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Speaker: Honourable Wade Verge, MHA

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MR. SPEAKER (Verge): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

I am pleased to welcome to the public gallery today Mr. Rodney Drover, Principal of Virginia Park Elementary.

I am also pleased to welcome Mr. Jacob Hill from Gunners Cove who, I believe, will be the subject of a member's statement in a little while.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we will hear members' statements from the Districts of St. John's North, The Straits – White Bay North, Bonavista South, Port de Grave, Bellevue, and Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize students and teachers at Leary's Brook Junior High and Prince of Wales Collegiate for their participation in the Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program.

This award-winning national human rights awareness program is designed to promote tolerance and sensitize students to the consequences of racism through a specially designed education program.

It requires students to complete sessions on the Holocaust, human rights, discrimination against various groups in Canadian and American history, the civil rights movement, multiculturalism, global leadership, and individual responsibility.

The education sessions for this program have taken place on Sundays, with students using their free time to take part. Volunteer work is also a required program component and together this year's program participants have contributed hundreds of hours of community service.

The students and their teachers are currently in Washington DC where they have visited a number of notable historic sites, including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and a number of important monuments relating to freedom and democracy.

I ask all hon. members to join me in offering congratulations to students and teachers at Leary's Brook and PWC on completing this important human rights program.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, Jacob Hill, Gunners Cove native, has always tried to inspire youth around him in any way he can with encouragement, involvement and commitment, especially through sports.

Jacob founded FTP Ball Hockey Tournament in memory of his late father, Jacob Hill Sr., in the spirit of his father's positive, kind nature that inspired him to be who he is today. The event is held every summer at St. Anthony Polar Centre, with funds going to Team Cle, honouring the memory of Cleon Smith, giving funds to Kids Sport NL. As you can see, this one endeavour reaches out to many other partnerships supporting children in our Province.

The annual event also impressed Rogers, sponsor of Hockey Night in Canada. Jacob's story won the contest "What Do You Play For?" commercial premiering nationally during the NHL Playoffs. Now what young hockey player or fan would not want to have that opportunity, his own piece of a hockey dream.

The commercial was quite genuine, heartfelt, and summarized where many hockey dreams begin, the fun of the game, the commitment of all involved, and the bond it brings.

I ask all members to congratulate Jacob Hill on his inspiration at home and across the country.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize the commitment of an organization in my District of Bonavista South. The Discovery Shooting Club, in the Town of Elliston, formed the Great War Living History Committee to honour the regional contribution of the Bonavista Peninsula during the First World War.

Their goal is to keep our Province's history and memory of the First World War alive. This summer, volunteers will be dressed in replica Royal Newfoundland Regiment uniforms and attending community functions around the Bonavista Peninsula. They will also be performing interpretations, free of charge. Through these activities, the tragedy and sacrifice experienced by our Province will be made real for a new generation, Lest We Forget.

The committee is in the process of documenting everyone who served from our region. This information is being placed online at nfldww1.com as a public resource to ensure the contribution a century ago of the Bonavista Peninsula and area to the Newfoundland and Labrador's World War One effort is remembered.

Mr. Speaker, hon. colleagues, please join me in recognizing the continued dedication of this committee in keeping the history and memory of World War I veterans alive.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to congratulate Jenna Lee Ralph, a Grade 8 student of Holy Redeemer School, Spaniard's Bay, one of the winners of the Regional Heritage Fair recently held in St. John's.

Jenna Lee's entry was in the Ambassador's Award category as a part of the Honour 100 program. She was one of nineteen students selected to participate in a battlefield tour of Northern France and Belgium later this year.

In her essay entitled, "In their Footsteps – The Life of Matthew Brazil" Jenna Lee takes us on a four year journey through World War I.

She says Matthew Brazil was a heroic man who received the Military Medal for conspicuous bravery: under heavy machine gun fire in full view of the enemy, he ran into the open field to retrieve ammunition from fallen comrades.

Six months later, he also received the Distinguished Combat Medal for conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty. He, along with another famous Newfoundlander and Labradorian, Tommy Ricketts pushed forward while being shot at by four enemy machine guns. They broke through the enemy line because of their accurate shooting and unselfishness providing a path forward for their platoon.

