention Court.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I plead with the Premier at this point in his career, before he leaves this House of Assembly and a new Premier comes onboard, I plead to him to heed and to listen to the women of the Province, to women's shelters in this Province, to women's groups who work in the area of Violence Against Women. I beg him to listen to the police. I beg him to listen to the courts. I beg him to listen to Child, Youth and Family Services.

Mr. Speaker, I beg the Premier to stop and to listen to the people who are saying that the Family Violence Intervention Court was one of the most effective tools in working in the area and looking at the root causes of domestic violence. I beg him to speak to the judges. I beg him to listen to the people who say that this court was effective, that this court protected the women and children of this Province. I beg him to do that before he steps down as Premier. I beg him to listen and to reverse this decision. I

beg him to use his position of authority and power and to honour the commitment that this government says that it has made in the area of violence prevention and domestic violence. I beg the Premier to listen to the people who are talking about this who are experts. They are absolutely experts.

They want it in Labrador. They want it in Corner Brook.

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

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

**MS ROGERS:** They want it all over the Province. The Premier knows that it can be spread all over the Province. That it is possible. That it does not cost a lot of money.

The women's groups in Labrador, the women's groups in Corner Brook, the women's groups in Stephenville want this court as well. The John Howard Society wants this court. The Child, Youth and Family Services (inaudible) –

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

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

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

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** 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 consumers and businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador pay some of the highest automobile insurance rates in the country; and

WHEREAS part of recent increases in automobile insurance is due to uninsured automobile coverage, which could increase by 329.3 per cent in 2014 for taxis and limousines insured by the Facility Association; and

WHEREAS consumers may see an increase in taxi fares and limousine rates as a result; and

WHEREAS consumers insured by the Facility Association could see their own auto insurance rates increase partly due to uninsured drivers;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to establish a procedure for insurance companies to co-ordinate with police, highway enforcement officers, and the Motor Registration Division to remove unlicensed and uninsured vehicles from our Province's highways.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, it has been several times now that I have risen in this House on this particular petition and addressed the simple fact of uninsured drivers in this Province. The other day was a really glaring example of what can happen with an uninsured driver.

Here in the City of St. John's, up on Blackmarsh Road, a lady's house happened to be struck by an uninsured vehicle. She found out the hard way that her house was not covered through the other vehicle's incident with their house and that their damages would not be covered. Now they are left hanging with a house here that has an untold dollar amount on it, probably in the thousands to get their house repaired because there was no insurance on the vehicle in question that hit their house.

So, now we have a consumer here who is left out hanging in the wind with no way to get their house fixed, except by paying for it out of their own pocket when they should not have to. We all recognize that accidents are accidents, Mr. Speaker; but when somebody is at fault and it can be proven, such as in this case, when they do not have any insurance, well then the question has to be asked: How much are we paying on our insurance rates right now whenever we are paying for uninsured vehicles out there? We know it is a serious problem.

We need to hear actions on the part of government to correct the problem that is out there. We know we have several mechanisms to do it. We can do it through the police; we can do it through highway enforcement.

All it takes is a little bit of co-ordination from the insurance companies to find out about those people out there who do not have current policies, or let their policies expire and for the obvious reasons that people think they do not have to have it. They think that they have a right not to have it on their vehicles when we know that the opposite in case is the fact, that it is the law to have at least some form of liability insurance on your vehicle.

The other day was a telling example of that. When somebody's very residence gets hit by a car and that person has no insurance, we know what the costs are, we have a glaring example out there now in the media.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**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 humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS there is no cell coverage in Trinity Bay South from Heart's Content Barrens to Bay de Verde and this is not acceptable; and

WHEREAS the lack of cellphone services is unsafe for everyone in the area; car accidents, volunteer firefighter requests, police help, ambulance requests, and inshore fishing are just a few areas where access to cellphone service could affect life or death; and

WHEREAS safety should be a number one priority; and

WHEREAS Trinity Bay South can never attract meaningful business interests without cell coverage; and

WHEREAS tourism involving hiking, cycling, and many other activities simply cannot thrive without cellular services;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to provide Trinity Bay South with cellular service immediately to protect the safety, economic, and social well-being of the area and its people.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, it is quite evident that there is a significant opportunity for the CBN area to look at, with the population, to provide adequate cell coverage to areas that are underserved. I think it is really a time for government to table its plan and to work with the federal government and with Bell Mobility.

There was a wireless spectrum sale which Bell has a plan to cover 97 per cent of the population across Canada with cellular coverage. Let us get together, carve out those plans so the economic benefits can be shared throughout the Province. We look at strategic investment with the Department of IBRD; make it happen for these areas.

I have been presenting and speaking of the issue on behalf of my constituents on the Great Northern Peninsula, but as well there are many other areas of the Province that need that type of attention. The business case certainly can be made for it. I present this petition because I think it is something that is so important for the safety, well-being, and economic development of a region.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity.

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS parents are continuing to demand more flexible policies to meet 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 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, I do not know how many times I have presented this. It is quite a number of times. I got an e-mail yesterday that made me think I should present this here today. It was from parents out in Paradise. They are talking about how in that town they are getting busing provided for Paradise Elementary students while there is construction going on, and they talk about the need to consider safety of their children beyond this year when the construction is going on.

I think this really legitimizes a lot of the things that I have been talking about. They say that their child has to cross Topsail Road, which is a feat for an adult, let alone a child, must contend with four lanes of traffic; and they said that their wife could walk to school with them, but she has a three-year-old at home who would have to accompany them on their walk across to

Paradise Elementary – 1.4 kilometres. It says: a very busy four-lane street, Topsail Road, and then also a busy four-lane street in Karwood Drive.

It goes on to talk about our weather, how it is actually not unpredictable, but very predictable, and you can predict that we are going to have wet and cold and snowy and windy, and downright nasty weather sometimes. To expect small children to negotiate four lanes of traffic to get to school is simply unreasonable. This parent goes on to say that not only is it not safe to walk, it is often not safe to park because there is not a sufficient amount of parking, so even driving their own kids is not an option.

Mr. Speaker, this really speaks to what we have been raising.

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

**MR. KIRBY:** Thank you.

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

**MR. MURPHY:** 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 weather cameras are needed on the Burin Peninsula Highway for safety of residents who are travelling during unpredictable weather conditions.

We, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge government to install weather cameras on the Burin Peninsula Highway.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I stood in the House of Assembly before on this particular petition and this one, I guess. When it comes to a seasonal basis, this one may sound like it is little late in coming but it is not. There is still snow in the forecast, I

think as late as yesterday. It is unbelievable how changeable our weather is.

When it comes to the Burin Peninsula Highway itself, Mr. Speaker, I was down there about three weeks ago on an event. I had to note the changeable weather conditions that were down there at that particular time. Of note then, of course, even since then, we had some accumulation of snow on our highways.

The people of the Burin Peninsula are asking, pretty much – they know there are cameras down there on the highway but they know there is a need for a second camera down there. They are in a particularly harsh area where the weather seems to be very, very changeable. It may simply be a case, Mr. Speaker, where they might be able to change the position of one of the cameras down there, for example, and move it into the area where there is a high degradation of temperature, a big swing in temperature where the road would freeze more so than in others.

I am asking government to consider this move on the part of the people of the Burin Peninsula. Again, these signatories come anywhere from Marystown, Creston North, as far down as Grand Bank. I will leave it with government.

Again, a last thought on this is that even though there is no technology that exists, for example, cellular service in some areas down there is also spotty. That is another issue we are dealing with. We do know government has made good investments when it comes to cameras, for example, underwater cameras in fisheries. I think the minister, within the last three months, announced about a \$19,000 funding measure to put in an underwater camera system for some net monitoring.

We know the technology out there exists. We know the technology is available here in Newfoundland and Labrador. We do know of a couple of companies that can come up with a system. We think it can be done for less than \$10,000.

Mr. Speaker, again, it is a pleasure to stand up in the House and present this on behalf of the people of the Burin Peninsula. We hope that government can address this situation.

Thank you very much.

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

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

As per Standing Order 32, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation, that we move to Orders of the Day.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that we now move to Orders of the Day.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

#### Orders of the Day

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

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

First of all, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 11, I move that the House not adjourn today at 5:30 p.m. – that is Thursday, May 29, 2014.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that this House do not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 29, 2014.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

Once again, pursuant to Standing Order 11, I move motion 9 that the House not adjourn today at 5:30 p.m., May 29, 2014.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that this House do not adjourn at 10:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 29, 2014.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against –

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. KING:** Yes, I am not sure if I said the right thing. They said I said 5:30 twice. I intended the first motion to reflect 5:30 p.m., the second one to reflect 10:00 p.m.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Just to make sure we are fair here, let's repeat the motion.

**MR. KING:** Yes.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that the House do not adjourn at 10:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 29, 2014.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

We do not want people getting out too early.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

This time I ask leave, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Dispensing Opticians Act, 2005, Bill 19, and that the said bill be now read the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services shall have leave to introduce a bill, An Act To Amend The Dispensing Opticians Act, 2005, Bill 19, 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 19?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

The said bill, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation. I apologize.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

It has been moved and seconded that the Minister of Health and Community Services shall have leave to introduce a bill, An Act To Amend The Dispensing Opticians Act, 2005, Bill 19.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 19, 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'.

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Dispensing Opticians Act, 2005", carried. (Bill 19)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Dispensing Opticians Act, 2005. (Bill 19)

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

When shall the bill be read a second time?

**MR. KING:** On tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 19 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.

At this time I call from the Order Paper, Order 1, and I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation, that An Act To Amend Various Acts Of The Province Respecting The Publication Of A Summary Of A Decision Or Order Of An Adjudication Tribunal, Bill 8, and the said bill 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 8 shall be now 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 Amend Various Acts Of The Province Respecting The Publication Of A Summary Of A Decision Or Order Of An Adjudication Tribunal. (Bill 8)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend Various Acts Of The Province Respecting The Publication Of A Summary Of A Decision Or Order Of An Adjudication Tribunal", read third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 8)

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

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

At this time I call from the Order Paper, Motion 1, that the House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, the Budget Speech.

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

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

I rise in my place again today to talk about the Budget. Of course, as everybody knows, there has been some time now since the Budget has been passed, and knowing that I guess in some cases people may even forget that we did pass along the motion to debate the Budget pretty much in March now. It seems so long ago when it came out, that some people may even have forgotten that it is still not passed yet. Again, I take pleasure in rising in my place to talk about that.

Mr. Speaker, before I do, I would like to thank the Members of the House of Assembly here for their support. I know my own family has been getting a very harsh lesson when it comes to what is happening in the health care system when you have somebody sick in your family. I want to thank them, first of all, for their hopes and their prayers.

The exposure we have had to the health care system, of course, makes you all the more readily apparent of the problems that you see within the health care system, too. I want to say one comment with regard to the staffing who are in there. I want to thank them wholeheartedly for their support and their tireless efforts in working with our family, in particular, and with the families they deal with on an everyday basis.

I know we have an aging population in this Province. The challenges are going to be very many in the next coming years. I just want to thank them for all the work and everything they are doing. God love the nurses, is all I can say, Mr. Speaker, and that basically includes everybody. God love the nurses for their toil that they do out there. I cannot help but think of nurses in a whole different light having been exposed to the health care system and what is happening.

Mr. Speaker, the Budget, like I said, was brought forth about a month-and-a-half ago now – it seems so long ago – but I wanted to talk to some issues to the Budget that I believe are very important to the Province. Again, when I touch on the health care system, I want to talk about the population challenge issues that we have in the Province here and how they can be effective in the next couple of years by looking at the budget numbers that are here in this book and

comparing them again to what is going to be happening down the road.

The first big issue when it comes to population, we know there are going to be heavy demands on the health care system, as I just chatted about, simply because we do have an aging demographic. Along with an aging demographic and a declining birth rate – because the figures from Statistics Canada are not lying in this particular case; we have a declining birth rate not only in this country, but particularly in this Province, and that is going to affect the budget numbers in the Province, but we are not talking about it. We are really not talking about it in a way that we should be. It would be my suggestion to government that we would have an all-party standing committee that would be sitting and looking at the challenges as regards population and what it is going to be doing to budgets in the future.

One of the more important things that I talked about was that in the future, we are going to be dealing with a declining tax intake, if you will, into the Province. This year's budget numbers show, for example, that we are going to be taking in approximately \$1.1 billion in personal income taxes in this Province. That is from working people. That is from you and me. That is from the people who are out there working the minimum wage jobs. That is from the people who are out there driving their taxis or driving their trucks, or people who are working in the office buildings here on Water Street.

We have a tax rate right now that is based simply on people who are working, or people who are making a lot of money that can contribute to the system; but at the same time, whenever you get older, usually what happens is that if you do not have a good nest egg put away, you tend to fall back on pensions – and pensions these days we know are not as valued the same way as what they were before. We do not get the same purchasing power and then, on top of that, sometimes we do not draw out as much income tax from that.

If we are going to have an aging population, this Province has a challenge right now of meeting workforce needs for example. The government is saying that we have the challenge of getting about 70,000 workers into the workforce. The

skilled trades are one place that I can point to. If we cannot get enough people who are going to get in here to support the system – and like I said, \$1.1 billion in income tax is raised this year, projected.

It would be my guess based on the declines in population from Statistics Canada, that number could be anywhere from 30 per cent to 35 per cent less in taxation collected to government twenty years down the road. That is almost a \$400 million shortfall in basic personal income taxes collected. If we also have an aging demographic, Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that along with that declining birth rate, that retail sales, for example, may be affected.

Now we have a problem here, an issue with money, and twenty years down the road the answer cannot be royalty money from our resources because we know right now, for example, that royalty monies from a declining resource like oil are simply going to be less in twenty years' time. So, now we have a double problem here. We have a problem of declining population, if you will, and revenues that are taken in from that; but, at the same time, we are also going to have the issue of royalty monies from a declining resource, and we know that those monies are going to drop. So, we do have challenges coming up in the future.

