



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FORTY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume XLVII

THIRD SESSION

Number 70

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Wade Verge, MHA

Tuesday

March 31, 2015

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Today I am pleased to welcome to the public gallery the Mayor of St. Brendan's, Her Worship Veronica Broomfield.

Welcome to the House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: In actual fact my lovely wife is up there too, but she said not to mention her.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we will hear members' statement from the Members from the District of The Straits – White Bay North, the District of St. John's East, the District of Baie Verte – Springdale, the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, the District of Burgeo – La Poile, and the District of Cape St. Francis.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize nine-year-old Hailey Blake of St. Anthony, who became the proud winner of a country-wide contest held by Cross Country Canada.

Jackrabbits from across the nation were asked to design a picture for the 2016 toques. Hailey put her imagination to work, her pencils to paper, and designed a brilliant red cup of hot chocolate incorporating a set of skis that dazzled the judges enough to place her in the top ten.

It was then up to fans and peers to hit Facebook and judge the finalists. Initially a close race, until Natalie Hughes of Aurora Nordic Ski Club, St. Anthony reached out to ski clubs from across the Province. Shares turned to likes from across the country, support from her own ski club and, of course, family and friends helped Hailey come out on top.

Hailey's design will be on 11,000 toques for all jackrabbits across Canada. Hailey was very excited for the win, but the humble girl that she is gave lots of thank yous for all who helped.

I ask all hon. members to congratulate Hailey Blake, a talented young artist, on her national accomplishment.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today I am happy to tell you about a creative, educational, and award-winning project in my district. Madame Line Daly's Grade 6 French Immersion class at Vanier Elementary School in my district of St. John's East was one of the grand prize winners in this year's Take Charge NL Kids in Charge contest.

Take Charge NL challenged elementary school classes to devise a creative, informative, and fun way to explain why saving energy is important and demonstrate what to do to save energy. The contest was sponsored by Newfoundland Power, Newfoundland Hydro, and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador; the prize was five iPads for the classroom, and a pizza party.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MURPHY: The Grade 6 class produced a video modelled after that of old TV standby, *Family Feud*. They asked and answered questions about how to save energy at home and school, with the contestants answering with examples and reasons why conservation is so important.

The students created, produced, and filmed the video themselves, with just a little guidance from Madame Daly, and, Mr. Speaker, they did it all en français. Félicitations to Madame Daly's Grade 6 French Immersion class for creatively enforcing the energy conservation message.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. POLLARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In its early years, Springdale Stadium was jam packed with the loyal fans and supporters as the Springdale Braves senior hockey team usually crushed their opponents, providing exciting entertainment.

In more recent times, it is also the place to assemble to support the Silver Gliders figure skating club which, over the years, has contributed immensely to the recreational and social needs of our tender-hearted youth.

On Saturday, March 21, I had the pleasure to attend their 2015 program called TRUE COLORS, as forty-two enthusiastic skaters hit the ice.

Performing to their individual programs, the skaters put proud smiles on the faces of their family members as they demonstrated poise, flexibility, balance, and talent.

Senior coach, Leanne Roberts and Junior coaches, Kendyl Andrews, Melissa Bowers, Olivia Bowers, Natasha Lawler, Hailey Noseworthy, and Leanne Warford are to be applauded for their dedicated leadership. In addition to the sponsors of the event, the parents are to be recognized for their willingness to support the local club in sacrificial ways.

I ask all hon. colleagues to help me congratulate President, Paula Strowbridge, and her executive, and the Silver Gliders Figure skating club for their outstanding work and commitment.

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 rise in this hon. House to recognize the forty-first anniversary of the Labrador Flag.

The flag was designed by Mike Martin in 1973 in response to a request from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to adopt a special project commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of Newfoundland and Labrador's Confederation with Canada.

In the words of Mr. Martin, "it was never meant to be a separatist flag, it was meant to be a positive symbol of who we were, and are, and hope to be – collectively, all races, religions, and political parties, proud of ourselves and our heritage."

The Combined Councils of Labrador first requested to have the Labrador Flag flown at the borders in 2006, but until yesterday were denied. In September last year, the residents took matters in their own hands and the flag has been proudly flying since then.

The Labrador Flag has been seen in all corners of the world, brought there by proud Labradorians who appreciate their heritage and the land they call home.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me on this day, March 31, in paying respect to a symbol that proudly unites us as a people, the Labrador Flag.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I rise today to congratulate Mr. Chuck Keeping, a member of the band, Big Wreck, on the group's nomination for a 2015 Juno Award for their album: Ghosts.

Prior to drumming for Big Wreck, Chuck played with some well-known names, including Fathead, Jeff Healey, Jeremy Fisher, and Suzie McNeil. He has opened for Aerosmith, Slash, Motley Crue, Alan Jackson and Great Big Sea,

among others. He has twice been nominated for drummer of the year at the Canadian Maple Blues Awards.

Chuck, a native of Port aux Basques, first picked up drumsticks at the age of eleven when his guitarist father needed a replacement drummer for a booked show. Chuck graduated from St. James Regional High and continued on to the Ontario Institute of Audio Recording Technology. After graduating, he started playing sessions with musicians ranging from pop to country. He auditioned for Big Wreck when the band was on its reunion tour three years ago.

Chuck is the son of a very proud Roy and Norma Keeping of Port aux Basques.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join with me in extending congratulations to this multi-talented artist and wish Chuck well with all his future endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate the inductees into the Torbay Sports Hall of Fame. They are:

Delores Manning, a member of the Torbay Ladies Chargers team in the 1970s and 1980s who was a solid two-way player. She was also an all-star outfielder and third basemen for the Torbay Ladies Fast Pitch softball league.

Tony Redmond has a long decorated career in bowling since he started in 1972 at the YBL league. He holds several records, both provincially and nationally. Tony is currently a director and coach with disabled bowlers and helps organize the sport of bocce.

George Bursell served as coach and administrator at the St. John's Ladies Hockey League and minor hockey coach, linesman, and referee in Torbay. He is now the President of the St. John's Junior Hockey league and Eastern Director for Junior Hockey NL.

Alex Byrne, a team captain who helped his team win four Avalon East hockey championships in the 1970s and 1980s. Alex was also an all-star shortstop who won several championships in the Torbay men's league, slo-pitch and mercantile leagues. He also coached and was an administrator in minor hockey and minor softball, and also an outstanding bowler.

I ask all hon. members to join with me in congratulating these inductees into the Torbay Sports Hall of Fame.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will do my statement in spite of the jest I hear on all sides of the House this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to share the enthusiasm I experienced last week during my participation in the Arctic Technology Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The Arctic Technology Conference, which is known as ATC, is a gathering of global business and academic leaders. The conference provides an unparalleled opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador's best to come together with the industry's finest to share ideas, current research, and cutting-edge technology.

Mr. Speaker, with a mature offshore supply and service industry with over 600 companies, all in

support of an industry that is operating successfully in Arctic-like conditions – ATC provided the organizations involved with a tremendous opportunity to demonstrate the fundamental role our Province will play in future Arctic activity.