Please wish Jenna Lee well as she retraces the trail of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment later this summer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Bellevue.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PEACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize a student group from Crescent Collegiate in Blaketown who are working hard to promote environmental awareness. They contribute by educating their peers on recycling and improving their environment.

The Code Green club currently has approximately eighteen members, and started about nine years ago with the assistance of Mr. Peter Bishop at Crescent Collegiate. Within the last two years, the membership has doubled – it

is proof that sustainability of our environment is becoming more and more important to our youth.

The club regularly stages clean ups around the school and surrounding communities. They currently run a recycling program and are planning to start a composting program in the near future.

For the past two years, Code Green has received the spirit award for Envirothon. Envirothon is a hands-on competition for high school students. The competition tests their knowledge of the environmental sustainability and resources of this Province. The students pick their own category before the competition and then during the Envirothon, they are challenged on the subject of their choosing.

I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating the Code Green team for their efforts to support our environment.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

We often rise in the House to give recognition to people and groups who have received particular awards or honours for their individual achievements. Today I would like to recognize the hard work of a group of people in the city who together brought an innovative sports pilot project to a school in my district.

The Province's first Junior NBA Canada basketball program ran at Virginia Park Elementary as a pilot project from October to March. Twenty boys and girls aged five to seven years learned the basics of basketball, and I would add, of team play.

NBA Canada supplied the school with two portable basketball nets, and each of the participants with an NBA jersey, a ball, and a gym bag. St. Paul's Knights of Columbus contributed the \$1,200 needed for the program.

Director of Operations, Jerry Puddister, and Coach Tony Oliver of the Swilers Basketball Club worked with Rodney Drover, the principal at Virginia Park, to get the program started. Former Sea-Hawks player, David O'Keefe, joined in as a coach. The young participants developed skills and had fun.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating everyone involved in making the Province's first Junior NBA Canada Program such a success and invite my colleagues to think of schools in their district who might take this up as it has been started by Virginia Park.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the Minister Responsible for the Office of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency to update my hon. colleagues on work recently undertaken to improve our Provinces' resilience to climate change.

In the 2011 Climate Change Action Plan, our government committed to ensuring our Province is prepared for the impacts of climate change. These impacts include more frequent and intense storm events, which have the potential to cause increases in flooding and coastal erosion, as well as significant damages to property and infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, preparing for such changes requires ensuring we have access to the most up-to-date and authoritative information about trends in our Province's weather patterns.

As such, last year we contracted a world-class engineering firm to update our Province's Intensity-Duration-Frequency curves. These

curves are developed from historical data to predict future rain events. They are critical tools for ensuring our infrastructure designs are able to withstand increases in precipitation, including vital transportation, municipal, marine, and mining infrastructure. The updated curves are now available online.

Mr. Speaker, this builds upon work we have already undertaken to ensure our Province is well positioned to minimize the risks associated with climate change. This work includes our 2013 climate projections study, which outlines how our Province's climate is expected to change by mid-century; our innovative approach for completing flood risk mapping, as we are the first jurisdiction in Canada to incorporate climate change into these tools; our Hurricane Flood Alert System, which notifies municipalities throughout the Province of impending heavy precipitation events; and our ongoing work to monitor coastal erosion at 112 sites throughout the Province, including nine in Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that, in addition to risks, climate change will present many opportunities in our Province. These opportunities include the potential for a longer growing season and longer summer tourism season, as well as opportunities to capitalize on the demand for innovation within the green economy. Research notes that with the right support, employment in the green economy in this Province could grow by up to 30 per cent by 2020. As such, our government is developing a green economy action plan, which will ensure our Province is well positioned to maximize these opportunities while minimizing risks.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Certainly, climate change is one of the greatest long-term challenges facing jurisdictions around the world. Climate change

will present challenges going forward in our fishery, with warming water temperatures impacting shellfish, but government continues to ignore the fishery.