Mr. Speaker, a couple of issues in my district – and going out door to door you talk to people and one of the big issues that a lot of people out there in my district have are affordability issues. In some places in my district people have fairly good incomes. In other areas I have a lot of seniors, for example – just to give everybody a little sense of what they are feeling out there. Government's policy – and we all talk about it here as well, about keeping people in their own homes. We all want to keep people in their own homes and keep them healthy at the same time, and it would be partially a health concern; but if we are talking about the affordability of keeping people in their own homes, one of the responsibilities that we have as legislators, is to make sure that the taxes that they are paying are going to be the lowest that they can.

I talk about in this case, for example, the role of the Department of Municipal Affairs when it comes to the funding formula. If government

was paying its way, for example, on the buildings that are right down there in St. John's East alone, how much of a tax base increase – an increase to the tax base and an increase to the revenue that the City of St. John's would be able to avail of and not to fall back on the taxpayer to increase their municipal taxes. That is kind of important. I see that some of the government members are a little bit interested in this one. If we keep municipal taxes low, we keep people in their own homes. It is as plain and simple as that. The second thing that we also do is we maintain revenue to the various cities and towns across the Province that have provincial infrastructure.

So there is a responsibility here on the part of the Province, as well, to make sure that municipal taxes are low. How can they do that? A couple of different ways; let me tell you about them. If we know that the Province was paying its fair share, for example, on provincial buildings – on provincial buildings alone, we know that it would be several thousand dollars in revenue, for example, per building that would be back into the municipal coffers. That is one way that a municipality, for example, can gain revenue.

The second way – and let me give you an example of how this can affect the general public out there too, and it is not talked about enough here in this House here either – is municipal transit. Last week my comrade for St. John's Centre asked a question in the House. She talked about the case where a couple of seniors wanted to visit their brother who happened to be moved out to a home in Long Pond. Mr. Speaker, as much as that does not sound like a big issue for a lot of people, it was for these two seniors. When you are talking about visiting from St. John's West going out to Long Pond out in Manuels, you are probably talking about a \$60 cab ride one way.

Everybody thinks that municipal transit has to make money. The other reason why you have municipal transit is to address an issue like this. We know that the Town of CBS, for example – I would imagine that they would certainly love to have a foothold in on a municipal transit issue. The Town of Paradise would want to get in on a municipal transit issue.

This is an everybody issue, Mr. Speaker, because you are talking about the cost effectiveness of transportation. We just do not have municipal transit for the sake of municipal transit. We have municipal transit as a connector for people and a connector for communities. More importantly in this particular case when the Member for St. John's Centre talked about the two ladies in St. John's West who wanted to visit their brother in CBS, it becomes an affordable option to have somebody out in CBS in a case like this, if they desire to go out in CBS, because they know they have a municipal transit system that can probably help move people at the same time. That discussion needs to happen. Towns and cities benefit from a discussion like that.

A Province, for example, like ours with as much oil revenue as it has coming in right now, could be giving the City of St. John's a tax break, for example, on its purchases that it is making and keep some of the money in provincial coffers. We know that the CFIB earlier today, for example, came out with a report saying that the City of St. John's was spending 50 per cent more over and above what it was a few years ago in spite of only having an 8 per cent growth in area.

The real factor here is that we know the City of St. John's is probably doing pretty good spending with that 50 per cent because of aging infrastructure that it has. There are challenges for cities, for example, even when you read the report from the CFIB where the City of St. John's needs to be spending that 50 per cent more. We have a responsibility as legislators to protect our cities from there and hence to protect our citizenry at the same time. That is something about what I hear from my people in St. John's East.

The other thing I wanted to address was a rather unique educational issue that I ran into in my district, and it seems like this one is scattered in some schools. Perhaps the minister might want to address this one or investigate this one. In just talking to one of my school councils last week, one of the issues I ran into, and it is starting to come up again, is the issue around some electrical issues with some of the SMART Boards out there.

As much as government made a great investment, there is a problem with the SMART Boards out there and the maintenance of. In some cases the SMART Boards, the bulbs, for example, in them burn out after about 400 hours use. These things are used eight hours a day in the classroom now. After roughly of about fifty days, you are looking at a school board that has to go ahead and spend \$400 for a bulb for one of these projectors.

In some of these schools, if you have twenty classrooms you are talking about twenty bulbs over the run of 400 hours and you could be talking upwards of \$8,000. So I ask government to have a look at that, to investigate that particular issue, but like I said, the SMART Boards right now are a necessity. Until we have better technology or a better way of replacing some of the parts for some of these SMART Boards, it needs to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about the people of Chalker Place. I had the opportunity as well to participate in a Chalker Place neighbourhood cleanup down there last week. They are just super nice people down there, and we had a great time down there. The kids were really responsive to a cleanup in their area.

It is a funny thing about young people, they are more responsive to environmental issues and environmental sensitivities sometimes than adults are. We see that case everyday of course when it comes to the discussion of some government policy when it comes to industrial development. We have to be very careful. The environment belongs to our children out there.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say hats off to the people of Chalker Place who responded last week to cleaning up their neighbourhood. We just had a great bit of fun there the other day.

I want to talk about the amounts in royalties at the same time. Last week – well, I think it was probably about three weeks ago now; we had an interesting set when it came to the amount of money. We are asking government from that day exactly where the money went? About \$14.7 billion in royalties were collected since 1997 from first oil and I think everybody remembers not seeing that first dollar amount on the cheque.

Some people in return, of course, are looking for fairness in taxation in this Budget, and I do not think they really got it. I do not think they really got it when you look at the numbers that were in there. We wanted to see more investment, for example, from the monies that were collected in this Budget.

One of the things we did not see, for example, was something our party had asked for several years ago. I think it was in 2011. In a private member's motion we asked for diabetes test strips to be paid for by government. At that particular time government came forth and amended the resolution to the point where they said when they have the money in the Budget to do so they will go ahead and start paying for it. Well, guess what? It is \$14.7 billion since 1997 and we still cannot afford to take some preventative steps when it comes to medicine and Medicare in this Province and avoid some medical care spending here.

We did not see fit yet in this Budget, for example, to pay for diabetes test strips. Like I said, when government said they had the money they would do it. Well, it is obvious they had the money this year. They went out and borrowed another billion dollars. They bet on the future that they were going to have the money in the future as well to do it, but the time is now, Mr. Speaker, with an aging population in this Province and the onset of diabetes and how much it has increased in the past years. We did not see government invest in preventative-type medicine to the degree that we would have liked to have seen. That is one instance.

Back to my constituency again. I can talk about Lucentis injections. The funny part about Lucentis injections is that this is the only Province in Canada that subjects the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who are facing macular degeneration – and yes, it happens again with an older population – you get fifteen injections and they are capped. There is a cap on them. Hats off to government for looking at that cap, but they still do not see the basis of removing that cap as other provinces have.

What Lucentis does, of course, if you have macular degeneration you lose your eyesight. That is fifteen injections over a lifetime – not fifteen injections a month or a year, anything

like that, that is fifteen in a lifetime. I ran into a constituent last week also who is starting to have problems with their vision. They had started losing it about three months before I even knew it, and they were already up to five or six injections, I think it was. Well, what do they do after they reach the cap?

Well, here is what happens, Mr. Speaker, here is what happens. They are expected to – if they want to prevent losing their eyesight they have to reach into their pocket, they have to reach into their retirement savings, they have to reach into their RRSPS, if you will, and they have to haul out about \$1,800 per injection in order to save their eyesight. Now that is a little bit ridiculous, Mr. Speaker.

If you are talking about not having to pay the expenses of somebody losing their eyesight, it is absolutely preposterous to know that government will not remove the cap on Lucentis injections. They would expect that if somebody could not afford it, that person would have to end up going blind and cost the medical system in training in Braille education, or in Seeing Eye dogs, or in helpers in this particular case.

Two people I am dealing with right now, one is a seventy-nine-year-old lady who happens to have her driver's licence. Her husband is sick. She is the only mode of transportation. If she loses her eyesight, Mr. Speaker, what do they do? What do they do if she is the only one in the household right now getting them around? I can guarantee you, the next step for them, if they do not go ahead and get the \$1,800 a month for Lucentis injections, they will have home care. That is going to cost government, if government does not end up doing the right thing by paying for Lucentis injections. Mr. Speaker, like I said, that is not the only person in my constituency.

I would say to government right here and now in Newfoundland and Labrador, we have an aging demographic in this Province and according to the CNIB we have about 20,000 people in Newfoundland and Labrador who are susceptible right now to have macular degeneration within the next few years. While it is a slow build up now, government is going to get hit with an extreme wave of people who are experiencing problems with vision health.

Do you know what? Vision health, Mr. Speaker, is one of the lesser paid attention to, if you will, classes of health care. We do not tend to look at vision care the same way as we do for home care or old age care, if you will. This is one place where government can actually avoid a problem in the next couple of years. Remove the cap and make sure people are going to be insured of their eye health so they will not have to be practicing an added expense to the health care system later on.

Mr. Speaker, I can see my time is up. I will just reflect on a couple of things very quickly as regards other things in the Budget.

There is no plan from this government as regards roads and bridges. There are no plans for road maintenance programs that will be undergoing rotation. We know the Auditor General has already said we are \$800 million in the hole. We know that government has already said this year \$81 million is a record. We still have not heard from government in regard to how they are going to be able to pick up from the amounts of money that they have missing.

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

I remind the member his time has expired.

**MR. MURPHY:** I see my time is up, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale.

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

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

I am certainly privileged to speak on *Budget 2014: Shared Prosperity, Fair Society, Balanced Outlook*. Before I get into the crux of the matter, I just want again to thank the people of the District of Baie Verte – Springdale for their ongoing support and for placing me here. It is certainly humbling and a tremendous educational experience. On behalf of all of us here, I want to thank the people right across the Province for placing us here, and we all try to do our best.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize, first of all, the six high schools in my district that are carrying on graduations. They are Indian River High of Springdale; Valmont Academy of King's Point; Copper Ridge Academy, Baie Verte; St. Peter's Academy of Westport; and Cape John Collegiate, La Scie. I hope I did not forget anybody, Mr. Speaker – the M.S.B Regional Academy of Middle Arm. I have the privilege of going, hopefully, next week, to the Baie Verte CNA graduation and also this Friday night attending the St. Peter's Academy one.

One common theme or thread of all of these so far is the outstanding speeches by the graduating students, youth, community support, the huge commitment of teachers and the strong leadership that the graduating students exhibited as I visit these schools. In short, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to applaud the schools and the graduates for the outstanding job that they are doing.

Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I will probably be in a combative mood. If you ask me why, it is simply because a couple of weeks ago the Leader of the Official Opposition gave me a lot of food to chew on, of which I cannot digest and I find it very distasteful. By extension, I assumed all the members across the way believe the same viewpoint. You might be wondering: Well, what is the problem? What kind of phrases did he use in his speech about a couple of weeks ago in a fundraising event? The phrase that really got to me, irritated me, and perturbed me as a proud Newfoundlander and Labradorian was the three words: lowest, worst and the last.

I said to myself: Well, what Province is he living in? If he is referring to Newfoundland and Labrador, he is really completely oblivious to the past ten years and what this government has done. Is he referring to the lowest tuition fees in the country? If he is, he is correct. If he is referring to the lowest pupil-teacher ratio, he is correct. If he is referring to the lowest unemployment rate since 1973, he is correct. If he is referring to the lowest small business corporate income tax ratio in Atlantic Canada, he is indeed correct. If he is referring to the lowest personal income tax rates in Atlantic Canada, he is indeed correct.

Like I said earlier, I cannot share the same view, Mr. Speaker. I take strong exception to the official leader's characterization of our beloved Province. He stated like I said earlier: least, lowest, worst, last. I cannot share that same view. Does he really believe that?

Why would he diminish our collective psyche? Why would he discourage potential tourists and investors to visit our Province by such negative comments? Is it because of his quest for power? I refuse to believe that we are least, last, and worst. For the first time since Confederation, we as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians believe in ourselves. We are proud, we are confident, and we hold our heads up high.

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

**MR. POLLARD:** We are leaders; we are not followers. No longer are we taking the brunt of one joke after another. From the resilient, innovative, hard-working Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to the huge, many, varied resources that we have in our Province, Newfoundland and Labrador has become a model not only for this Nation but the rest of the world.

My question is: Why paint such a dismal picture of our beloved Province? I reject the notion that we are least, last, and worst. I refuse to believe it. It is a gross misrepresentation of who we really are and where we are right now in this particular time of our history.

The lust of power is so great it has attacked our pride, our psyche, of which no amount of money is able to purchase. Is that the image every leader wants to be projected to our school aged children? Is this the image that we want to project to potential investors, to potential business people? Is this the image we want to project to our school-aged children, to our children, to our grandchildren with these negative comments? Will these negative comments instill vision in our people? Will they instill pride in our people? Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker.

Will these negative comments instill a can-do attitude? Absolutely not. Why attempt to tear down and destroy what we as a Province, ever since Confederation, approximately sixty-five

years, are striving to become – proud, determined, strong Newfoundland and Labradorians, able to stand on our own two feet for the first time in our history –

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

**MR. POLLARD:** Right now we are paying our own way. We are no longer the poor cousins of Confederation. We are now part of the golden era of opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. POLLARD:** Why do we want to go back to the 1990s or the early 2000s in ones and twos and threes, no vision, close to bankruptcy, a spirit of despondency and depression and despair pervaded the entire Province, Mr. Speaker. The people were so much in despair in that they could not hold their heads up high. Their chins were digging furrows in the sand in the ground; we were so low in our pride, Mr. Speaker.