Our government has long recognized Newfoundland and Labrador's extensive Arctic-related capabilities and expertise.

Newfoundland and Labrador's strategic location, world-class infrastructure, and waters colder than anywhere else south of the Arctic Circle, make our Province the ultimate proving ground for developing cutting-edge solutions to operational challenges in the Arctic.

Our strong ocean technology cluster was well represented in Copenhagen, Mr. Speaker. I led a total of nineteen companies, including ones such as: Oceanic Consulting, GRI Simulations, C-Core, Canatec, Intecsea, Memorial University, Subsea 7, Fugro, and Provincial Aerospace.

Mr. Speaker, we are quite proud of the delegates that participated in this important conference, and even prouder that Newfoundland and Labrador will host this conference in St. John's next year.

As the ideal staging ground for Arctic-related activities, Newfoundland and Labrador is the path to the Arctic and hosting ATC in 2016 will further establish this position in the international community.

The conference will provide an international platform for Newfoundland and Labrador's ocean technology sector and bring greater awareness to the Province's research and development in emerging technologies, extraordinary marine infrastructure, as well as bring attention to local leading-edge companies operating in the sector.

The world's most comprehensive Arctic event, Mr. Speaker, we anticipate that ATC will draw more than 1,000 delegates and more than 100 exhibitors from around the world.

I look forward to welcoming delegates to our Province so they can see first-hand the world-class capabilities we have right here in

Newfoundland and Labrador and the extensive potential we have in the ocean technology sector.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Trinity – Bay de Verde.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. We are happy to hear that Newfoundland and Labrador was well represented by academia and industry at the Arctic Technologies Conference. We very much look forward to hosting the conference here in Newfoundland and Labrador next year.

Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador is geographically positioned to be the gateway to the North. Unfortunately, this government has missed opportunity after opportunity for our Province to capitalize on our location.

We can look to Nova Scotia who won a \$25 billion contract to build vessels under the federal government's National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy. While Nova Scotia is winning \$25 billion contracts, this government cannot even successfully implement a ferry replacement strategy.

We have also have the two Coast Guard marine communications and traffic centres in St. Anthony and St. John's slated to close; the two busiest centres in the Province.

The minister says his government has long recognized Newfoundland and Labrador's extensive Arctic-related capabilities and experience, what they fail to do is maximize on those capabilities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I also thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement here in the House today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MURPHY: Congratulations for getting the Arctic Technology Conference and its members to come here; that is no easy feat. So, congratulations to government for that, but we are also hoping to hear about the interesting –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MURPHY: – advancements in technologies in northern environments as well.

In the statement comes a focus on our offshore supply and service, which are mostly oil related. We also hope that there is also going to be a focus on protecting the fragile Arctic environment, as much as there is a focus on exploiting it. We have that duty to future generations, Mr. Speaker, to protect it.

Thank you very much.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House to note the conclusion of Fraud Prevention Month. This occasion is recognized throughout Canada each March to raise awareness of the dangers of all types of fraud, and to provide information that helps people protect themselves against it.

Mr. Speaker, as part of Fraud Prevention Month, jurisdictions across Canada promote “Check Registration Day.” Observed this year on March 18, this annual event was created by the Canadian Securities Administrators to guard against investment fraud. It encourages consumers to check the registration of any investment service provider before engaging their services.

Mr. Speaker, Service NL, in partnership with other Canadian Securities Administrators, will only register firms and individuals that meet specific qualifications and standards. Knowing if a service provider is registered confirms whether an individual or company is authorized to sell investments or offer investment advice.

Consumers can check for registration quickly by using the National Registration search engine at www.aretheyregistered.com, or by contacting the Financial Services Regulation Division of Service NL at 709-729-2602.

Mr. Speaker, the Consumer and Commercial Affairs Branch of Service NL is dedicated to protecting the people of our Province from all types of fraud, and makes information and resources available to keep Newfoundlanders and Labradorians informed. I encourage everyone to visit the Service NL website, where they will find useful information that helps protect consumers throughout the Province, including a list of all currently licensed or registered financial service providers.

The consumer protection services provided by our government play an important role in realizing our vision for a prosperous Newfoundland and Labrador. Through regulation and information sharing, we help protect the interests of consumers across a wide range of financial activities. As Fraud Prevention Month concludes, I encourage people throughout the Province to learn more about the risks associated with various types of fraud that take place, and to avail of the information and services we provide to stay informed and protect themselves.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. I, and my colleagues, would like to join the minister in recognizing Fraud Protection Month. This is an important occasion, as we are

too often hearing about victims of fraud, who often are seniors.

Service Newfoundland and Labrador, through its Consumer and Commercial Affairs Branch may be dedicated, as the minister says, to informing people about such frauds. However, the department has been falling down on the job when it comes to consumer protection.

Whether it be the failure to implement payday loan legislation, whether it be the failure to protect purchasers of pre-paid funerals by not collecting audited statements, whether it be the removal of requirements for insurance audits – and I might add that was done without consultation with the insurance brokers – whether it be failure to place food safety inspections for public food preparation areas online, or whether it be failure to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, it is fine for the minister to stand up here, talk about consumer protection, but it is quite another thing to actually act.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: I, too, would also like to thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement in the House here today, Mr. Speaker. I am glad to see the government is informing us of these online resources that we can check to see if an investment service provider is legitimate. We would, however, like to see government support more outreach to protect seniors who are targets of fraudsters trying to get their money and personal data, using such things as phoney prizes, services, or information to get their foot in the door of some of these seniors.

Not every senior has access to a computer and many have difficulty navigating the system, Mr. Speaker. Groups such as the Seniors Resource Centre help seniors learn how to spot scams and identity thief and protect themselves. They need more resources to do this important work, Mr. Speaker. I hope that is going to be a consideration of this government in the upcoming Budget.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House to highlight the 2015 Call for Bids announced today by the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board.

This is the first Call for Bids under the scheduled land tenure regime in our offshore area. The Call for Bids consists of eleven parcels and a total of 2.5 million hectares in the Eastern Newfoundland Region. The minimum bid for each parcel offered is \$10 million in work commitments.

The new land tenure regime is a huge step forward in the Province's offshore industry. It was developed based on global best practices from leading exploration jurisdictions and through discussion with stakeholders.

With the new regime, transparency and predictability are ensured for companies interested in doing business in our offshore industry. Exploration companies will now have additional time to evaluate petroleum prospects, conduct geoscientific work, and prepare for the Call for Bids process.

The new regime is already creating a strong interest among present players in the Province and it is proving to be particularly beneficial to those companies contemplating business in our Province.

The petroleum industry as a whole continues to generate tremendous benefits to this Province. In 2014 alone there was \$3.4 billion spent in this Province, and close to 12,000 Newfoundland and Labrador residents employed at peak.