In government's 2011 Climate Change Action Plan, to no surprise, there is no commitment to the fishing industry there, given that the progress report says that all these recommendations and commitments will be based on available funding year over year over year. With more money cut from the fisheries budget, will we see this go forward?

Now, the minister talked about these IDF curves for rain reports, and that interests me. I actually went on the government's website to look at it. They are federal files. I tried to access them. There was a requirement for a username and a password which was not provided, and there is no access to that.

Coastal erosion and flooding are huge issues, and they can devastate communities. We saw heavy rains that have flooded roads like in Croque and also in Hare Bay, areas of Central. We have to make sure that we have infrastructure in place to deal with those changes. In November 2013, we asked in this House about the coastal erosion report which sat on a shelf for quite a period of time, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is great that we have a lot of usable information now over the last few years. It is an awful lot. What is needed is revenue not only to municipalities to directly deal with the replacement of bridges and infrastructure, but we also have to have a commitment from government to prevent washouts of culverts and bridges that have been neglected over the years. We all know; we have heard the arguments.

There is no evidence of a plan for our roads as noted by the Auditor General. As noted by the

title, Mr. Speaker, it is a Climate Change Action Plan. We need to see action now, not just a series of ongoing reports.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to provide an update on the voluntary Operating Grant Program which was launched this past December.

Providing quality, affordability and sufficiency in regulated child care in this Province is a priority for this government and we honour that commitment through a number of programs under our 10-Year Child Care Strategy entitled, *Caring For Our Future*. One of these programs is the voluntary Operating Grant Program.

Mr. Speaker, the voluntary Operating Grant Program provides annual operating grants to eligible regulated child care centres to help offset some of the costs associated with providing child care. I am pleased to tell you that since this program was launched just five months ago, we have had encouraging uptake from licensed child care centres from all regions of the Province. As of today, we have received a total of forty-two applications which represents almost 1,400 more affordable child care spaces. Through Budget 2015, an additional \$1 million has been allocated to this program bringing this year's total investment to \$10.7 million.

Centres that utilize the voluntary Operating Grant Program ensure that parents have access to more affordable regulated child care spaces. Parents of children at participating licensed child care centres will see their fees reduced to current daily subsidy rates. These rates would be set at \$44 per day for infants, \$33 a day for toddlers, \$30 a day for children aged three to twelve years in full-day care, and \$14 per day for afterschool programs for children up to twelve years of age.

Mr. Speaker, we are constantly monitoring the Operating Grant Program for potential areas of improvement and are making an effort to engage child care centres throughout the Province. In March, our staff held a session in Bay Roberts and there will be other sessions held in the coming months.

I encourage all licensed child care centres to consider the voluntary Operating Grant Program and talk to our knowledgeable staff about how they can avail of this opportunity and work with the department to help ensure that parents who choose regulated child care in this Province will receive quality, sufficient, and affordable services.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KIRBY: Thanks to the minister for an advance copy of his statement. I do not want to pour cold water on this, Mr. Speaker. The minister should be embarrassed to get up and say that there today..

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KIRBY: He should be embarrassed. Forty-two applications, he said. Sure, applications – that is not the number of people who qualified for the program. The truth of the matter is that they did not consult with the sector. This program is a flop. They based it on outdated information. It does not reflect reality, and it just goes to show how out of touch this government is – absolutely out of touch.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KIRBY: AECENL – early childhood educators have spoken out against this. It says no improvements of family care whatsoever, absolutely no guarantee they are going to have quality spaces whatsoever.

The 10-Year Child Care Strategy is also off of the rails, Mr. Speaker. They promised a review

of the Inclusion Supports Program last year; they never delivered. We have no sign at all of the child care registry that is part of their ten-year strategy. They are only into the third year, and it is absolutely off the rails. He should be embarrassed to get up here and say that today, Mr. Speaker. You should be embarrassed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. However, I am not sure how this new Operating Grant Program is making child care more affordable or accessible. It takes gall to be able to say that. I do not see how he can talk about parents having better access to affordable child care when there are long wait-lists for quality child care centres and when fees are still so high at \$30 to \$44 per day. This idea is ludicrous; \$8 a day in Quebec, Mr. Speaker.