Away with negativism, away with doom and gloom, away with this austerity in the past ten years, we have come out of it, Mr. Speaker; what a metamorphosis, what a transformation this Province has seen in the last ten years by this government. It is absolutely irresponsible for anybody to get up and say that we are least and worst, and lowest and last. It is a pure condemnation of the people of the Province.

Mr. Speaker, look at our history since Confederation, look at the highs and lows, where are the highs in the graph if you look at them? It is under the PC government, under the Tory government, the high peaks –

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

**MR. POLLARD:** Where were the low peaks? It was under the Liberal rule, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. POLLARD:** Under the Liberal rule. The Moores Administration, the Peckford Administration, the Williams Administration, the Dunderdale Administration and under this current government, you see high peaks in economic performance, Mr. Speaker, high peaks

in our pride and now they want to get in power and bring the people down, down, down, with no vision. It is absolutely irresponsible, Mr. Speaker.

Do you know what their energy plan was in the early 1990s? Exploit the dividends of Newfoundland Hydro to pay for roads and bridges –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** It is shameful.

**MR. POLLARD:** It is shameful, Mr. Speaker. It is absolutely irresponsible. I cannot go back there.

Mr. Speaker, I have to calm down a bit because something rises in me when I hear these negative comments. What did Michelle Obama say? Just listen to this quote, “One of the lessons that I grew up with was to always stay true to yourself and never let what somebody else says distract you from your goals. And so when I hear about negative and false attacks, I really don’t invest any energy in them, because I know who I am.”

Mr. Speaker, I know who I am. The people of this Province know who they really are: proud, strong, determined.

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

**MR. POLLARD:** Mr. Speaker, we are visionary, we are innovative and resilient people. We are not going to tolerate somebody calling us worst, last, and least anymore.

Just listen to this comment, Mr. Speaker. It is another quote I got from Facebook. My friend just put it there this morning. I came across it: the waters of the sea cannot sink a ship unless it gets inside. Likewise, negativity cannot put you down unless you allow it to get inside of you.

Mr. Speaker, I refuse to let the waters get inside me and sink my ship. This government chooses to lead. This government chooses to inspire. This government chooses to uplift. This government chooses to be positive. This government chooses to be encouraging to the people. This government chooses to look up. This government chooses to look ahead. This government chooses to look forward and not

behind. This government chooses a vision. This government is staying on course.

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

**MR. POLLARD:** Mr. Speaker, this government is casting a vision of which we have never seen before. We are not to be deterred; we are not to veer off course. We are going to stay straight ahead with our vision. We know we are on the right track in the past ten years from economic performance and taking care of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, showing that we care about the people of this great Province.

Mr. Speaker, in my former life as a teacher I never did subscribe to the have not phrase that I heard over and over and over. I believed in the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and how resilient, strong, and innovative they really were. I knew how many resources we had in this Province, but it was mismanaged, it was not done right.

As a teacher I often wondered, how can we do better? Do you know what? In the late 1990s, 2003 when we took power the vision was cast.

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

**MR. POLLARD:** I gravitated to that vision, Mr. Speaker. I was hooked because the vision was clear. I am proud to be part of this government today because I was looking for someone to uplift me. I was looking for someone to inspire me. I was looking for someone to motivate me. I was looking for someone to say the sun will shine and have not will be no more.

I have news for everybody, especially over there, Mr. Speaker. The sun is shining.

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

**MR. POLLARD:** I have news to believe, Mr. Speaker, the clouds are gone, the sun is shining, and have not will be no more. It is happening today just in case they do not know, Mr. Speaker. They are completely oblivious to the present situation. They are completely oblivious to the economic performance of the past ten years of this government. Why? Because the lust for power is so great that they are willing to

down trod, they are willing to tear down, they are willing to trod the psyche of our people.

Mr. Speaker, it is shameful, it is irresponsible. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador will hold them accountable in the next general election.

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

**MR. POLLARD:** Excuse me, Mr. Speaker, I have to calm down a bit. I do get emotional.

I have a choice, we all have a choice. Every day we get up in the morning, we can be positive or we can be negative. Mr. Speaker, I choose to be positive. This government chooses to be positive. I choose to believe there are more people working today than ever before in our history, since 1973.

I choose to believe – to wear my glasses, Mr. Speaker. This Province is leading the nation in health care wait times for cardiac bypass, hip fracture repairs, and cardiac surgery.

Thank you, we share the same vision over here. It keeps us focused, thank you.

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

**MR. POLLARD:** I say thank you to the Member for Harbour Main, thank you. I can even see better now.

Mr. Speaker, I choose to believe that we have the best pupil-teacher ratio than any province in Canada. I choose to believe we have the lowest tuition in the country. I choose to believe that retail sales are strong, car sales are strong, and there is a high level of consumer confidence.

We have low interest rates. We have the highest average weekly wage in the country. I choose to believe that second only to Alberta. How can we not believe that this Province – do I look good, Mr. Speaker, with these glasses on?

I choose to believe that we are a have Province. Alberta, BC and Saskatchewan – we are in their league. One time, they looked upon us with condensation – a condescending attitude. Yes, they wanted to rain upon us too, on every parade

that we had. It is no more, no more, Mr. Speaker. We believe in ourselves.

I believe that we have the highest level of employment in the history of the Province, second only to Alberta. We have the lowest annual unemployment rate in thirty-seven years, Mr. Speaker. I choose to believe that the housing starts are strong. I choose to believe that Newfoundland and Labrador is leading Canada in economic performance, outpacing every other province.

Just listen to this, Mr. Speaker, the Conference Board of Canada issued its economic report card for the provinces, "Using hard data, they have ranked Newfoundland and Labrador, alongside Alberta and Saskatchewan, as the top performers among all provinces. In fact, with an A-plus rating, we were not only ahead of Ontario, Quebec, BC, Manitoba and the Maritimes; we were also ahead of Canada's national performance and ahead of the US, the UK, Australia, France, Germany and even Norway."

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

**MR. POLLARD:** This new report echoes the findings of Canada's five major banks and the bond rating agencies. I have a question, Mr. Speaker: Whose report are you going to believe? I believe in the report of bond rating agencies. I believe the report of Dr. Wade Locke. I believe the report of the Conference Board of Canada. I believe the report of major banks, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have a question: Is that the worst? Is that the least? Is that the lowest?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No.

**MR. POLLARD:** Is that the last?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No.

**MR. POLLARD:** Tell me again, Mr. Speaker, I want to hear it loud and clear. Is that the worst?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No.

**MR. POLLARD:** Is that the least?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No.

**MR. POLLARD:** Is that the last?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No.

**MR. POLLARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. See that information? See the thing work?

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

**MR. POLLARD:** Now, Mr. Speaker, we have an A<sup>+</sup> grade for economic performance. I have two more phrases. My time is running out.

Just quickly, Mr. Speaker, a couple of years ago spending \$5 billion on infrastructure was considered by the Official Opposition over there as frivolous spending. I say it again, frivolous spending. In fact, the other day he had the audacity to say that we squandered our oil money and we left a legacy of lost opportunity, left nothing behind.

Mr. Speaker, that is totally appalling, shocking, amazing, completely oblivious to the surroundings of what is happening in this great Province of ours. What newspaper is he reading, Mr. Speaker? Nothing could be further from reality, Mr. Speaker. Tell the people of Little Bay Islands and Long Island that the \$27.5 million ferry is frivolous spending or squandered money. Tell the people of Bell Island, my colleague here, the Member for Bell Island – I am sorry, there is someone else sitting there now.

The \$50 million ferry and a fire hall, squandered money, Mr. Speaker, just squandered. Shameful! Tell the people of Baie Verte the Copper Ridge Academy, \$16.7 million is frivolous spending, squandered money. They will not believe you, Mr. Speaker. Tell the people of Green Bay-White Bay that the investment in roadwork and Municipal Capital Works is just squandered, frivolous spending. Tell the people of Central Newfoundland that the five operating state-of-the-art rooms in the hospital is frivolous spending and squandered money.

Tell my son-in-law, Mr. Speaker, who had a baby boy born, my grandson, last weekend, my daughter Danielle and Josh – tell them that the money is squandered, and tell the physicians that. He came home raving about the beautiful,

beautiful state-of-the-art facility in which the baby was born. Mr. Speaker, hats off to this Province and to this government for investing.

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

**MR. POLLARD:** Tell the people who are receiving dialysis services, it went from seven to fourteen; tell the people that is squandered money. Shameful! Tell the people who are in long-term care facilities. Tell the people in Grand Falls who are receiving a building for a youth addictions centre, and Paradise.

**MR. JOYCE:** How about the hospital in Corner Brook?

**MR. POLLARD:** I heard too much of that, Mr. Speaker.

Tell the people of this great Province that 383 per cent spending in infrastructure is squandered. It is shameful, Mr. Speaker, absolutely shameful!

Mr. Speaker, my time has run out. Do you know what?

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

I remind the member his time –

**MR. POLLARD:** We are first, the best, we are leaders, we are highest, we are models, and we are visionaries, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, normally I have a pretty good stomach, but you almost have to have Gravol to listen to something like that. Does he really live in a bubble where he gets in his vehicle and drives on a paved road in here and he really thinks that everything in the Province is fine?

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

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

**MS DEMPSTER:** Is that really the situation? He gets in his vehicle, he drives in on Sunday night or Monday morning and he thinks everything is fine with the world. Well, I am going to tell you, Mr. Speaker, when you talk about the shared prosperity, fair society, and balanced outlook, it stops before you cross the Strait of Belle Isle, and it stopped long before the ice blocked up the Strait of Belle Isle this winter.

If he wants to talk about shared prosperity, I am going to burst his bubble a little bit and talk about the poverty in my district; poverty that is a stone's throw away from mega industrial projects, billions of dollars, Mr. Speaker. It is not good enough. It is time for the people of Labrador to rise up and strike back against this.

Everybody knows where Labrador is when they are ready to exploit, when they are ready to take, but when it comes to giving back, Mr. Speaker. He can get up and talk about his son, his grandson, and his daughter-in-law coming home. Guess what is happening? All of our young people are leaving, Mr. Speaker. Billions of dollars of investment in their backyard but there are no jobs for them. There is not even an employment office, Mr. Speaker, for them to go to any more.

Two-hundred-and-twenty-six councillors in Newfoundland and Labrador, their jobs were cut, Mr. Speaker. Now they are coming to our offices. Ever since I have been elected with so much on my desk and every day there are people looking for work, apprentices, Mr. Speaker, qualified people.

If the member wants to know what life is like outside this little House of Assembly and in your district, travel with me some weekend home to Labrador. You will be sitting on the plane next to people from outside the Province who are working at Muskrat Falls. You will not be sitting next to my people who are working at Muskrat Falls, Mr. Speaker, because they are not able to get work there.

It really, really, turns my stomach when I hear people talking about shared prosperity, fair society, and a balanced outlook because it is just not happening in Labrador, Mr. Speaker. It is not happening and it is time for people to stand up.

Yes, he mentioned the graduations when he stood up. May is a month of graduations and our young people have so much opportunity in front of them, they should, but they do not have it in Labrador, Mr. Speaker. I went to six –

**MR. POLLARD:** Stop putting down your district. Talk about the positive stuff (inaudible).

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

**MS DEMPSTER:** I am going to tell what is positive in my district. When you talked about the sun that is shining, we cannot see it in Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, because we are either down in a pothole in one half that is so deep you cannot see out, or –

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

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

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

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

I am going to tell you another reason why we cannot see that the sun is shining. It is because we are in a cloud of dust. We are choking on it. It is killing us. That is what we are living in, in Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair while a couple of mornings ago I went to the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council's Major Projects 2014. I had a job to sit there, Mr. Speaker, and listen to the millions and billions of dollars that is being invested in Labrador and to know what I drive through every single weekend.

My story is the same as the people's story in the district, Mr. Speaker. Vehicles two and three years old are done, they are totalled. I mentioned a while back our highway is like the Dalmatian highway. There is more cold patch in it than there is pavement. Yet, it is acceptable every single year for this government to send in

a bunch of people over Easter weekend, pay double time and everything else – when we have been going on a month about the desperate need – and temporarily fix it up.

If he wants to talk about planning and vision, I will talk about planning and vision. While everywhere else in the world is building tunnels, we are still building ferries. Mr. Speaker, talk about planning, there is \$1 billion being spent on a subsea cable going across the Straits for the Muskrat Falls Project. If this government had the vision and the planning that the member just talked about, it would be going through a tunnel and in the long-run money would be saved.

He can talk about all the money they have spent, but he did not mention, Mr. Speaker, \$18.9 billion. This government has had \$18.9 billion in oil revenue. No other government has had that. They have done absolutely nothing with it to diversify the economy for the long term – nothing.

It is \$7.5 billion, Mr. Speaker, is what this government is working with in a Budget every year – \$7.5 billion, the cost of the entire Muskrat Falls. That is what they have every year, but we do not see the benefits of that, Mr. Speaker, in Labrador. We are choking in –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No schools.

**MS DEMPSTER:** Yes, we have a school. They love to get all excited and talk about the school that we have. Do you know why we have a school? Because the children in that coastal community deserve to sit in an environment that is clean, safe, and free from mould just like kids everywhere else in the Province. Instead, people think it is a big deal here in government that we are getting a new school because most of the time we have been expected to sit in mould and dilapidated buildings and learn like that, Mr. Speaker.

I want to talk about the Municipal Capital Works money, Mr. Speaker, for a couple of minutes. What a sad state of affairs. I hope the communities do band together, rise up, and talk about some of their frustrations and what they are doing.