Through Nalcor, we continue to promote our oil and gas potential through seismic work which is providing us with a better understanding of what lies beneath our offshore subsurface. This work is attracting the attention of the global oil and gas industry. In 2014, working with globally

recognized partners TGS and PGS, Nalcor acquired 37,500 kilometres of multi-client two dimensional seismic. This is the most data captured offshore Newfoundland and Labrador in a single year since 1983. The seismic program is one of the largest ongoing offshore 2D seismic programs in the world today. Multi-client seismic data is available to explorers through licensing arrangements with TGS.

Continued exploration activity will help to sustain growth and development, while supporting long-term economic and employment opportunities for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Mr. Speaker, the initiatives I am outlining today, including the move to the new land tenure regime and our commitment to offshore exploration are consistent with our government's long-term Energy Plan. I look forward to seeing the results of the Call for Bids announced today and to continuing efforts in offshore exploration to sustain economic prosperity in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Call for Bids in the new land tenure regime in the offshore, we see this as something that we support. This is a positive initiative that we see coming and we look forward to the results that come from this. As we know, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, oil will always be a major component of our economy for years to come. How we spend that oil money to diversify our economy will be extremely important.

It was just three months ago, on December 12, 2014, when the partnership comprised of ExxonMobil, Suncor, and ConocoPhillips paid a record \$559 million for a large piece of land in the Flemish Pass. Of course, we look forward to that because that is really a new basin for us as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Last week we just heard at the Nalcor AGM, the importance of seismic and the work that is being done with that. That really is data we can use to attract further exploration and more industry to our Province; \$250 million of that was invested in 2011 to 2015, \$45 million being Nalcor's share. That data is extremely important to us, but what is also important is that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will continue to be the primary beneficiaries of that, and the offshore will always be a safe place for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I too thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. The new land tenure system is indeed an improvement. We are all excited about recent finds in the Flemish Pass.

Hopefully this latest call for bids will see more interest in exploration in our offshore. Some are saying the Flemish Pass is the next North Sea. Here's hoping.

Meanwhile, I hope the minister is doing his homework. There are very serious unresolved environmental issues regarding deepwater drilling. These have to be faced. There is also the issue of who pays the United Nations fees on oil drilled outside of Canada's 200-mile limit, just to name a couple that we face in the future oil industry development.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On November 27, Nalcor provided an update on their winter readiness and launched the We Are Winter Ready ad campaign. That campaign cost \$400,000. That was ironically on the same day that this government announced a freeze on discretionary spending.

I ask the Premier: Do you approve of Nalcor spending \$400,000 on a winter readiness ad campaign?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, last January 2014, the Province went through a very difficult time with respect to power outages. There was a considerable cry for some answers.

As a government we wanted answers, and we said we would get answers. We have also gotten answers in an action plan. Through internal reviews, independent reviews, the Public Utilities Board, Liberty, there were some eighty-two recommendations put forward that Hydro has accepted, Mr. Speaker. Within those recommendations was a strong message that we needed more communications.

I think we all agree the importance of informing people. The efforts here, Mr. Speaker, of money being spent, were all a part of the process to improve the system and improve communications.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister's comments did not address one thing. Nalcor was not winter ready and failed to – their first test actually on March 4, 2015. They failed to communicate with the public even though they knew there were issues hours before the power was cut.

I ask the Premier: How do you justify allowing Nalcor to spend \$400,000 of taxpayers' money in Newfoundland and Labrador when they obviously were not winter ready?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I will remind the Leader of the Opposition you cannot have it two ways. You cannot come out and criticize a company for not communicating, not being prepared, and then when they go and spend the money and do the work, Mr. Speaker, to blame them for spending money when they are actually trying to do what is expected of them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. DALLEY: With respect to the system, Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with a very complex system: 15,000 kilometres of power lines, 2,000 megawatts of power generation, over 800 employees working. We have nine hydroelectric stations, gas turbines. We have diesel stations. We have fifty-four high voltage stations, Mr. Speaker, a very complex system that is old. There will be breakdowns. I say to the people of the Province, what is important here is that we deal with that and we make sure they respond appropriately.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, with all respect to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, when you are going to spend \$400,000 on an ad campaign you should be ready and be able to support what the ad campaign is saying.

After the DarkNL debacle, Nalcor introduced a new notification protocol. They committed to informing the public in advance of significant

issues within the system. On March 4, they failed to communicate significant issues that led to the blackouts.

I ask the Premier: Why didn't Nalcor follow their own protocol which was part of the \$400,000 ad campaign?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: This has been acknowledged, Mr. Speaker, by Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, and the recommendations that have come from all the reviews that have been made, the importance of communication not only to their stakeholders, but certainly in working with the other utility, Newfoundland Power as well. They have implemented a new system, and I acknowledge that some tweaks have to be made with that new system. We have acknowledged that.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, March 4, the generation was available. The plan was to start up the new CT. They had a glitch in the morning, Mr. Speaker, but a few hours shortly after that they had it rectified.

The problem, Mr. Speaker, any time the power is out it is inconvenient for people. We have to recognize that, and we fully expect Hydro to implement these new measures and to ensure that the system is reliable for all of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will ask the minister a very frank question: Do you support the communications that Hydro put out on March 4, 2015? Is that acceptable to you? Because it seems that it is.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, who time and time again stands here, time and time again with information attacking some of the very Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are putting this system in, Mr. Speaker –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. DALLEY: Time and time again, Mr. Speaker, we have stood here. We have seen the incredible amount of work that is done, we have seen the money that is spent, Mr. Speaker. We have seen the work that has gone on with the Public Utilities Board and I think everybody understands the complexity of what goes on.

When there is an issue, Mr. Speaker, they respond to it as they should. They report it as they should. I will say and give people the commitment, as minister and as a government, we are going to make sure Hydro continues to do that, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, we are in no way attacking Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. What we are doing, however, I say to the minister, is protecting Newfoundlanders and Labradorians from more blackouts and more outages.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BALL: So I ask the Minister: Are you okay with what happened on March 4, 2015? Just say yes or no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am never okay when the power goes off. I am like every other Newfoundlander and Labradorian. The power goes out, we have a problem – and we have a history in this Province, Mr. Speaker. This is not new. It is not new to the people of the Province for the power to go out.

What we are seeing, Mr. Speaker, is improved investments of \$209 million last year on generation, transmission, and distribution. What we are seeing is an investment in a combustion turbine to provide an additional 123 megawatts of power. What we are seeing is a new communication plan. That is being brought forward and being worked on. What we are seeing, Mr. Speaker, is Newfoundlanders and Labradorians stepping up to the challenge and delivering for the people of the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Two weeks ago I asked if taxpayers in Newfoundland and Labrador or Astaldi of Italy were on the hook for additional costs at Muskrat Falls. At that point, the minister said he would get back, that he would check it out.

So I ask the minister: Who is on the hook for the extra costs? Is it Newfoundlanders and Labradorians or is it Astaldi?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I thought I answered that question yesterday.

The contract with Astaldi is a lump-sum contract. As I have said before, there are various types of contracts with so many different contractors at the Muskrat Falls site, but with Astaldi it is lump sum. They have a scope of work to do, Mr. Speaker, and within that scope of work they have to deliver for the price that they are being paid.

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, speaking of contracts with Astaldi, our access to information request for Astaldi's contract was over ninety pages, completely withheld or other partially redacted.

I ask the Premier: In the spirit of openness and accountability, that you say is the direction you want to take your government in, why don't you do the right thing, release the contract with Astaldi?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, again, we have addressed those issues a number of times. We have made a full commitment to the people of the Province that when it is appropriate and it is not commercially sensitive, we will release those documents, Mr. Speaker. There are still ongoing contracts and work being done at Muskrat Falls.

In the spirit of openness and transparency, Mr. Speaker, since the leader brought it up, I am sure we would all be delighted to see the list of names at the \$10,000 a plate dinner that Brian Tobin arranged for him. In the spirit of openness and transparency, maybe he can share that with the people of the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can assure you now, those people who joined us at the dinner went there willingly. That information will be available to the people of the Province.

Mr. Speaker, the new Access to Information law will require government to prove why information is redacted. It is then up to the

Privacy Commissioner to see if the information will be released.

I ask the Premier: In the spirit of these new recommendations, will you make Nalcor justify the redactions to the Privacy Commissioner?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, here we go again. They want it both ways, Mr. Speaker.

They want to put pressure on about cost pressures and schedule pressures about the project. They want to stand here day after day and criticize the project, even though the Member for Virginia Waters said: This is not a nice to do; this is a must do. We must built Muskrat Falls, was what the Member for Virginia Waters said when she was a part of the Nalcor board.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. DALLEY: You cannot have it two ways, Mr. Speaker. You cannot criticize over here around cost pressures but at the same time expect Nalcor or government to release information that could potentially increase the cost of Muskrat Falls. We are not going to do it, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You talk about speaking out of two sides of their mouth. We have a government here who claims to be open and transparent. They are already on record as saying there are scheduling pressures. They are already on record as saying there is a dome up there that is now doomed. Pouring concrete in the summer should not be anything new in Newfoundland and Labrador. You have advanced over \$100 million. You have increasing members on Nalcor.

Why will you not release this contract?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the member just outlined a lot of things that we are making public to the people of the Province. The fact is our commitment that we would share what is going on in Muskrat Falls is absolute, and we make that commitment. He has also pointed out a number of things – we are providing the necessary oversight, Mr. Speaker, on Muskrat Falls.

What we will not do is jeopardize the cost of Muskrat Falls, because the reality is the ratepayers of Newfoundland and Labrador are going to pay that cost. We are not prepared, for the sake of the Leader of the Opposition looking for information that is commercially sensitive, we will not risk the ratepayers of Newfoundland and Labrador.

If you want to be open and transparent, give us the names of the \$10,000 a plate dinner.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

I am sure there are a few members on the other side who would like to know the next time we have a dinner.

Early diagnosis is the most powerful tool to make a difference in the life of a child with autism. The number of children being diagnosed with autism in our Province continues to climb. Mr. Speaker, 106 were diagnosed in 2010, 125 in 2012, and 146 last year. As of July, there were 331 children waiting up to eighteen months for OT services after they have been diagnosed with autism.

I ask the minister: Is this acceptable?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite raises a very important issue. We want to make sure there is timely access for services for children with autism and other developmental disabilities, not only autism. That is a high priority for the Department of Health and Community Services as well.

That is why we have added new staffing positions to try and address some of the needs. We have invested money in new programs and services, including additional funding for the Applied Behavioural Analysis Program.

Specifically related to wait-time management, we have undertaken a number of initiatives in recent years that have seen a decrease in average wait times in a number of areas. We are going to continue to work on this, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, as always, this government constantly touts the money that they are putting into autism. However, professionals are telling us that the problem is not the money, it is how it is being spent. Health care is not talking to education. Education does not talk to health care. It is time for a new approach.

I ask the minister: Why haven't you put a provincial autism strategy in place to deal with this growing problem?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As you can see, the minister and I absolutely do work together. So you just might want to take note of that over on the other side.

Mr. Speaker, autism certainly is an issue in Newfoundland and Labrador that we are very, very concerned about. We know the incidence is on the rise.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS SULLIVAN: That is why we have taken opportunity to put new supports in place, Mr. Speaker. A broad range of supports: itinerants, speech-language pathologists, educational psychologists, guidance counsellors, special education teachers, our IRTs with additional training, when necessary alternate transportation systems have been approved, assistive technology, and so on. We continue to work and we will continue to meet the needs.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Again, Mr. Speaker, it is apparent that the minister has no idea what is going on in the front lines, what we are hearing from parents and front-line workers.

The Federation of School Councils is calling on government to implement secure treatment for youth whose addiction issues pose a threat to their own or other's safety. Government said last year it would draft legislation in the summer of 2014 to protect the rights of youth receiving secure treatment.

Given this government's absolute lack of legislation currently on the agenda, I ask the minister: Why haven't you introduced the secure treatment legislation?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The member has raised yet another important issue. The secure treatment legislation that he is

referring to is in the works. It is something that we are working on within the Department of Health and Community Services. We are consulting with a number of stakeholders.

There have been some questions and concerns raised as part of that process that we are trying to address. This is a very significant piece of legislation and we want to get it right. It is still on our agenda, and I would hope over the next year that we can bring that legislation forward.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Supreme Court – almost seven years ago – upheld an earlier decision of the arbitration board to compensate employees affected by the 2005 closure of thirteen provincial highway depots. The arbitration board – again, two-and-a-half years ago – ordered redress for those employees. These workers have proven their case and government owes them wages.

I ask the minister: Why has government failed to meet its obligations and compensate employees affected by the closure of these depots?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We take, very diligently, the work that is being done by our employees, Mr. Speaker. In the closure of these depots a number of years ago, we were in complete compliance with the collective agreement at the time.

This process is still before the courts, Mr. Speaker, and the process will unfold. Once it unfolds, then this Administration will rectify it based on the ruling of the courts.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, the court has ruled. The arbitration board has ruled. The decision is clear: Government owes them the money. It is not still before the courts.

Back in December when I asked the same issue, the Minister of Finance said government would respect the decision of the arbitration board, move forward, and make the appropriate adjustments. Over three months later, and still nothing has happened to compensate these employees.

Why has government dragged its heels on this issue? Mr. Speaker, I ask why these workers still have to wait. They have been waiting over ten years for compensation.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There is a process that is being followed here. It is very complex. We want to ensure that the employees who are entitled to restitution there will indeed get that restitution. This process is unfolding, and there will be decisions and there will be payouts made over the next number of months, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Trinity – Bay de Verde.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the 2011 Blue Book, government promised to develop an online BUYNL catalogue to showcase locally manufactured products.

I ask the minister: Where is the catalogue?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To be very frank, I cannot answer the question; I have no idea where that issue is. I can say to the member, I spent a considerable amount of time during my tenure in this department, as I know my predecessors did, in encouraging people to shop and spend their money within the Province, and encouraging those outside of the Province to have some inward investment into the Province, as I was doing over the last number of days outside of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker.

To the member's question, I will certainly endeavour to find out an update on the status of that and get back to you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Trinity – Bay de Verde.