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

It is not funny, I say to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

They talk about shared prosperity and yet, right after I was elected last year I took a look into the money that came into the district last spring. I am going to talk about shared prosperity; \$65,000, Mr. Speaker, in Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, the communities that are struggling, communities in 2014 that do not have clean water to drink. That is what we are talking about with a fair society, communities that do not have water to drink. This government thought it was okay.

I cannot believe they can sleep at night. They thought it was okay to extend one project that was ongoing \$20,000 and another one \$45,000 – \$65,000. I met with the previous minister and I had really high hopes that this year things were going to be a little bit better, Mr. Speaker.

We had I think just under \$6 million in requests. We got nothing last year. We have one project announced this year and it is just unacceptable, Mr. Speaker – unacceptable.

When you hear the people of Labrador on Open Line –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible) you will let them know.

**MS DEMPSTER:** There you go, Mr. Speaker. I am being distracted a little bit by members across the way.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** It is okay.

**MS DEMPSTER:** It is not okay, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. KING:** Your speech is okay.

**MS DEMPSTER:** My speech is okay. Well, I am happy to hear the House Leader say my speech is okay. I hope he recognizes that it is not fair the condition this Province is in right now. You could have called your Speech from the Throne anything but shared prosperity because we certainly have not seen it where I live, Mr. Speaker.

I mentioned a week or so ago, on a flight, reading an article from the board of trade, Mr.

Speaker, and talking about the bright spot in the Province, Labrador. Everybody is focused on Labrador, but yet the people in its backyard are not benefitting from it. People are going away; they are training, and coming back with high expectations. They are just not getting the work and it is not acceptable.

Ice compensation; right now I know it is a federal issue but I think that the provincial minister has an obligation to be up pounding down the door. We have households of three and four people right now with no income. It is a very, very sad situation. They are certainly not feeling the benefits of shared prosperity or a fair society, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker; there is so much room for improvement in health care in our area and not even necessarily situations where we need to be spending more money, but where we need to be spending smarter. Areas like diabetes where we are always coming out and reacting, we are never being preventative.

I want to speak for a minute in my critic area under AES. I sat in Estimates a little while ago. Budget 2014 Estimates; zero accountability, Mr. Speaker, was what I observed or concluded after I left that; zero accountability from a huge department like Advanced Education and Skills. It was my first time going through the Estimates process and I asked a lot of questions. They were not quoting the same numbers from the Estimates 2013 document. Mr. Speaker, every question that I did ask they blamed it on restructuring.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about \$1 billion in taxpayers' money. The people deserve answers. Just to say that the differences in the money from 2013 to 2014 were because of restructuring is not good enough. We are talking about \$1 billion in taxpayers' money.

Mr. Speaker, every day I hear from apprentices, what a mess the system is in. Why can't we be looking at models like what is happening in Ontario and Alberta, if the people here who are managing it do not have the fortitude to know how to put a system in place that works? We have the staff at the Industrial Training Unit telling apprentices they are better off going to

Alberta to get their hours. Yet, we are trying to grow the economy here.

We talk a lot about population growth. People stand up on the other side and they talk about the lowest number on Income Support, but nobody talks about the increase in the numbers of outmigration, Mr. Speaker. The member across the way got up and did a nice little sermon on the prosperity, but yesterday morning when I sat at breakfast and listened to some presentations from the major projects under the Atlantic report, what we heard at the Delta yesterday morning was quite different.

We are not singing from the same hymn book because they are not sharing the details, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that. Shame on them, I say, for hiding the truth from the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, shame on you when you talk about honesty.

Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador projects a deficit of \$538 million. There is nobody talking about that. All the prosperity, projecting – here we were with over \$18 billion in oil revenues alone and we are projecting a deficit of \$538 million in 2014-2015. This represents \$189 million increase over its revised deficit forecast. Nobody is talking about that.

Mr. Speaker, nobody is talking about the program expenses growing almost twice as fast as revenue. That concerns me for places like my district where we are already being shafted, left behind, and left in the cold. When I read about program expenses growing almost twice as fast as revenue, I know that when we get on the other side we are going to have quite a mess to deal with, because they did not do the proper planning and the proper vision, like they had a responsibility to do to the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We are going to have mining tax and royalties that will decline by \$58 million, Mr. Speaker, due to lower nickel and copper production and lower iron ore prices. We need to be planning for that. We need to be investing in places where we can get a return on the dollar.

I want to mention the Combined Councils because something recently came across my desk. The Combined Councils is a group that

advocates for all of the towns in Labrador. Every year I notice when the Combined Councils sends in their resolutions, every year many of them are the same. What does that tell you, Mr. Speaker? The issues that they are bringing forward on behalf of the towns in Labrador are not being addressed, they are not being met. I say shame on this government to leave an area so rich in resources that is contributing so much to the provincial coffers, shame on them for leaving them behind in so many areas.

Our broadband coverage, Mr. Speaker, is absolutely terrible. Ten of the twenty-two communities in my area have exceeded capacity, nobody else can join on. The streamlining in some towns is very, very poor. It is impacting students, it is impacting professionals who want to work in that community, stay and study their thesis and things like that.

That is the flip side to the shared prosperity and the fair society. Anybody who wants to travel through the district and experience the bumps that I do every weekend are very welcome to come, I will even put them up for the night, Mr. Speaker, just so they can experience firsthand what it is that life is like in many of the communities in Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair. Communities are trying very hard to move ahead with no help – Municipal Capital Works, communities requesting money for water and sewer. It is very sad.

Mr. Speaker, I could hardly believe it, I still cannot believe it. After what I was told last year that we missed the boat, I had high expectation that this year the communities would get something. Once again we see they are left sadly behind. They are not a part of the shared prosperity. It must stop at the ferry terminal, Mr. Speaker, because we are not experiencing it. It is very, very unfortunate.

Mr. Speaker, the money they are saving by not giving the communities the infrastructure they need for clean drinking water, do you know what? They are going to pay it in another way – through health care, when people are sick because they are drinking water from runoffs on the roads. It is unimaginable when I stand here and talk about what life is like in some of those coastal communities. Yet people can stand here

and get up on their soapbox and talk about the wonderful, wonderful job that they are doing with shared prosperity. They are definitely not in touch with reality, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that.

The Muskrat Falls Project: If they want to do something to redeem them, I say right the ship. Yes, we are too far in to turn back, but Nalcor is not meeting its benefits. A Crown corporation that is not living up to the responsibilities that it signed onto, and this government is not doing anything – not doing anything – to see that they do that, to right the wrong. If they were, they would put in a more robust type of monitoring, Mr. Speaker.

When I sat down with people from Nalcor I said: What are you doing to people who are submitting resumes with Labrador addresses; what are you doing to check to see if they are actually people from Labrador? They are doing nothing, Mr. Speaker. It is very, very sad. That is why every weekend I am sitting beside people on a plane who are going to work there, and when I get home people are knocking on my door and giving me their resume. The lives here in the House of Assembly, Mr. Speaker, everybody has a nice income, nobody is being disrupted, but it is very sad every weekend when I travel home to see the reality that is happening on the ground.

Businesses are seriously impacted, Mr. Speaker. The price of gas in my district – there is nowhere else in Newfoundland and Labrador where you will drive eighty-five kilometres and the price of gas increases by ten cents a litre. There is something wrong with that, Mr. Speaker – eighty-five kilometres from one town to the next and the price of gas goes up by ten cents. The truck leaves Goose Bay and travels to the Straits, and they buy it at one price, and then it is trucked back down the coast and our businesses, our people on the ground, pay an extra ten cents. You want to talk about fairness? I can talk all day about fairness. The inadequacies and the injustices, time does not permit me today; they abound on every hand.

I will continue, Mr. Speaker; the people who elected me, they heard me many times speak out for the people oftentimes who do not have a voice for themselves. I was pleased just recently

when they gave me another strong mandate to come back to the House and I will continue to be a voice for those people. Because what is happening, I can tell you it is morally and ethically wrong. This is the people's House, and that is the people's money, and the people in charge of the purse strings have not done a good job in terms of sharing the prosperity. They have not shared the prosperity. It looks good on paper, but the reality that we live in – \$700,000 was the cost of dust control, a calcium program for the whole of Newfoundland and Labrador, the 192 kilometres of gravel road; \$700,000 they could not keep in the Budget to keep people healthy and not breathe in dust, but you have a contractor that defaults on their contract and they get their full bid bond back, millions of dollars, \$19 million.

It absolutely boggles my mind that you could default on a contract. I have at least five businesses in my area, Mr. Speaker, they are owed \$30,000, they are owed \$50,000, they are owed \$80,000, and were not even aware of the mechanics' lien. That is the shared prosperity and the fair society that is happening in Cartwright, Labrador, and indeed, the whole of Labrador.

It saddens me, and I have every confidence that when we move across the House there will be some vision and there will be some planning, because what is happening right now is just not acceptable. It is just not good enough.

Mr. Speaker, I will just conclude again – I have been up many times talking about the fixed link. Before I sit down, I will mention it again. The benefit that could come to the whole of the Province if this government would just start the ball rolling by commissioning a study on the benefits of the fixed link, a full feasibility study that could be carried out.

This will benefit the whole Province because we will see the cost of goods and services go down everywhere 25 per cent to 30 per cent. What is going to happen, Mr. Speaker, just like everything else happens, with no planning, once Route 138 is connected the government is going to be scrambling to catch up; when, if they had foresight, vision, and planning they would have started that process right now, Mr. Speaker.

We are not talking about one community cut off; we are talking about the whole of Labrador and until we can find a way to move goods and service in, we are not going to grow, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Bonavista South.

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

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

After the previous speaker, I tell you, I do not know what part of the Province she is living in, or if she is actually listening to what this side of the House is actually saying and acting on, on a regular basis, but I listened to the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale and what an electrifying speech.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** All about the facts, all about positivity, and all about the plan of the future in this Province. Then I hear a speaker across the way get up and talk negative, negative, negative and say shame, shame, shame and what a mess.

There is no mess, Mr. Speaker. On this side of the House, the government of today, is certainly bringing us into the prosperity and the future important prosperity that we are about to see in many, many years to come. A speaker who gets up and talks about shame – there is no shame on this side of the House. There is none. I can actually hold my head high and speak on behalf of the programs and the investments that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador today is putting out there in all regions of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I am delighted to rise in this House today and speak, especially after the previous speaker – certainly I am. I am going to talk about news about the provincial economy and how our economy is growing. I will give facts to back up what I am saying in this House again today.

The country's major banks and bond rating agencies have noted the success of our economy. It is noted all around the world, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to advise that the Conference Board of Canada named Newfoundland and Labrador, this great Province, as one of the three provinces in Canada to receive a grade A<sup>+</sup>, outperforming twenty-five other jurisdictions in Canada and around the world.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** With an A<sup>+</sup> rating, our Province was not only ahead of Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, Manitoba, and the Maritime Provinces, but actually ahead of the national performance and ahead of the United States, the UK, Australia, France, Germany, and even Norway, Mr. Speaker. How about that?

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

**MR. LITTLE:** Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador are A<sup>+</sup> economies, something that we are all proud of to be part of this great Confederation of Canada, Mr. Speaker. Our government has made significant investments to strengthen the economy and to encourage continued growth in our Province.

Since 2006, we have decreased taxes, putting hundreds of millions of dollars back into the hands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** There has been approximately \$600 million savings to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Our Province continues to maintain the lowest personal income tax rates in Atlantic Canada. What an accomplishment.

This government has made significant accomplishments over the past few years, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to grow the economy and make this place a better place to live and a great place for people to actually come home. I would like to speak on that because in my district a friend of mine actually went away years ago when the Liberal government was in power. He had to leave this Province looking for work. Now he is after bringing home his

wife and his child. Hopefully his wife will get a job here in Newfoundland and Labrador. He is working in one of the larger construction sites in Newfoundland and Labrador. Hopefully his child will grow up and this will be a better place to live.

I think that is what all of us want to see in this great Province of Newfoundland and Labrador – opportunities. This is what this government is doing. We do have a plan. We are going to share the prosperity, all around the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We are going to continue to stay on the same road.

I question Opposition and what they plan on doing. All I am hearing from the Opposition is criticism day after day after day in this House of Assembly with no plan and no policy. I am wondering what their plan would be. I heard the Opposition talk about in health care the \$3 billion budget. We received in my district funding for a new bungalow-style health care facility, a long-term care facility. There was an announcement made and that particular building will open in October month, this year.

When this government makes a commitment it delivers on its commitments, Mr. Speaker. It is proven over and over. Dialysis will be open in Harbour Breton. This government made a commitment. This government acted on the commitment. In this past Budget, this government made a commitment to have dialysis services in Bonavista region. This government will deliver on that commitment.

I am asking the Opposition: What are your plans? If you are planning on reducing the \$3 billion budget in health care, what are your plans? Do you plan on not delivering services in rural Newfoundland and Labrador? That is the question. It is time to come out and let the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador know what your plan is.

That is shame, Mr. Speaker. That is shame because there is no plan. There is no plan of action. No plan whatsoever, only criticize day after day after day, and negativity, doom, doom, doom, doom, doom. That is all I hear.

I can tell you we will act on our promises. We will deliver on our commitments. I am going to

give some facts; since 2006, approximately \$2 billion has been put back to the taxpayers in the Province. That is a fact. Effective July 1, 2014, our government will decrease the small business corporate income tax to 3 per cent. The Province's small business tax rate will be tied with Nova Scotia for the lowest rate in Atlantic Canada. What an achievement, Mr. Speaker. This government of today has made that achievement.

Newfoundland and Labrador has seen significant economic growth. It is sad to say people sitting opposite do not realize this, or they do not understand what is happening in this wonderful Province today, the prosperity and the economic growth. Over the past ten years we led all other provinces in economic growth. It is unbelievable. These are the facts, Mr. Speaker.