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, clearly manufacturing and export are not priorities of this government. The export directory on the department's website was last updated in 2008, includes a message from the former Minister Trevor Taylor, and lists Abitibi-Consolidated as an exporter in our Province.

I ask the minister: Do you plan on updating the directory any time soon?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KING: – if all that the member opposite is relying on for his research is a little bit of online information. It is too bad he is not actually engaging –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KING: – with the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters association, whom I am meeting with later today, along with a number of my colleagues, Mr. Speaker. Because if he engaged with them, he would find a completely different picture of the engagement of this government and this government's track record over the last ten years on working with small and medium enterprises. He could find out very clearly, as is the colleague sitting next to him can attest, about the investments we have made in the tourism and hospitality industry for small- and medium-sized businesses. Members of this House personally, in some respects, have benefited from that.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. George's – Stephenville East.

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The review of the Province's Lands Act, which is currently underway, provides a discussion guide to encourage participation. One of the items not mentioned in the guide is the issue of designating Crown lands for agricultural purposes.

I ask the minister responsible for agriculture: Will the ongoing review consider proposals which would see agricultural uses of Crown land given a higher priority so it can become easier for farmers to access Crown lands in the future?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, I understand there is a separate review taking place with that particular issue. I will get the details of that and report back to the hon. member where we are on that review.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. George's – Stephenville East.

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Food shortages are nothing new in our Province. Recent bad weather in the Gulf has left lots of store shelves empty. The Province's Food Security Network says we do not produce enough of our food and we have only two or three days of supply of fresh vegetables at any given time.

I ask the minister: When this review is complete, will it make it easier for local farmers to access Crown land so they can increase production of food in our Province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, as people would know, the Province is self-sufficient in milk and eggs in the Province. In actual fact, Mr. Speaker, some of our products in excess, we ship outside the Province.

We all understand the challenges we face here in the Province, especially with the ice conditions as it was this past winter and the previous winter, but there are a number of programs in our department which look at food security. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the work that is being done at Grenfell Campus of Memorial University, with the research that is taking place there, we all look forward to a greater food security in the Province. Our department in forestry and agrifoods is looking at that.

Over the years to come, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to invest in the food security of the Province.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HILLIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, last week government employees were asked to complete an electronic survey on

poverty reduction. Phase II of the Poverty Reduction Strategy is now four years late. In November, 2012, the minister responsible said Phase II was coming very soon.

I ask the minister: Will you show some accountability and commit to a release date for the Poverty Reduction Strategy? Soon does not cut it.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to say that – I cannot remember the exact date. Just a matter of a few weeks ago there was a summit held in the city around poverty reduction. I believe there were some ninety to 100 people who – some of the people who were there live with this issue day in and day out. As a result of all of that and a follow up now to that summit, Mr. Speaker, we have that document in preparation. I would expect that it will be coming out within the next month or the next couple of months, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HILLIER: Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that we are touting ourselves as a have Province, and despite the fact that to a person, government members spent last week bragging about how they had so wisely spent \$20 billion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. HILLIER: I ask the minister: How can you justify Newfoundland and Labrador still having the highest unemployment rate amongst provinces and still having the highest food bank usage in the country at twice the national average?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I just would like to point out to the member that our Poverty Reduction Strategy, since we have been in government –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. JACKMAN: – an investment of \$1 billion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, \$1 billion in poverty reduction.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that in terms of unemployment records, 2014 –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. JACKMAN: – was the second-lowest unemployment rate in Newfoundland since has been record in 1976, 2013 being the lowest unemployment rates that this Province has had.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, it speaks to what is happening in the Province, very positive results.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, government says it is committed to proactive disclosure of information; however, upon receiving the public library board minutes, which I accessed through an ATIPP request, I was disappointed to find that many of those minutes were redacted.

I ask the minister: If the minutes of a public library board meeting were redacted, where does

your government truly stand on proactive disclosure?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, he is referring to something from the public information libraries board. That is not something that I would be responsible for from the perspective of knowing how they would respond to outside inquiries. However, I will certainly ask them what their position is with regard to that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Today is the first anniversary of the expiry of the federal-provincial Health Accord. In its place, the Harper government has imposed a new formula for federal funding that has already cost this Province \$22.4 million and will cost \$491 million over a decade.

I ask the Premier: Has he done anything to defend Newfoundland and Labrador from this deep and unfair cut in federal health care funding?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WISEMAN: Mr. Speaker, obviously when any interruption of the flow of funding from the federal government to the Province – it will have an impact on our Province. Not just ours though, this is something that is affecting every province in the country.

It is something that has been talked about by Health Ministers, it is something that has been

talked about by Finance Ministers, and talked about by Premiers I say, Mr. Speaker. This is an issue that affects an entire country. It is a decision that the federal government has made. Unfortunately, we are in a position now today where we need to make an adjustment to accommodate and adjust our budgets accordingly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Well, in all of those meetings of ministers and first ministers, et cetera, I ask the Premier: In speaking with the other provinces, have they taken a stand against the new federal funding formula which threatens the viability of our health care system? How strongly did they stand against Prime Minister Harper?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WISEMAN: Mr. Speaker, many times in the House members opposite stand and talk about what this government will do on any front in terms of making representation to the federal government.

One of the things we have experienced over the last number of years is regardless of how compelling an argument we may make, regardless of how strongly we may make an argument, regardless of how many allies we may have in joining us in making an argument with the federal government on many fiscal fronts and on many policy fronts, we have absolutely no control of what that federal government will do.

We, unfortunately, find ourselves in a position as provinces, that we find ourselves reacting frequently to decisions the federal government make and we need to adjust our issues accordingly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, again this year the Canadian Automobile Association is having a contest asking drivers for Canada's worst roads. Two roads are on that list from Newfoundland and Labrador. These same roads were on the list from two years ago.

I ask the minister: Why wasn't something done about these roads before now?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have 10,000 kilometres of road in this Province, Mr. Speaker. We have a very harsh terrain. We spend more money per capita than any other province in this country to ensure our roads are safe and to try to bring them up to Canadian grades. Our 900 staff who go out every day in adverse weather to improve the safety of our roads here are second to none, Mr. Speaker.

I would love to be able to do every road, every year, but we have to look at the necessity of where people are travelling, how we maintain those roads, bring them up to par, and make sure that we can continue to keep our roads safe, and, Mr. Speaker, our employees do that every day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last year in the Budget they projected to collect \$183 million in road taxation but only a little over \$80 million was put back in.

I ask the minister: Why the difference if the money was there?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Again, Mr. Speaker, I reiterate. We have put in more per capita than any other province in this country, keeping in mind the terrain here. We may not get the same return because of the additional work that has to be done on our roads to maintain them and bring them up to par to get them ready for paving and get them ready for grading.

Again, when it comes to our spring thaw here, this is perhaps the worst time for our roads. Our staff are out there doing everything to keep the roads maintained until we can further invest, further put contracts out to the private sector, and further improve our roads here for the people of this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Even the Auditor General could not find evidence of a plan for roads and bridges in the Province. Why doesn't the government have a plan to address road and bridge maintenance and repair? We have already seen that the government has the money, why aren't they owning up to the people who are consuming fuels in this Province?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have a daily plan, as I mentioned earlier; 900 of our valued employees go out every day to maintain our roads. Let's talk about bridges; we have done over 100 bridges that we have replaced at a value of \$100 million over the last number of years, and we are

continuing to invest millions of dollars a year in road replacement and in bridge improvements.

We are committed to this. Our roads program is second to none in this country, and we continue to do that. We have a strategy; it happens every day. Mr. Speaker, stay tuned for a long-term strategy around how we improve the roads and bridges in this Province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Tabling of Documents

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to rise today to table the Strategic Plan for the years 2014-2017 on behalf of the Department of Justice and Public Safety.

MR. SPEAKER: Further tabling of documents?

The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development.

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the Transparency and Accountability Act, it is my pleasure to table the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan for the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development.

MR. SPEAKER: Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

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

WHEREAS many parents have expressed concern about the impact of overcrowding at Beachy Cove Elementary on the student's mental and physical well-being; and

WHEREAS many parents have questioned the impact of major space restrictions at Beachy Cove Elementary and the ability of the school to continue delivering quality curriculum to their growing student population; and

WHEREAS many parents have expressed concern about government's prolonged timelines to plan, tender, and construct the approved intermediate (Grade 5-9) school in Portugal Cove-St. Phillips;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to provide all necessary resources in Budget 2015 and beyond to have Portugal Cove-St. Phillips intermediate school constructed, commissioned, and operational for students in September 2016.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, there are 100 or more signatures on this petition again today. There is more coming I understand. The situation in Portugal Cove-St. Phillips is symptomatic of the situation that exists across the Northeast Avalon on a band that roughly goes from Mount Pearl right down to Torbay. It does not only exist here on the Northeast Avalon. There are schools overcrowding in other communities; for example, in Deer Lake in the Leader of the

Official Opposition, the Member for Humber Valley's district, and other districts in the Province in other schools.

Last night the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District made a decision to bus kids from Paradise all the way down to the former Newfoundland School for the Deaf because government has failed to plan in that community for schools construction. As I said before, it is sort of ironic, we were at a meeting out in CBS a while back, and ten minutes before the meeting was scheduled to begin, the Department of Transportation and Works issued a press release promising the construction of a school, which was subject to that meeting, for 2016.

There are five or six schools that have been committed to for that for September of that year. Parents are very concerned about government's timelines on this.

This school was committed to four years ago now. We still do not have a tender issued for this school. Parents are wondering when it is going to happen. The Minister of Transportation and Works, who represents many of the people in that community, said that he is hopefully optimistic that it is going to be constructed for 2016. It is not going to happen if he does not issue the tender, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

MR. SLADE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS the community of Bristol's Hope is expressing ongoing concern regarding the need to making repairs to Beach Road which has been severely damaged by storm waves and this has caused major concerns to the community of Bristol's Hope as it pertains to fire protection and safety; and

WHEREAS the lack of repair by government constitutes a fire and safety hazard to the community since the residents will be trapped if a fire ever took place; and

WHEREAS this damaged roadway is also creating an environmental concern, as the Atlantic Ocean has washed over the roadway and out into a freshwater pond where the fish in this pond are; and

WHEREAS this area serves as a caplin run area each year which attract a great many of local residents and tourists to the site;

WHEREAS the federal government refuses to assist with this repair, as they deem there is no associated fishing activity to justify investment;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to respond to pleas from the community residents to have this road repaired to previous condition, to urge government to repair the road.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is several times since I have brought this petition here. I am just going to use one; there are several issues here into it. The most important issue of all that is in this, is it is a heavy wooded area. There are a fair number of homes down there. This road not being there any more – and which, by the way, the Department of Transportation looked after that road, kept that road in shape up until that point in time. A few years back they gave up on that one, and they also gave up on the one down in Freshwater.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is the most important concern here: the escape route for those people. If they happen to get nipped in there, of course there are going to be all kinds of problems.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to ask a question here of somebody, and for somebody to explain to me that if I took a backhoe and I went down in Bristol's Hope and start infilling a pond, would I not be stopped by the Department of Environment or one of the other departments over there? I think I would be stopped fairly

quickly. Yet, this continues on, and the infilling of the pond continues on, and nobody over there seems to care. It is absolutely amazing when I sit here and I present this petition day after day. Mr. Speaker, it is about the safety of the residents in Bristol's Hope.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

WHEREAS there is no cellphone service in the Town of Trout River, which is an enclave community in Gros Morne National Park; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS cellphone service is essential for business development;

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

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

Mr. Speaker, since I began presenting copies of this petition, more and more people have signed it. In this case, the first name is somebody from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia who was visiting who wanted to sign the petition.

Not only have I done that, I have approached Bell Mobility to find out if Bell Mobility had any interest whatsoever in extending cellphone service throughout Gros Morne National Park. I was quite satisfied to find that, yes, they were very interested.

In fact, through my office, at their request, we scoped out various areas in the park where cellphones could be installed, where there were already services available, and where there were already towers. We were able to identify there is a tower on Cow Head. That tower is owned by Bell Aliant.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. J. BENNETT: The tower that is owned by Bell Aliant could be partnered with Bell Mobility. They prepared a proposal and put it to government.

All of the people who visit Gros Morne National Park from approximately Martin's Point right on down through Cow Head, all of the people who take the beautiful boat tour who have no cellphone service today would have cellphone service if government would simply partner with Bell Mobility and help them install that cellphone transmitter on a tower which already exists in Cow Head.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. J. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, this government is showing absolutely no interest whatsoever in partnering with the private sector. It is all talk, talk, talk when it comes to extending coverage throughout the Province. Meanwhile, they just hide their heads and provide no service whatsoever.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. J. BENNETT: Once again, I call on government to partner with the private sector to look for solutions to cellphone service in Gros Morne National Park. The people last week who

were trapped in a snow bank with no cellphone service, they could not very well access a Province-wide 911 service even though they are paying for it on their phone bill. They sat in a snow bank. They could easily have cellphone service, but this government has no interest in advancing cellphone coverage throughout this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Trinity – Bay de Verde.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS many communities in the District of Trinity – Bay de Verde do not have cellphone coverage; and

WHEREAS residents of the district require cellphone coverage to ensure their safety and communications abilities; and

WHEREAS cellphone coverage on many portions of the highway in the district is very poor or non-existent;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to work with the appropriate agencies to provide adequate cellphone coverage throughout the entire District of Trinity – Bay de Verde.

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

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity this afternoon to enter this petition on behalf of my constituents and the people of the District of Trinity – Bay de Verde. We just heard the Member for St. Barbe talk about the issues of cellphone coverage in his district and we hear the Member for Burgeo – La Poile on a regular basis also talking about the cellphone issues in his district.