More people are working than ever before in this Province. The unemployment rate is lower than any time since 1973. The facts are the facts, Mr. Speaker. For the first time in over forty years, Newfoundland and Labrador no longer has the highest unemployment rate in Canada. What an achievement. Our economy continues to grow.

There are people from my beautiful historic District of Bonavista South who are working on the major projects all over the Province. Actually there are people moving from my district on a seasonal basis, and sometimes on an annual basis to Western Labrador – to the beautiful great land, Labrador. Seriously, Mr. Speaker, there are opportunities. Opportunities like never before. The sky is the limit.

This government will continue to look at growing the economy into the future. We do have a plan. We do have a vision. We will act on our plan and our vision for the future. We do care about people. We do care about the economy. We will make sure the economy grows in the future. This is what this government is all about.

Budget 2014 provides strategic investment in the Province's abundant resources such as hydro. I heard the previous speaker talk about Muskrat Falls. I am going to tell you I can stand on my feet and say that I certainly support the project. I support the project for a number of reasons because of employment opportunities, because

in the future we will have a renewable resource that will be around for years and years and years and years to come. My children and their children will benefit from the hydro resources in this great Province, Mr. Speaker.

We certainly have an abundance of petroleum, minerals, and agriculture. The fishery and forestry industry will grow, Mr. Speaker, in this Province. I am a firm believer of that. All of those sectors will continue to grow. In my District of Bonavista South, I have a number of people who are working in our district in areas of forestry, agriculture, the fishery, the tourism industry, the public sector, and I can go on and on and on. One time the District of Bonavista South was mostly related to the fishery, but we diversified. This government helped my district, and helped the rural part of Newfoundland and Labrador that I come from, to diversify. There are great opportunities happening all over my district as you travel to different parts of my district.

Jamestown Lumber was closed down for years and years. Now a new company has moved in, Marwood lumber. There are a number of people hired on in that facility. It is a great opportunity for people. It is a great opportunity for truckers and a great opportunity for small businesses to grow and prosper. This government actually worked with Marwood lumber to make sure that we secured a deal to see future prosperity in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. This is something that this government will continue to do, work with different businesses and different industries to make sure that our economy continues to grow.

Facts are facts over on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. The facts are the facts. There is no shame over on this side of the House – one on this side of the House, in light of what the previous speaker said. The fishery is still strong and powerful in my district. Budget 2014 advances the fishery and the economy in relation to development in the rural area that I come from. Through sound, fiscal management and responsibility our government is strengthening the business environment, encouraging the development of innovative industries, and building a vibrant economy into the future.

Our government will continue to invest in the fishery, Mr. Speaker. This is the first time I actually got up to speak on the Budget since the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, the minister actually from Ferryland – and I have to commend the minister in showing leadership, the leadership role that he has taken in the position that he is in, in relation to being active and collectively joining people together in this House of Assembly, working together as one, one voice, and going to meet with our counterparts in Ottawa to actually put forward our frustrations and concerns in relation to the future fishery and LIFO and how it ties into the future fishery.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure the committee, a large number of members from all sides of this House, feels the same way about the fishery. The fishery is a renewable resource, a resource that certainly ties into a number of districts in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune, actually aquaculture is big in that part of the Province, and the fishery is so important to all of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and important to not only the Province, but to the country, to the international community, because of the large abundance of seafood that we put into the world market.

Can we do more? Yes. Will we do more? Yes, we will. As a government, we will definitely do more. We are investing millions and millions of dollars into the fishery of the future, Mr. Speaker.

I know fisherpeople from my district who actually are continuing to invest in enterprises, enterprises that will help the economy grow in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We are not talking like small money when you invest in a licence or an enterprise; you are talking like millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker. You are talking about an enterprise that employs people. It is like a business. That fishery has evolved into many businesses. This government has certainly worked with the industry and will continue to work with the industry in the future, and the fishery is very important to this government and very important to my district, the District of Bonavista South.

Our government will continue to invest in different areas and different departments of our government. The tourism industry in my district is a growing industry. There are people who are continually investing in business, and investing with the help of the Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development in some cases. They are expanding their businesses, and they are actually hiring people on, Mr. Speaker.

As we grow the economy – and we are growing the economy in different sectors; and this is what my speech was about today, how Budget 2014 ties into the future prosperity and the economy growth in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. So there are so many different sectors out in the rural parts of Newfoundland and Labrador that are continually growing. As the tourism industry grows, small business grows. As the fishery grows, small business grows. As the agriculture industry grows in my colleague's district –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Aquaculture.

**MR. LITTLE:** – aquaculture, the Province's economy grows, Mr. Speaker.

Not only does this government look at the major parts of this Province, the regional centres, we actually look at every rural part of this Province. This government is committed to working with business in the rural parts of this Province. I identified, I gave facts, in some areas where this government supports and continually will support business in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

I would like to know – because centralization, the name came up – what the plan is in relation to what the Opposition would do if they were in power, besides criticize. That is all I am hearing – just criticize, criticize and saying shame. There is no shame over on this side of the House. I can stand up here and support what this government is doing. This government has helped create and grow the economy in rural parts of this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I gave fact after fact, Mr. Speaker, in relation to what we are doing as a government.

We will continue to grow the economy, share the prosperity, and have a fair society right throughout every community in Newfoundland

and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. We will certainly continue to act on our commitments. We do have a plan and it is all about being fair. It is a balanced approach.

We will continue to share the prosperity to every part of this Province. This government will do that. That is the commitment in Budget 2014. It is evident because we are acting on what we have committed to do. We will continue to grow the economy.

I would like to know what areas of the Budget the Opposition will cut to do what they are saying they are going to do. I would like to know. I would like for somebody to stand up on their feet and start explaining that. I have not heard the explanation to this point in time and I am waiting. There is no plan, there is no action, but on this side of the government we will continue to grow the economy.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak here again today.

Thank you.

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

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

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

That was an interesting twenty minutes, maybe not as entertaining as the twenty minutes from the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale, but equally as interesting.

Mr. Speaker, if we were going to have a trial on the gross fiscal mismanagement of this government, you would need to look no further than Estimates 2014. It is all contained in their own documents. It is all something they cannot possibly defend. It is probably something they cannot possibly explain.

That is why they keep going back to talking about how much they have spent on different items and then pleading with the Opposition and say, what would the Opposition do, as if they were looking for ideas. They have one thing right; they should be looking for ideas because they clearly do not have any of their own.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to run through some of the Budget documents and sections in Estimates 2014. I think they should be available to the members of the public who may well be watching. I am going to start with the Premier's Office. We know that we have had unprecedented wealth in this Province for the last ten years. We have had unprecedented income for the last ten years. Government keeps saying we cannot really predict the amount of income we are going to have because we do not know the price of oil. The price of oil keeps on going up and it has gone up quite a bit in the – ten or twelve years ago the price of oil was down in the low tens of dollars. Since then it has gone to \$100 or more. The amount of revenue that government has had has been far more than it could ever have expected.

This Administration has also benefited extensively from all the revenue coming from the Voisey's Bay mine, something that they had no input in whatsoever except to criticize it and say how awful it was, but they do not mind cashing the royalty checks. They do not seem to mind that at all.

The part that I would like to speak on, Mr. Speaker, is the expense side. I think people watching at home can understand the expense side. You need to be able to manage your expenses. Clearly you cannot blame government if the price of oil is higher than they expected or lower than they expected, that is a world thing. I think that people can realistically blame government if they can never figure out how much they are going to spend.

The problem that this government has is a spending problem. They do not know how to budget properly; they do not know how to budget effectively. By way of example, let us start first with the Premier's Office. In our Budget Estimates we have three lines. We have one line which says this is what we budgeted last year. Actually, that is the amount that they came before the House last year and the Minister of Finance put together the numbers and said this is what we need to run this department for a year or that department for a year, this secretariat for a year, some other organization for a year, this is how much we need for the next twelve months.

We went through this Budget debate which we have and then they ended up spending a figure. Sometimes they had it right, sometimes they underspent, and sometimes they overspent. Underspending sometimes can be equally as bad as overspending. That means that in a prior Budget government said we need this much money to do such and such with and at the end of the year they had millions and millions left over. It is reasonable for Opposition to say what did you say you needed the money for a year ago and then you did not do it? What roads did you not pave? What hospitals did you not build? What schools did you not build? What investments did you not make from over the last year when we took a chance on you and said yes, you can have this much money?

Last year if you start at the top, the Salaries for the Premier's Office were projected to be – they asked for \$1,607,300 and they went through \$2,030,000. Mr. Speaker, that is a 25 per cent overrun in the cost of the salaries in the Premier's Office and that is the year of one Premier. This year is going to be the year of the three Premiers. Unless we have an election in the fall, then it will likely be the year of the four Premiers.

If they cannot get the salaries right in the Premier's Office within 25 per cent of the money – \$400,000 overspending last year in the Premier's Office compared to what they said they needed. They only needed \$500,000 for the Family Violence Intervention Court and yet, they overspent salaries in the Premier's Office by \$400,000 or 25 per cent of what they asked for.

This year they are asking for \$1.7 million. I bet that number is going to be way overspent because we heard in the media last week that they had a shuffle in the Premier's Office. I thought you had a shuffle in the Cabinet not in the Premier's Office, but that is how the media reported it. They said there is a shuffle in the Premier's Office and twelve people are moved.

How big is the Premier's Office that you can move twelve people and have anybody left? How big is the Premier's Office if you can shuffle twelve people late on a Friday afternoon hoping nobody would pick it up? At a time when you have a sitting interim Premier who is

going to be gone in five or six weeks' time and somebody who is going to be taking over the Premier's Office who is not yet elected – and we just had a shuffle for an incoming Premier and we have to wait and see what he needs. This, Mr. Speaker, indicates fiscal mismanagement for sure and it continues. It continues throughout the entire Budget document.

In this whole category that you see called the Executive Council which includes the Premier's Office, you have a Cabinet Secretariat. The Cabinet Secretariat last year asked for \$1,489,000 and at the end of the year they came in at \$1.8 million. They overspent by more than 20 per cent of what they said they needed.

If you were running a home and you said this year I am going to make \$50,000 or \$60,000 or \$80,000, this is my mortgage, these are my groceries, we would like a vacation, and put aside some money for the kids, and if you overspent by 25 per cent or 30 per cent, you would be belly up. You would be going down to one of the bankruptcy companies and file for personal bankruptcy.

The government does not do that. They just keep writing more cheques and taxing people more, or going further and further and further in debt, this year more than \$500 million going backwards. To get to only \$500 million going backwards, they have to borrow \$1 billion. Mr. Speaker, all families know you cannot live on your credit card forever. It just shows poor management and it is expensive money.

If you look at some of the categories, where did they make the big blunders? Where did they make the big mistakes? Under Executive Support last year there was something called Professional Services. People should know that generally speaking professional services are not exposed to the Public Tender Act. That means you can hire someone to do a professional service and we never know what they are. It might be an accountant, it might be public relations, it might be lawyers, it might be whatever. Last year in the Cabinet Secretariat, they said they needed \$30,000 for Professional Services and at the end of the year they had gone to \$3.4 million.

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

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Three million and four hundred thousand dollars. Mr. Speaker, for every dollar they asked for in Professional Services last year they spent \$11; \$3.4 million was spent in Professional Services last year when they asked for \$30,000. That is absolutely amazing.

We came and debated a Budget last year, the government got a number. It seems almost as if they say tell them anything you want and then do as you please. That does not seem like prudent financial management to me whatsoever. That is on page 2.4 in case any of the government members would like to have a look at the document that they are so vigorously defending. I wonder if any of them have actually read it.

Mr. Speaker, if you go to the end of Executive Council – and there are a bunch of pages that include all of these different offices, including the Cabinet Secretariat for this, and the Cabinet Secretariat for that, for all kinds of ways to spend money. You get to the end of that line; last year they asked for \$25,900,000 and they spent \$28,800,000. They overspent by more than 10 per cent, or \$3 million more overspending.

That is really important to government, how they display themselves and how they run government supposedly, how they run the Premier's office. If you compare that to spending in other departments, where does it stack up to what we would think was the most important departments of government versus the least important departments of government?

Based on the amount of money they spent you would have to conclude that Fisheries and Aquaculture is the least important department in this government. Last year, they went through \$17.5 million in the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and \$28 million in the Office of the Executive Council; almost \$2 of overhead for every \$1 of investment in the fishery. It is absolutely mindboggling. They budgeted over \$30 million, but they did not get the money out the door for whatever reason. Who knows?

If you go on through their own document, Mr. Speaker – and I do not know if I can be criticized for criticizing the government, but I

am using their own numbers, their own documents. If you look at the Human Resource Secretariat, I wonder what that does. This is strategic human resource management. That seems like a good idea, although government has been in ten years or eleven years, you would think they would get it figured out sooner or later. Obviously if they need more help figuring out this strategic human resource management – last year they asked for \$4.8 million and they used \$4.3 million. They underspent by \$500,000.

Did they not know what they needed the money for? Did they not know how much they needed? Or did they come before us last year and say we need \$4.8 million and they only used up \$4.3 million, so they left a lot of work undone? How much work did they leave undone for the \$500,000 that they did not use?

If you look at Payroll and Compensation Benefits, the Salaries in that section, last year they asked for \$2.48 million, or say \$2.5 million. They went through \$3.25 million. That again is 25 per cent more than they asked for.

Mr. Speaker, how can the finances of the Province be on a level footing if government cannot get its expenditures correct? Never mind if it is too much or too little, they cannot even figure out how much they are going to need from Budget to Budget. It is like somebody living from paycheque to paycheque and not knowing how much they are going to need for the next paycheque, so they just spend and spend and spend.

Looking at Professional Services under the Benefits Administration they said last year we do not really need anything for that. They did not even put it in there, but they blew through \$155,000. I wonder who was hired for \$155,000, and what did they do for something that they did not know at the beginning of the year they were going to need any money for?