If we look at it, Mr. Speaker, in 2015 and the conditions we have had this winter with people being stranded on highways. There are three main routes in Trinity – Bay de Verde. There is Route 74, Route 70, and Route 80. Nowhere on any of those three routes can you access adequate cellphone coverage. We are all now paying for 911 through the seventy-five cents that each and every one of us pays on our cellphone bill, our kid's cellphone bill and seventy-five cents on your home line.

Mr. Speaker, government often talks about how this is a federal responsibility. No one is disputing it is a federal responsibility. It is interesting; the government has not taken the initiative on cellphone coverage in our Province.

I am going to refer to an ATIPP request, Mr. Speaker, dated March 13, 2015. This request was quite simple. The requester asked for any briefing notes regarding cellphone coverage in Newfoundland and Labrador since January 1, 2014. So about fourteen months ago. This person wanted to know what the government of the Province was doing with regard to cellphone coverage.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the answer was quite clear: through our search we have found no responsive records that directly address your request. In fifteen months there was no activity in the Department of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development, or ITRD, whatever the department was fourteen months ago. There was no activity identified in the ATIPP request of what the government had been doing with regard to cellphone coverage.

Obviously, the government is not talking to the federal government about cellphone coverage. Even though it is a federal responsibility, our government should be at least advocating on behalf of the citizens of our Province.

Mr. Speaker, government does have a role to play.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CROCKER: I appreciate the opportunity to enter this petition.

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

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, 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 a 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.

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

Mr. Speaker, I stand yet again. I should have been keeping track of how many times I have stood in this House and presented this petition. I see it as an opportunity to do some education in

the House in terms of making sure that every MHA here in this House of Assembly understands the importance of the court, the impact that it has on people's lives, and the impact that it has on our justice system.

One of the issues we know is that the Family Violence Intervention Court makes it safer for women and children who are predominantly the victims of domestic violence. I would like to explain how it does that.

Mr. Speaker, this is how it makes it safer for women. The reason it makes it safer for women is that there is constant contact with the offender. First of all, it is not just any – for short I will say that most offenders in the court are male. For a man to be able to take advantage of and go through the Family Violence Intervention Court, he has to first admit his guilt. So he stands up in a court of law and he says I admit my guilt; I take full responsibility for what I have done.

Then there is a risk assessment done by a specialist who assesses whether or not he would be a good candidate for this court, or whether or not his violence is to the point where the woman or children are in danger. If the risk assessor feels that there is not likely a chance of re-offence, then that offender is admitted to a program. In that program he has to attend a therapy session for a period of a number of months and constantly is in contact with the court. That is how it makes it safer for women.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

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

WHEREAS the Applied Behaviour Analysis, ABA program, for children with autism is funded by the Department of Health; and

WHEREAS the program was introduced in 1999 and is in serious need of revision; and

WHEREAS with the advances made in early diagnosis of autism, the number of high-functioning children being diagnosed with autism has drastically increased; and

WHEREAS the current ABA program does not take into account that children on the autism spectrum are involved in many educational, recreational and social activities outside of the home; and

WHEREAS the current ABA program requires that the therapist be accompanied at all times by another adult which is not only inconvenient but can be quite costly when a parent is unable to be that second adult due to work or other obligations; and

WHEREAS the current ABA program ends at Grade 3 but autism is a lifelong social disorder;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House to urge the government to implement a review of the ABA program with considerations given to alternate programming options, and to extend autism programming beyond Grade 3.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have stood up on a number of occasions and entered this petition, and I enter it today with some special significance given that this Thursday – unfortunately, we will not be in the House, but this Thursday is World Autism Awareness Day.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. A. PARSONS: Members of this caucus were very proud to stand today and take pictures to recognize how we would like to assist in that cause, because this is an issue that is a growing problem in this Province. By problem, I mean the number of children being diagnosed is increasing very significantly year over year, yet we do not seem to see any changes as to how we

treat this, how we handle it. In fact, there is absolutely no strategy whatsoever.

Whenever we ask a question on this, the answer we get back – again, that is a loose term here, answer. What we get back is, well, we have spent this money, we have spent that money. The problem is if you talk to the people within the system they will say money is not the issue, the plan is the issue. We need to treat this differently.

I can tell you when you talk to front line providers, when you talk to parents, when you talk to educators, health care people, they say, we do not know what is going on in the other system. They are completely ‘siloeed.’ One hand does not know what the other is doing.

So, the first thing that we should see is some co-operation between the two departments. I do not know if it was a sign of irony today, that when I asked a question the ministers did not know who should answer. That just goes to show what is going on in those two departments. There is absolutely no collaboration whatsoever. We are seeing no changes. It applies to so many things –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. A. PARSONS: We could get into the legislation, but again that is something else.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to stand here today and bring up this issue. It is getting bigger. The numbers diagnosed have increased drastically. So until we see a plan from government – which I do not think they plan on bringing a plan out – we are going to continue on this same path, with lots of money being invested and children waiting eighteen months after diagnosis to get OT, which is completely unacceptable.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I would ask all members, please, for their co-operation. There is an awful lot of noise in the

House of Assembly today, and I would ask members for their co-operation.

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

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS most communities in the District of Cartwright – L’Anse au Clair do not have cellphone coverage; and

WHEREAS residents of coastal Labrador require cell coverage to ensure their safety and communications abilities; and

WHEREAS the opening of the Trans-Labrador Highway has increased their dependency on mobile communications;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to work with the appropriate agencies to provide cellphone coverage along the Trans-Labrador Highway and to communities in coastal Labrador.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to present this petition yesterday and to speak about the area where I live, the seventeen or eighteen communities. There are probably only a couple of communities in that area that have cellphone coverage. It is a large district. When you leave Red Bay, you can head on down the stretch to Goose Bay and you have 600 or 700 kilometres that has absolutely nothing, other than the exception of two depots that you can pull into and you may pick up Wi-Fi.

Mr. Speaker, while we recognize that telecommunications is an area of federal jurisdiction, it was very disheartening to just hear my colleague on a prior petition reference the fact that, to date, right now the provincial government has not done anything of asking the

federal government to commit money to this area to try and address a lot of these gaps that are existing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS DEMPSTER: I found it very interesting; Mr. Speaker, I was looking at some stats. According to Bell Mobility, recent statistics show that approximately 25 per cent of roads in Labrador have cell coverage. I am going to go back, Mr. Speaker, I was not aware of that until a few minutes ago, and I am going to ask him to provide the list because I believe it is much less than that.

We have a lot of road in Labrador. We have a lot of big land, but we do have serious accidents. We have loss of lives on the highway, like we have seen just recently. You have people waiting for hours and hours and hours, because unless someone comes along with a satellite phone, you have a six, seven, eight-hour stretch of road there, often subject to inclement weather conditions and you have absolutely no communications on that.

As I said, I spent most of Thursday night dealing with a moose on that stretch of road. I did not get home until 4:00 a.m. after I was rescued. So just another little reason, I guess, of why we need some form of communication when we are driving the Trans-Labrador Highway.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

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 Tordon 101 contains the chemicals 2, 4-D and Picloram; and

WEHREAS the chemical Picloram is a known cancer causing carcinogen; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has banned the cosmetic use of the pesticide 2, 4-D; and

WHEREAS safer alternatives are available to the provincial government for brush clearing such as manual labour, alternative competitive seeding methods and/or mechanical removal of brush; and

WHEREAS the provincial government is responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of its citizens;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to cease the use of chemicals covered under its own cosmetic pesticide ban and begin using safer methods of brush clearance that will not place its citizens in harm's way.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am standing on behalf of the people of Bonavista in this particular instance. I thank them for signing this petition and sending it in, as well as some of the residents of Stephenville, Black Duck Siding, and Kippens who have chosen to let government know again their displeasure with the fact that chemicals are being used on the roadside brush clearing. There are better ways of doing it.

Mr. Speaker, about two years ago, I think it was, when I first became aware they were using these chemicals and that the ban of course had come into effect, I had to note that at that particular time going down the Trans-Canada Highway just outside Clarenville there were some gentlemen running around all over the place without, it looked like, the full protective gear on and spraying these chemicals around. It was quite something. At that particular time I think we took pictures and that became public. There were some concerns that arose from that.

I wonder if those people who were spraying these chemicals knew exactly what they were ingesting, the possibility of these chemicals that

they were ingesting, and how their health is now, and how their health is going to be in the future. I wonder if they asked themselves that question, Mr. Speaker. If in the future because of breathing in some of these chemicals that are used on roadside brush clearing, I wonder do they have that time bomb going on that they are probably going to become fully aware of in another ten years from now.

The possibility is there, Mr. Speaker. That is why I bring up the concern about these chemicals that are being brought into the environment. We have a duty, and government has a duty whenever it puts a plan together. One of those plans includes health, another plan hopefully, according to the minister when he says stay tuned for a road maintenance program coming up, hopefully that is going to involve a plan that is going to be eliminating the use of dangerous chemicals on our roadside.

Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the people of Bonavista for their role and participation in this particular petition, as well as the people of the immediate Port au Port and Stephenville area for their role in helping to get that message to government.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. George's – Stephenville East.

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a petition related to Internet access at a high school in the Codroy Valley. Mr. Speaker, the petition reads:

We, the undersigned staff and students of the Belanger Memorial of the Codroy Valley, within St. George's – Stephenville East district, draw the attention of the House to the following:

WHEREAS our recent upgrade of ten megabits of bandwidth is insufficient to the needs of our school. We are unable to complete the tasks of our education in an acceptable manner. Please refer to the attached list of issues identified by staff and students of the school;

WHEREUPON we, the undersigned petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to increase our bandwidth to 100 megabits, the equivalent to that of other schools in the Province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by people, students in the school from Doyles, from Codroy, from St. Andrew's, from South Branch, Upper Ferry, O'Regan's, Tompkins, Searston, Millville, and other communities in the Codroy Valley.

The issues that the students at the school and the staff there at the school have with the Internet not being adequate are that it takes too long to get connected to the Internet –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. REID: It is difficult to conduct research because the time it takes to download pages. It is difficult to copy images. It is hard to download files needed to create presentations. The speed of the download makes it difficult to present in class, to use more than one application at a time, and to use iPads for class activities.

Also, students cannot participate in CDLI, online classes because of audio delays. So, there are a number of issues there. Students also have difficulty doing simple things like sending attachments. Students are often late in roll calls in online courses due to the time it takes them to log on.

Educational videos and clips cannot be streamed. Teachers cannot avail of certain professional development videos that they need to advance their skills. Some course content such as You Be The Judge component of the Canadian law course is not available to these students. Another issue is time-sensitive messages are sometimes delayed because of the speed of access at the school.

Overall, the results are that students at this school are not getting the type of education they need to be technologically competent and advance their skills, their needs in a high-tech world. I ask the minister to contact officials in her department to look into this.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the member his time has expired.

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 in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents in Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS Route 434, Conche Road, is 17.6 kilometres of unpaved road; and

WHEREAS the current road conditions are deplorable; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Automobile Association ranked Route 434 the seventh worse road in Atlantic Canada; and

WHEREAS it is government's obligation to provide basic infrastructure to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians; and

WHEREAS an improved paved road would enhance local business, fish processing operations and tourism, which is vital to the health of the communities affected;

We, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge the government to allocate funds in the provincial roads program to pave Route 434.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, since I have been elected, I have been petitioning, I have been raising the issue of paving Route 434. I have written letters to many, many Ministers of Transportation and Works. One of the former Ministers of Transportation and Works committed and said that it was this government's, across the way here, intention to pave Route 434.

The people of Conche and the users of that highway are losing confidence in this government that they are going to live up to their commitment. The documentation that I have, shows that it would cost \$2.3 million to pave the 17.6 kilometres of road. This government has made plans in the past but certainly abandoned them, like we have seen with strategies.

In the mid-2000s about \$6 million was allocated to rebuild and realign this gravel road, yet studies will show that if you do not put the blacktop on, you are losing materials, there are amounts of dust, the impact for health and safety of residents, where there is no cell coverage on that highway or even in the community.

By not paving this road or even committing to a multi-year plan to pave, you are hindering the economic development that is happening in a vibrant town. The people have spoken by putting out a Facebook group called the Face of Disgrace highway; CAA, it is still ranked the seventh worse road; it has been in the media on CBC, on NTV, and in local papers.

People are very outspoken and upset about the lack of attention that this government has given the town and people of Conche in past plans when they have paved the road in failed chip seal, keeping the 25 per cent payment when there was a 75-25 per cent split for municipal roads and that failed after two years, government had to come back in and require another 10 per cent and repave those roads in the town. Then they repaved another five kilometres of roads within the town itself under the failed program that was under the provincial responsibility. Mr. Speaker, this will not be the last time that I present this petition, unless we see a commitment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to call from the Order Paper, Order 2, third reading of a bill, An Act To Amend The Provincial Court Act, 1991, Bill 43.

It is so moved by me, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs, that the said bill be now read the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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 the said bill be now read a third time?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Provincial Court Act, 1991. (Bill 43)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Provincial Court Act, 1991," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 43)

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At this point in time I am pleased to share with the House that we will be doing a Speech from the Throne on April 21. At this point it brings to a close this formal legislative agenda for government.

I am going to move that the House adjourn, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, for the Easter break. We will resume on April 21, which is a Tuesday. We

will commence with a closing out of the session and the Speech from the Throne.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Government House Leader, on April 21, will we be meeting at 11:00 a.m. to prorogue?

MR. KING: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: Are you sure it is the twenty-first?

MR. KING: I hear one of my colleagues questioning if it is the twenty-first. I stand to be corrected, but I believe the day is the Tuesday and Monday is a holiday – so the twenty-second?

MR. SPEAKER: The twenty-first.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. KING: I do not have any. It is the Tuesday – when we normally come back, the twenty-first. So we will meet in the morning to prorogue, Mr. Speaker, that is correct, and then the Speech from the Throne in the afternoon.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that this House do now adjourn.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The motion is that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, April 21, at 11:00 a.m.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until Tuesday, April 21, at 11:00 a.m.