If you look at Purchased Services, whatever that is, they said we only need \$700. They revised it to \$1,200. This year they want \$250,000 for it. If last year they asked for \$700 – not \$700,000, but \$700 – and they used up \$1,200 and now they want \$250,000, if this is a government of

restraint, you can see where the enormous deficits are coming in good times.

Mr. Speaker, it goes on and on and on with this government with what I say is the gross fiscal mismanagement of the government. If you look in the Department of Finance in their own budget, page 3.3 under General Administration, Executive Support, last year they said for Professional Services we need \$7,000. Okay, you need \$7,000. The budget was approved for \$7,000. They burned through \$324,000 where they only needed \$7,000. What happened for \$7,000 that they needed and they spent \$324,000? Should there not be some sort of accountability?

Mr. Speaker, if you had a business you would expect some explanation halfway through, a quarter of the way through when we are running through that kind of money which was never, ever approved by the House, but they spent it anyway. If you send a child to the store with a \$20 bill and he came back with a pack of smokes and an ice cream, you would give him a harder time than people are giving this government over blowing through money in the hundreds of thousands, and even hundreds of millions. It is just disgraceful the way the finances of this Province are being mismanaged.

To continue on, in Finance there is a category which says Financial Assistance and this is, “Appropriations provide for promoting business opportunities and financial support for departments and Crown agencies for initiatives consistent with government’s sustainability plan” – that sounds good – “and investment objectives with relevant funding transferred to departments during the year as required.” It sounds sort of fancy and whatever.

They say we need \$4,498,000 for that initiative, \$4.5 million. Well, it was approved. It was given to them and they did not spend a penny, not a penny. They were approved \$4.5 million for something last year and did not spend one red cent. You cannot even spend it in a store anymore because we do not use the penny, but they did not spend one penny. Mr. Speaker, shouldn’t somebody explain what happened? Why did we approve \$4.5 million last year under this line item, it is called Grants and Subsidies, and you did not use any of it?

Government tends to provide us with budgets and forecasts and then you get so far through the year and you get a fiscal update. If the numbers are way out of whack, typically the response is: Well, the price of oil was not what we thought, or the price of oil was fine but we did not pump so much, so we did not get as much royalties, or there was a big strike down in Voisey's Bay so we did not get any revenues out of that.

I can understand all of that. I can accept all of that. That may well be beyond their control, although they should not budget to the last penny because if you budget to the last penny and spend to the last penny, you have no safety zone left in case things go wrong. What I cannot accept, Mr. Speaker, with this government is the fact that they cannot get their expenses under control. They cannot even forecast with any degree of reliability as to how much they are going to go through in a twelve-month period.

Mr. Speaker, if you had a brand new government with no experience, you would say: Well, they are just getting their feet underneath them, the last government made some mistakes and they have to reorganize. They have to do all kinds of stuff. You might give them a year. Well, to be generous you might give them a couple of years. You might give them three or four years. The people might give them another term and say: Well, that was only their first term, give them a break; but, Mr. Speaker, this is a government that has gone on for eleven years, elected to three majority governments, and the Province is totally out of control on the spending side, totally out of control.

Some areas where they have underspent, which really blows my mind is – and this is also under Financial Administration, under Tax Administration. Now, a lot of people do not like paying taxes. I do not really blame them in that respect, but we are entitled to their taxes. Taxes are necessary to pay for all the benefits we receive and taxes have to be collected.

There is a category last year, Tax Administration, "Appropriations provide for the administration, assessment, recording, collection and audit of taxes and benefit programs, as well as assisting in the collection of other Government receivables." This should be straight cash in, cash out.

Government said, well we need \$3,476,000 for salaries for that part of the department, and the House of Assembly went ahead and said: Yes, okay, we will give you the \$3.5 million. Then they underspent it by \$500,000. They underspent by roughly 15 per cent. How many people did they not hire to go and collect the taxes we were owed to keep the ship afloat, when they were approved \$3.5 million and they spent less than \$3 million?

It should be no credit to government to say we need this figure, \$3.5 million, we only used \$3 million, unless they can explain: What taxes did you leave on the table? What did you not collect? Is it like the Fines Administration? Is it tax in arrears? How much money would the people that you did not hire for the \$500,000 that you did not spend, how much would they have collected and put into the government bank account to cover the expenses to go against the half-a-billion dollar deficit that we are going to have today? It is just not working. Government is just not working in this Province, and it is really shameful.

Mr. Speaker, I have not even gotten to some of the big items, and almost twenty minutes gone. You can go department by department and see the gross fiscal screw-ups. You see Transportation and Works – now roads affect everybody, some better and some worse.

If you look at something called the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund – even though this government says they have all kinds of issues with the federal government, in fact, they get a lot of money from the federal government even without equalization. This is, "Appropriations provide for highway maintenance and rehabilitation projects to be cost shared with the Federal Government."

For Salaries they budgeted \$1.158 million – so just under \$1,200,000– and they only used \$200,000 in salaries. You saved \$1 million on salaries, on money that you were going to get from the feds. What happened? Why did you save that money? Because when you go further down, you look at what they call Purchased Services, they said we need \$11.5 million to purchase something, and they only used \$2 million. Mr. Speaker, there is \$9.5 million left on the table last year on that part of the Budget,

which makes absolutely no sense to me whatsoever.

The next category says Canada/Newfoundland and Labrador Infrastructure Framework Agreement. In that area, overall in that package, the amount to be voted last year; we voted almost \$16.9 million, and they only used \$3.6 million. So, \$13 million approved under that category last year did not get used. That was for construction of roads and buildings, cost-shared with the federal government, left on the table.

There is no wonder, Mr. Speaker, that our roads are such a mess. If government comes here with their plan and says, vote us the money, we vote them the money, they do not spend it. They leave the roads to go in rack and ruin.

The next category under Road Construction, Purchased Services, \$40,231,000, they only used up \$32,845,000 – \$8 million left on the table for roads there.

The next one: Improvement and Construction – Provincial Roads; Purchased Services, which is what that would be, approved \$15,600,000. They went through \$7 million. They spent less than half of the budget – and this is for capital construction, rehabilitation, upgrading and paving of provincial roads, bridges, and causeways.

So what I ask is: Was this intentional last year that they did not use the money last year so they could roll out the paving contracts this year; or, did they have enough troubles last year that they just could not get it done? Why would they have \$15,600,000 approved for this part of the road infrastructure and only go through \$7 million?

Mr. Speaker, there is so much more to talk about in this Budget. I hope people will read the document.

Thank you.

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

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

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

It is indeed an honour to stand in this hon. House and speak to the Budget. Again, a great Budget that reflects what this Administration is all about. This Administration is about some simple things, Mr. Speaker. It is about: everybody matters – everybody, from the newborns to those seniors who have contributed to our society and are still very active. That is what this Budget is all about; that is what this Administration is all about.

I wish I was as articulate and as open when it comes to being able to deliver a speech as my learned colleagues here for Baie Verte – Springdale and Bonavista South, but I am not. That is not my talent. What my talent is – and I would think like everybody else over here – is about we are committed, committed to the people in this Province. We are confident that the Budgets we put forward address the needs of the people.

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege in my previous life, and obviously continuing in politics, that I have followed the last thirty-two Budgets and I have followed them almost very detailed. Because of my past background as somebody responsible for the Crown Agency, everything was relevant to how much money was going to be spent, the impact education budgets would have, and health budgets would have, and infrastructure budgets would have on my staff and the programs that we worked on. I was very diligently paying attention over those years.

I remember sitting in the House before it was renovated and John Collins was the Minister of Finance at the time in the Peckford Administration, it was the first Budget I really got to analyze what the Budget process was all about. I got a better understanding of how complicated Budgets can be. It is not just a simple process of adding up numbers; it is about making decisions around what is in the best interest of the people of this Province. How do you do that balance; how do you make sure that everybody is served properly? How do you do what this Administration has done, that everybody matters? They do, Mr. Speaker. On this side of the House, we know that.

That is why we have a plan to make sure that everybody not only matters, but they are listened to and they are included. We have been very articulately doing that over the last number of Budgets.

We have had some things where Budgets I have analyzed have come from very difficult to very positive ones, particularly in the last ten to twelve years. There are all kinds of different things that you have to deal when you look at financial and social situations. You have to look at the economics of the day and you have to be able to plan for the future. You have to be able to build on the past, what worked and what did not work.

That is why a good Minister of Finance, a good caucus, and a good Cabinet looks at all those components and makes sure they all reflect how we move forward. This Administration, since it came into power in 2003, has all been about moving forward. It was about first of all dealing with an almost bankrupt Administration and being able to deal with that, and making sure our civil servants were taken care of. Even though we had to get them to negotiate with us and had to get them to buy in to what we were doing that there had to be restraint for a number of years. They did that. Then we rewarded them because we value the work they do.

We rewarded them in the process of being able to invest back into the economy. They are the people who are going to drive this economy. They are the people who stayed in this Province and they are the ones who are driving what we do today.

There is a whole process here of a balance of financial responsibility and proper investments and we have done that. We have done it for the last thirteen Budgets. I know we will continue to do it after the next election when we are the government again.

Mr. Speaker, for people who do not know – and I went back over the years – there are three real kinds of Budgets. There are restraint Budgets. Restraint Budgets pretty well are trying to reassess your priorities. Trying to take the money that you have and either make some investments so you get your better bang for your dollars, and in some cases you have to cut out

programs. In some cases you have to make some really hard decisions that are in the best interest for the longevity of any Province and being able to sustain programs and services.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately last year was one of those that we had to deal with. We dealt with it analyzing what was in the best interest of the people here, and how we could best still serve people but economically not hurt our rating internationally, so that we did not pay more interest which meant less money to go into social programs for people. We did that.

There was no doubt some people were upset. That is the balancing act you have to make. We wanted to make it clear to people that everybody did matter. Whatever was done was done in the best interest for the longevity of this Province and longevity of our financial security and so this generation, the next generation, and future generations will be taken care of. We did that.

Mr. Speaker, then we get into where we are right now. Then you get to status quo Budgets. Status quo is pretty well a balanced Budget, where you know you can balance out things. Things have been working okay. You do not have additional monies. You do not have to cut back. You will not jeopardize your status on the bond markets. You will not jeopardize that you have to spend money that you cannot generate back. The status quo works.

Every so often an Administration can go a couple of years doing that type of process. Most people do not get overly upset. There are agencies there that then say we need increases; we need extra supports. Or, there are new issues that come up that were never thought of before and never budgeted for.

All of a sudden, you have to look at who do you now say it is in the best interest of how we move the programs and services forward. Status quo ones sound good from an administrative point of view, they are easier to administer, but they do leave people out. That is not what we are about. This is an Administration about people mattering. We want to make sure we address all the issues, the existing ones, ones that now crop up and we want to start planning for future ones. We want to be proactive instead of reactive, and that is what we have done.

**MR. KENT:** It is all about the people.

**MR. BRAZIL:** Yes, you are right, my colleague from Mount Pearl; it is all about the people, because people matter. They matter to this Administration and that is reflected in all of the Budgets that we have put forth.

We also then have investment Budgets, surplus Budgets. Surplus Budgets when we know we can do two key things: We can invest in new programs and services that people have called for – and they have called for it because what this Administration has done for the last number of years is had our consultations during the Budget process. Contrary to the criticism we have gotten from the Opposition that they mean nothing – contrary, very contrary. I have been part of that process where I have gone and presented as a civil servant; I have gone and presented as a volunteer from a community perspective – and I know that the Finance Minister and I know it came back to Cabinet and I know caucus discussed it, that these issues were dealt with because now I see the programs and services.

They are not done overnight. You cannot ask for something in November, October, or January and expect it to happen; that is not how the Budget process works, but it gets on the radar. It gets the civil servants looking at which are the priority programs. It gets the minister and the senior executive talking about what are the priorities of that department. It gets them bringing it to Cabinet and in caucus talking about: Is this the message that we want to put out there? These are the programs and services that we support, and that is what happens.

Mr. Speaker, this Administration, and this Administration only, has been the one that has been able to invest more in Budgets and have more surpluses than any Administration in our history, and that is a positive concept of how we plan and how we are fiscally responsible. How we look at investing back in programs and also making sure our debt load is taken care of, that gives us more freedom to be able to do things and gives us a better opportunity to plan for the future, and that is what we have been able to do.

Mr. Speaker, at no time in our history has there been more organizations that get core funding

from this Administration – never in our history. Before, I remember years ago, thirty years ago when I worked for government there would be a handful; twenty-five years ago, twenty years ago, fifteen years ago, even twelve, thirteen years ago before this Administration fully took over and had a fiscal framework in place that moved us forward, there would still only be twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, 100 at best. Now we have hundreds of agencies that represent the social sector. They represent the health sectors. They represent sports agencies, youth organizations, women's organizations, seniors' organizations, and many more. Every sector here has support from this Administration, and that again goes back to our theme: everybody matters – and everybody in this Province does matter to this Administration. We have been very successful at doing that.

We have a plan, we have a strategy, and we outline them. We outline them in our Blue Books. We outline them when we have our strategies. We outline them when we have our consultations, when the minister goes around having our consultations. That says to the people: Listen, we are listening to you guys. Tell us what you need. Tell us how we can do it. Tell us how we can best invest it, and we will look at that process. It does not happen overnight. Things in our Blue Book start to move forward.

My colleague from St. John's realizes the education investments that we have made. As an educator he understands it. He got up a couple of weeks ago and questioned some of the issues we have in Portugal Cove – St. Philips on overcrowding. He failed to mention the fact that we are investing in a new Grade 5 to Grade 9 school, that we have built three modular classrooms onto that, and that we have worked with the administration down there. Nobody in this world would have planned or anticipated the growth that we have had. That growth has come in the last ten years, Mr. Speaker. Now we are addressing those needs and we are moving things forward.

Our infrastructure is second to none. It will address the needs of the people. As new issues crop up, we will address them also. That is what good planning is all about; good fiscal management.

Budgets are very complex and become very strategic. Sometimes they are strategic around politics. Sometimes you will hear members of Opposition get up and posture around the generic things; let's talk health care, let's streamline health care. We know what streamlining means, cut health care.

They do not talk about what we have done in health care, the \$3 billion, and how we have changed a multitude of access to services for people here. How we have improved people's wait time. How we have branched out our services to rural Newfoundland and Labrador. How we have improved things around dialysis. How we have improved things around the base investments. How new clinics have been built, like in my learned colleague's district here in Springdale. What was the investment that we made?

**MR. POLLARD:** It was \$2 million.

**MR. BRAZIL:** It was \$2 million just in one part of health care in one rural section of this Province. That shows how we commit to the people of this Province, Mr. Speaker, very much so.

We need to address the needs of the masses and we do that. Sometimes it is a small group who have a particular need, and I will touch on some of those later. Sometimes it is bigger groups, massive groups, things like student aid reform where you have tens of thousands of people who are affected by it. Not only affected by it immediately, but that is a long-term, that is a strategic, that is an historic thing. Things will move down the road so at the end of the day the next generation will also benefit from this piece of policy.

We also want to look at the bigger picture here. We also want to look at what we do immediately that has an impact. Part of your Budget process is you have to be able to generate money. You have to have a way to bring that revenue in. We do that through our strategic planning; our partnerships that we develop.

In the oil industry, the mineral industry, how we partner with other entities out there, in the tourism industry, in manufacturing, in our own tax bases here. While we do that we see how do

you have a good balance? Sometimes you can earn more money by at times cutting your revenues. In cases we did this, we cut the personal income tax.

Do you know what gave – the personal income tax? It gave more people more disposable income to put back into the economy. It drew other people from other parts of the country to come here because now, not only is our financial base better, but also our revenue generating streams are better and their earnings potential is better. Now we have more people coming here, earning more money, paying more taxes, and contributing more to our economy. In turn, more money comes back so those who need extra supports, those people who need a hand up, not a hand out, get the supports. We do that. We do it very diligently and we do it very professionally. We try to include everybody as we go through that process.

Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of things I want to note as I go through this afternoon. I just want to note on something, a comment that was made by a Member of the House of Assembly. The quote was, "The people of our province deserve more than just a token approach to the serious issues facing them..." I could not agree more nor could any one of colleagues on this side.

That statement was made by the Leader of the Opposition. He noted in an interview ten key things, a list of ten issues that government have put out to pasture and refused to address. Let me take them in order and then I will explain them.

Number ten, search and rescue. Mr. Speaker, as anybody knows here the Minister of Municipal Affairs has been very diligent lobbying the federal government, outlining what needs to be done, working with his own department or division of Fire and Emergency Services, and outlining what needs to be done. The Minister of Fisheries, on a number of occasions, had made it clear that the federal government needs to step up to the plate and improve search and rescue here. The all-party committee, that was struck by this Administration and led by the Minister of Fisheries here, also called for that and got to lobby that.

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** God love him for it. I am just explaining. Yes, now explaining. It was a good point he made. Now I am going to clarify that he was wrong on what we have not done because we were doing all these things.

The Premier, Mr. Speaker, has spoken numerous times. We have exchanged documentation back and forth with the federal government saying that we want improvement with search and rescue. We deserve it, the people of this Province deserve it. Safety is paramount when it comes to this Administration and we have done it.

I am glad to say the incoming Premier, Mr. Speaker, has made it clear – he made it clear when he spoke to Rotary, he made it clear on a couple of Open Line shows – that search and rescue is one of his priorities. He will continue to lobby, as this Administration has, to make sure improved search and rescue is here for the people of this Province.

One thing I want to clear from the Opposition Leader here that we have already taken the lead. This is not put out to pasture. We are dealing with it on a daily basis. We are moving things forward.

Number nine, family caregivers; put it out to pasture he says, did not do anything about it. He must have missed what went on. We have a process here and we have a pilot project in place. We want to make sure we do this right because we are the only people doing it in this country. When we do it, we want to do it right. We want to make sure our investment is not only sound and gets the best bang for the dollar, but it actually serves the people it is meant to serve.

This process is in place as we know. It has been shared with the general public. The stakeholders have been engaged and we are moving that forward. There is another thing that was not put out to pasture, that is being dealt with, and is in the works right now, Mr. Speaker.

An update on budget, number eight he noted; constantly, the present Premier, who was the former Minister of Finance, has outlined that. The present Minister of Finance has outlined our

Budget lines every day. We are not hiding anything. We tell people what it is we are spending and where we are spending it. Our process in Estimates has been very open. Information that was not directly there has been shared afterwards by line ministers back to the Opposition for clarification. Everything has been put there so very much an update on that.

Number seven, the school board act; put out to pasture and not being deal with. The school board act we have set out – implemented, almost through year's end now. I have talked to numerous administrators, it is a great process. Obviously a few bumps in the road as you do anything with a new transition coming in.

In the next year or so you will see the transition work even more effectively, but you will see the savings, the \$12 million a year that are planned for our savings. It will be reinvested back in our education system as we continue what we do here for our education system. Something put on the backburner, put out to pasture, it is not true. It is very active, very efficient, and now accepted by administrators as being a great move, very much so.

Number six, public procurement is something that we noted in our Blue Book. The Minister of Government Services outlined it is being done, legislation is being drafted to be looked at. They have been constantly working and looking at how we protect the public purse, looking at the process we have in place to make sure that the public purse and the money here is protected.

We have been doing that and we continue to do that. He speaks to it constantly and there is legislation in the process. Put out to pasture, no, by no stretch of the imagination. Forgotten? No, dealt with on a daily basis and open for discussion on it.

Number five, Mr. Speaker, in big bold letters; whistleblower legislation. If you say that is out to pasture or forgotten, somebody is wrong here. It is done, legislation passed and supported. I thank the Opposition. It is supported by the Opposition.

It is a great piece of legislation, great work by our minister here, and great work in getting it passed because it was something that people had

called for. Unions have called for it, the people called for it. We wanted to do it and we delivered again on our Blue Book. Something put out to pasture, no. Something forgotten, it did not happen.

Number four, fracking operations; and my good friend from St. John's East here would know this. Fracking operations – and the Minister of Natural Resources only the other day spoke to it. We are very, very committed to the safety of our environment and the safety of our people in this Province. That is paramount, that is our first priority.

We have given no applications, no permits for anybody for fracking. We have said if indeed we ever discuss the fracking process; there will be an open engagement. We will make sure that we have all the proper information. We will get the professional information, we will engage people. We will look at that.

We also have a commitment to look at financial viability. If there is something that is financially viable and can be done, that does not jeopardize, does not even one iota do any damage to the environment or in any way be a safety issue for any of our citizens, we will entertain that and look at it. Primarily, our objective under fracking is to protect the integrity of our environment and the safety of our people.

Looming job cuts and thoughts about what was going to happen in the regional health authorities' realignment, Mr. Speaker, it was all fear mongering. People screamed, the Opposition screamed. The Leader of the Opposition screamed all these cuts. We have done our streamlining. There are no cuts, no impacts on health care, and no mass demonstrations. It was done very professionally and we hired professionally. We have faith in our civil servants; we have faith in our executive members to do it.

The Minister of Health worked very closely with the health authorities to make sure this was done with little impact on the employees, little impact on the patients, but particularly, would also streamline how we better offer and better use the money to get a better bang back for our dollar.

Screening for newborns for cystic fibrosis – said, put it on the back burner, not dealt with. It is done, in the Budget, legislation now. Parents can feel rest-assured that there is a process there for screening for newborns, something that we always wanted to do. It was timing. It was about getting the professionals to move in place. It was being able to invest that money. We have done it, another thing that we delivered on, Mr. Speaker.

Not being heard, the number one. This government – people are not being heard. As I said from the onset, this Administration is about people. People matter. People matter so much that when they say not being heard, put out to pasture, not being done, it could not be further from the truth.

We have the ATIPPA. Give credit, people said they were confused about it, they did not understand it, they were not sure if it was the best piece of legislation. What does the Premier today do? Put a committee together, a neutral committee, an outside committee made up of people not politically connected, particularly to our Party, to say we want to assess this. We want to look at, because we want to know if indeed there are some problems with this, and what do people think about this. That is where we are with it. So talk about that and not being heard.

Then, what do we do? We have an open government policy, an open government process, an Open Government Initiative that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Premier announced publicly. People now have access to information. You do not have to go look for information, it will be already posted. Stuff that you should have at your fingertips, that you need to know about, stuff that is in the best interest of the people, so that a business or community group or an individual citizen can take and say, look, I can do something in my community that is beneficial. This will help me because now I have a better understanding of what works.

When people say that people are not being heard by this Administration as their number one thing, it could not be further from the truth. I sit and talk to my people in my district and they tell me, we are glad to see information is out there, we are glad to see that it is constantly – we are

having a press conference, we are putting information out.

Even when we sent about the Budget and we got criticized from some members of the Opposition that this was –

**MR. SPEAKER (Littlejohn):** I remind the hon. member, no props, please.

Thank you.

**MR. BRAZIL:** Sure, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that.

I had to outline that every citizen got this and this was so beneficial to them. Now they know exactly what we invest in. They know what health care means to this Administration. They know what education means to this Administration, Mr. Speaker. They know what we do for young children. They know how we invest in the economy. They know how we partner with the industrialized world here so that we can benefit the people here.

The old days of being have not are gone, Mr. Speaker. The days of not being proud to be Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are totally gone. What we have now is an Administration that is very proud of what they have accomplished, very proud of what they are going to accomplish in the future, and very proud to be able to say that everybody matters. That is what this Administration is about.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

It is a pleasure for me to have one more opportunity to talk about this year's Budget. This year's Budget, Mr. Speaker, is a testament. It is a testament to the fiscal mismanagement, the fiscal irresponsibility, the waste of this government, and the absence of any plan whatsoever.

It is a testament to the fact that people in my district and people all across this Province feel like we had an opportunity, we were a have Province and we have gone from a have Province to a had Province. It is a testament, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that people are going around and saying to me, Dale, I voted PC but I cannot vote PC any more. I cannot support the PCs anymore. It is a testament that this government had to borrow \$1 billion; a billion dollars now put on the credit card of the next generation of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I will go in to a little bit of detail here because I do not think people across the way are convinced. Based on what I have heard here this afternoon I do not think they are convinced. It is interesting, I attended a fundraiser recently and I listened to some of the things that were said about our provincial economy. I thought the speaker made some really excellent points about the direction that this government has taken us in. The person was talking about how this government's claims about diversification of the economy – well nothing could be further from the truth.

Let us just take the forestry, for example, just briefly, Mr. Speaker, and review this government's record.

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

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

**MR. KIRBY:** Instead of building on our hundreds of years heritage in the forestry, instead of building on opportunity looking for sustainable opportunities in the forestry, government stood by and watched mills close in Grand Falls-Windsor and in Stephenville. We know a lot of those people now – they more or less are supplying labour to Western Canada as a result from those communities. Some people moved on permanently, other people are reluctantly working on the turnaround because they do not have any other option to feed their families.

Because of the inefficient way that government is choosing to manage our natural resources, we have mills now in Central Newfoundland that cannot get enough products to take them up to

capacity. If you look at my colleague, the Member for The Straits – White Bay North, he is always out there advocating for some action on the Roddickton pellet plant, to get some jobs for people who work in the forest industry on the Great Northern Peninsula. That Roddickton pellet plant plan is still unrealized today despite government's investment. It is cruel.

Despite all of these claims that government is making – that they are supporting innovation, that they are supporting entrepreneurs – we have only seen negligible improvement. In fact, if you look at unemployment, if you look at some of the indicators, and to truly be honest with yourself, you will see the opposite of what they are saying is true.

Unemployment has actually risen outside of the Northeast Avalon over the past five years. Unemployment outside the Northeast Avalon has actually gone up over the past five years. That is your record.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Shameful.

**MR. KIRBY:** It is a shameful record, exactly.

If we look at the Budget for this year, in the documents government openly, openly admits that economic activity after 2015 is going to be weak. It is going to be much weaker than what we have seen. That is why they are scrambling and trying to hang on, and putting a billion dollars on the credit card of the next generation of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. They are trying to hang on and trying to buy the people of this Province with the next generation's opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

Beyond 2015 then, if you look at the indicators, if you look at where the economy is going to go, we know it is going to contract. The economy is going to contract after 2015. Capital investment in the Province is going to go down by almost \$5 billion. If you look at housing starts, if you look at other indicators, you will see that they are going down.

There will be fewer people employed and housing starts are going down, will decrease by 970. Why is that? Because this government has failed to diversify the economy, relied on royalties from projects, most of them, the vast

majority of them, that they had very little role in developing. They sat and they opposed them in fact. That is all they did. All they did was criticize, and now all we hear from them now is the past.

My colleague said to me today: you know, there is a reason why the rear-view mirror is smaller than the dashboard, because you should be looking forward; but this government is not looking forward, not looking to the future. That is why they are haphazardly putting a billion dollars on the credit card of the next generation. Now that did not have to be done.

They could have seized the opportunity in our historic fisheries. They could have done that, but instead they committed themselves to manage the decline of our historic fisheries. The fishery that sustained us for hundreds of years since the first settlers came here more than 500 years ago from Europe, and sustained our Aboriginal people for thousands of years before. They failed to seize that.

Instead, they have sat idly by and watched fish plants close one by one by one. In Hant's Harbour, Salvage, Jackson's Arm, Little Bay Islands, Port Union, Black Tickle, St. Lewis, in Marystown, despite the fact that the member for that area said he would buy it himself. He said: if I have to buy it myself I will keep it open, and it closed. The Premier at the time during that election campaign, she said: that plant has a future, and it closed.

Then in Burin, the High Liner plant, to the shock of everybody, closed. That was in some ways the jewel in the crown, the last remaining significant piece, and that closed. I think it is a shame that all of this has gone by, that government has sat by and our proud rural and outport heritage is washing away with closure after closure of plants and our people are wondering whether they are going to be the last ones left to turn the lights out in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, to date, as the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Member for Humber Valley has said: Government has collected almost \$19 billion in oil royalties to date; \$19 billion, and what do we have to show for it? Well, debt is still continuing to rise. Basically

from 2010, I know this is hard to take, our debt is going from \$10.2 billion to nearly \$13 billion in 2014, and per capita debt in this Province has risen to \$4,000 per person. To put that into perspective, every single man, woman and child owes \$4,000 each.

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

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

**MR. KIRBY:** That is this government's record. This Budget is a testimony to lumping that debt – they say, oh no, we are not increasing the debt. These Budget documents prove otherwise. These are the facts. I know they are hard to take.

We have in this Province a great small business sector, a small business sector that is more or less the engine of our economy. It employs the most people, but there has been a major decline, a significant decline in the small business sector in the past five years. Small business now makes up just 20 per cent of the Province's gross domestic product. That is the lowest in the country. That is their record, the lowest in the country. That is why when our leader spoke some time ago he talked about how they are taking us to the lowest of the pack in the country.

Again, it comes back to the failure to diversify the economy. As I have said before, not only has that happened, they failed to seize opportunities in the forestry, in the fishery. They have also failed to seize opportunities in shipbuilding and industrial fabrication.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have built ships and had related industries in this Province for hundreds of years. We built boats and there have been industrial workers working in this sector for hundreds of years. We could have had a chance to have people working in that sector for hundreds and hundreds more if this government had not continued to fumble the ball, but that is what happened.

Just take a few years ago. A few years ago the federal government was putting out bids to the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy. Remember, the Province of Nova Scotia invested and supported their shipbuilding and

industrial fabrication sector and helped to get a contract.

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

**MR. KIRBY:** It does not matter who is in power. That is not my point. My point is that we sat idly by. This government sat idly by.

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

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

**MR. KIRBY:** I know they do not like it, Mr. Speaker. They are getting worked up over there now, I know they are.

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

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

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

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

This government fumbled the ball, and here in Newfoundland and Labrador this government stood down. They did not stand up, they did not step up. They stood down, that is what they did. They did very little, if nothing, to attract a \$25 billion multi-year shipbuilding contract from the government. Another province got that, and very little has been done since. Instead of stepping up, our leaders have stood back. They are standing back, Mr. Speaker. This Budget is a testimony to that standing back.

I still cannot believe the day, listening to the Premier at the time celebrating the fact that the third Hebron module was going to be fabricated outside of this Province. That was a great thing in her opinion. The members opposite thought that was a great thing that this work was going to be going offshore elsewhere. Completely disregarding the fact that we would have massive, significant, spinoff opportunities and investment for building the industrial fabrication sector in this Province, building the shipbuilding industry in this Province. Instead, that went somewhere else; and we, this Province, this government, were willing to accept the consolation prize instead of going for the prize itself.

Of course, this had a massive, massive, impact on our population; despite the fact that this purportedly was something that government had made a priority. They, in fact, had a deputy minister I believe at one point who was responsible for population growth. All sorts of talk about population growth, but that has been a failure.

There has been no population growth. There was no population growth in 2013. Government, despite suggestions to the contrary, despite all of the rhetoric to the contrary that is proven in the Budget documents. This Budget document is a testament to the fact that there was no population growth in 2013. It also indicates that our population is now projected to decline.

By 2017, this government now projects that our population is going to contract; it is going to drop by some 2,600 people, and we have significant issues as a result of that. Because of that, because of retirements, because the baby boom generation is aging out of the workforce and many of them are choosing retirement, choosing to leave their jobs, and we have a significantly low birth rate, and the immigration strategy, if there was one, has not proved to have any effect of any significance -we have a low birth rate - that means our labour force is going to shrink. The labour force is going to shrink by some 11,300 people by 2017.

I was speaking to a constituent just a short time ago who said: I want to go and get training. I have a bachelor of arts, but now I want to get training. I want to become an industrial electrician; I want to do that apprenticeship. The person appealed to the Department of Advanced Education and Skills. You would think with all the changes that we have seen over the years, they would have been able to help this gentleman out because he was EI eligible.

A number of years ago, the government signed a Labour Market Development Agreement with the federal government – powers which, for many years, we wished this provincial government had, that we wish we had at the local level because we were sick and tired of being dealt in a ham-handed way by the federal government. We wish we had the power to determine those eligibility rules on our own to

make sure that we had the right, the power, and the means to ensure that our workers were trained. All those responsibilities were devolved down to the Province.

I am sad to say nothing has changed. I have heard this before. This person, despite the fact they are EI eligible, despite the fact of their willingness to go and study an industrial trade in an area where they could probably become employed in and stay in this Province with their family – no, not going to sponsor this person, not going to provide them with a training allowance to allow them to study.

That is just an example of how government has mismanaged opportunities, fumbled the ball, and continued to keep people back and put up roadblocks that really prevent the economy, the business community, from doing the job that they need to do if we are going to have economic diversification and broaden the sources of income that the Province has. Those are just a few examples of how instead of moving forward with economic diversification – and they talked a lot about business attraction. Year after year, they put money aside for business attraction. A lot of times they did not even spend it. There is very little to show, very few jobs to show, very little new business activity to show for the few dollars that they actually did decide to spend.

There has been talk about a billion dollar ocean technology industry. Lots of talk about development in the Arctic, development in our marine industries. Lots of talk; very little action. They are just continuing to sit idly by, borrow millions and millions, and tens of millions, and hundreds of millions of dollars, with a billion dollars on the credit card of the next generation, sit idly by and just assume that all of that work is going to get done on its own.

My point here is that this is the failed economic record of this government, and I have only scratched the surface. This is just the tip of the iceberg. Because the implications of this are massive on the social side, and I have not talked about any of those things. I have not talked about the fact that Kelly's Brook Apartments in the District of St. John's North, a refuge for seniors who are seeking housing, has a wait-list that is about five years long. We have

significant, huge numbers of seniors looking for housing and cannot find it. I have not talked about the fact that my constituent just a week ago, a little over a week ago, spent two days on a bed in a hallway at the Health Sciences Centre because there was no bed for her and she was sick, and her privacy was violated. That is a common experience of people in this Province.

I have not talked about the deficits in education, in special education, all of the issues that are associated with this government's failure –

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

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

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

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker – I have to speak tomorrow night at a graduation, a prom. There are about 110 students who I have to speak to. I thought, as I was listening to the member who just spoke, I am going to have about twenty minutes tomorrow night. So, I wondered what the reaction of those students would be if I got from Hansard tomorrow and read out what that member just said.

I think the question that I would ask them at the end of it would be: What province do you think he was speaking about? Because he did not mention the name of our Province. He did not refer to any names. So, I could read that out to those students and say: Could you tell me what province you think that member is speaking about?

Mr. Speaker, if, at the end of that, I said to those students that member of our House of Assembly is speaking about our Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, I think that they would say that this House and that kind of commentary is a total disgrace, a total disrespect for this Assembly, but a total disrespect for this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. It would be a total disrespect.

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, some of these members are going to start to heckle. We sat over here; we listened to them. I would ask for the same amount of respect.

This member cannot deny, and my colleague from Springdale got up and said before, when you speak about this Province – and we have had two of the people in Opposition; one just gave a twenty minute downgrading of our Province. We had the Leader of the Opposition who has gone out and said that we are the worst, the last, and the lowest. Mr. Speaker, I am going out to speak to 110 students who are now going to make their way in the world as of September, and I am thinking about the message that I am going to deliver to them. I can tell you one thing; the message that I am going to deliver to them is going to be a heck of a lot more positive than what that member has just spewed out of him. It is going to be a lot more positive.

Mr. Speaker, he talked about things – I went and I toured a facility in Marystown a couple of weeks ago, working on the Hebron project. I thought there were 400 people working at that site. When I go in, there are 700 people working. Mr. Speaker, I am going to tell you another thing; they were not from out of this Province.

I will tell you the other thing I noticed. I toured that about a year ago. The other thing that I noticed was that the hair was darker and the faces were a lot younger. Mr. Speaker, the youth of our Province are finding job opportunities in this Province and they are working here.

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** The man talked about the future of the fisheries. Mr. Speaker, for the first time in the history of this Province on a large scale, because we have had some research capacity – I can tell you one thing, the commentary by Dr. George Rose here recently speaks to what research is doing for this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The

Minister of Fisheries and I had this conversation just yesterday. We had it yesterday.

Do you know what this research is allowing us to do? Dr. George Rose found that the age, the two, three, and four-year-old codfish that are rebounding, we know we cannot catch them now. We know that we will have the ability and they can be caught in three or four years' time. Do you know what that research is allowing us to do? Now we can start to plan, Mr. Speaker, so that not all of a sudden it will be a bust and boom fishery, and then we find ourselves in desperate situations again. What that allows us to do is it allows us to plan the fishery that we see that is evolving.

I am going to tell him another thing, Mr. Speaker. The man's history is in Lord's Cove. I swear to God, he drives down there, he walks out on the peat bog and he says, well, maybe it is going, maybe it is not. He gets aboard his car and drives right back down the Burin Peninsula, right back into St. John's again.

Mr. Speaker, do not tell the people of rural Newfoundland and Labrador that the fishery is dying. Come and look – come and look. I have often used this example; fifteen years ago in Newfoundland and Labrador it was not much trouble to go around and see a truck with a wooden box on it. You will not see that now.

The fishery, Mr. Speaker, of the future – and the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace, the man knows the fishery, he was a fisher. He knows, I know, others know, there are not going to be as many people in the fishery, but those – if we do it right – who stay in it will have a wonderful future, and a successful future. They will.

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** They will, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have to make a comment about the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair. I really saw her for the first time and she seems exasperated. I have to just go back. Before she got in politics, myself and a couple of other ministers went into Charlottetown to announce a new school. I think there are forty-seven

students there. The school, when we finish, is about an \$8.7 million project.

She spoke about the investments in her district. While I was the minister I was pleased to announce the one in Charlottetown. We opened a brand new one, a \$17 million school in Port Hope Simpson and Minister Shea went down and opened up one previous to that. Mr. Speaker, they accuse us of not spending in their districts. Those are three schools in the space of about three or four years in her district.

The other thing – and I am not saying this to be condescending, Mr. Speaker, but one of the things she relayed to me and the other ministers was the pride that she took in her community, and that her grandfather was one of the original settlers in Charlottetown. It was through his tenacity and his spirit that he built that community. I do not know if it is because of the House of Assembly, but she is losing a lot of that spirit.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say you do not build your community on being continuously negative and criticizing. You work with the people who make your community. We have worked with that community – three schools and roadwork that they needed to have done down there. I am certain the Minister of Transportation and Works will work with them. You operate from the premise of being positive as opposed to being negative. You operate on that different premise.

I have said time and time again, I have held down I think it is five portfolios – I cannot count them up now – since I have been in government. Mr. Speaker, I have to say that sitting in this House, working and bringing initiatives forward is a wonderful, wonderful thing for the Province. I have seen the things that we have brought in that have been beneficial to our youth. We have invested in post-secondary.

Mr. Speaker, I will say to some of those students tomorrow night, do not be afraid to explore, do not be afraid to venture to the rest of the world. This is a generation who has not lived without the Internet. They have had the Internet all of their life. They are more global, more knowledgeable than many of us. They have seen more of the world through the Internet and

through some of their own travels than many of us in this House has seen.

They are not going to see obstacles, Mr. Speaker. What they are going to see is opportunity. It is opportunity internationally, it is opportunity nationally, and there is opportunity provincially and locally. It is there for them and I will relay that to them.

Mr. Speaker, anybody who knows me knows that I cannot operate in a negative world. I just cannot. I have to tell you if I had to get up day in and day out and do something like the Member for St. John's North just did, I would quit. I would quit and I would walk away. I would have to quit and walk away. I could not for the life of me get up for twenty minutes and be negative. I would not mind if he got up and were a little bit critical, but he gets up from the start to the end and it is nothing but negativity.

**MS JOHNSON:** And no suggestions.

**MR. JACKMAN:** It is interesting you say that. The Minister of Finance said no suggestions. I have not seen his plan for what he calls diversification, Mr. Speaker. I have not seen it, Mr. Speaker, I have not heard it. It is so easy to get up day in and day out and criticize and say this is not good and that. I have not heard any suggestions from him. No suggestion at all. The only thing I am hearing from them, Mr. Speaker, is we are the worst, we are the last, and we are the lowest – we are the worst, we are the last, and we are the lowest.

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** I am going to, I can guarantee you. What I am going to do is I am going to be asking this question of my constituents. Mr. Speaker, I would invite him to go out and ask his own constituents if we are the worst, the last, and the lowest.

Mr. Speaker, we have moved from there to being the best, the brightest, the sharpest, the leaders in Canada. All we have to do is look through the other agencies who are out there saying the same thing about us.

I am going to end now. It is a bit early but I am going to end. Tomorrow night I am going to

deliver a message to 110 students, Mr. Speaker. My message to them is to be positive, get out there, and find your place. Remember, Newfoundland and Labrador is your home, be proud of it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

After that riveting speech I now adjourn debate.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services, that we now do adjourn for today.

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

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

The House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Monday, at 1:30 p.m.