The only way we will ever have fully affordable, accessible child care with universally high quality is through a publicly funded and administered child care program.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, disasters may be beyond our control, but there are ways to reduce the risk and the impact of whatever emergency we might face – whether natural or human-induced.

This week is Emergency Preparedness Week throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Residents are encouraged to take a few simple steps to become better prepared to face a range of emergencies – anywhere, anytime.

I recommend all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians follow some simple steps in relation to emergency preparedness:

Know the risks – Although the consequences of disasters can be similar, knowing the risks specific to your community and your region can help you better prepare.

Make a plan – It will help you and your family know what to do.

Get an emergency kit – During an emergency, a number of basic items are required. You may need to get by for a few days without tap water or power. Be prepared to be self-sufficient for at least seventy-two hours in an emergency.

For more information about Emergency Preparedness Week and more resources to help you and your family prepare for all types of emergencies –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KING: – please visit www.GetPrepared.ca.

Mr. Speaker, this week I am also pleased to note that The Weather Network, federal/provincial/territorial governments, Environment Canada, and the broadcast industry have recently launched a new national public alerting system called Alert Ready. Alert Ready will notify the public of an event that could have negative impacts, and can provide advance notice of a potential adverse event so the public can be better prepared. A public awareness campaign to promote the system has been airing since early April.

The first official Alert Ready notice took place yesterday, and was the first opportunity to test the system with the issuance of an alert by Fire and Emergency Services-Newfoundland and Labrador to broadcasters, who then provided the message to the public. Further tests will occur regularly in the future to keep the system top of mind for our residents.

I encourage all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to visit www.alertready.ca for more information about the new national public alerting system and, furthermore, I encourage everyone to be vigilant and listen to these alerts at all times.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, this Emergency Preparedness Week, let's commit to take concrete actions to be better prepared. Experience has shown that individual preparedness and staying informed go a long way to help all of us cope better – both during and after a major disaster.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy. I am just reading his statement – whether natural or human disaster, Mr. Speaker. Also, without power or water, be prepared to be self-sufficient. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians know all about DarkNL and about power and being self-sufficient.

You talk about climate change; Mr. Speaker, out in Lark Harbour there was a meeting, an amalgamation about flooding in the area. The minister, the Member for St. John's West, never even showed up to the meeting. I am sure this minister takes this a lot more serious than most. I thank the minister for this because it is a big issue for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and I am very confident he will take his duties much more serious than the minister from St. John's West.

Mr. Speaker, at this time we must thank the councils around Newfoundland and Labrador that get prepared for the councils. I know the government is helping councils to prepare for this, and residents to prepare for emergencies. We all have to be ready, Mr. Speaker. We know there are a lot of emergencies that will happen. There are a lot of natural disasters that we must be prepared for. I think this is a great avenue to notify people, and I commend the government for being helpful with this.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement here today. We also caution the public against adverse weather conditions or emergencies.

Mr. Speaker, how can people be protected when government has slashed its own budget for fire and emergency services by 75 per cent in this year's Budget? Mr. Speaker, \$2.7 million to \$670,000; disaster assistance slashed from \$1.3 million to less than \$100,000. Is this enough money to protect the people of the Province in an emergency?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MURPHY: The feds have also cut back drastically on disaster assistance. Mr. Speaker, while we have to caution the public, we have to say that based on this Budget it is clear that this government certainly is going to have issues to be dealing with the public, too.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Newfoundland Power is concerned that there will be considerable risk of prolonged transmission failures on the Muskrat Falls transmission line. They went looking for detailed information from Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro but they have been denied. Hydro says the request is outside the scope of the current PUB investigation on the power system.

I ask the Premier: Do you support Hydro withholding this information from Newfoundland Power?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think it has been well documented, and Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro has been very open and transparent in working through, particularly the issues that occurred in January of 2014, and particularly around the Muskrat Falls Project and all the information that has been made public.

As well, we are currently going through a process with the PUB around a review, an internal review, Mr. Speaker. The PUB has hired Liberty. Newfoundland Power is an intervener in that process. All requests that have come forward are being worked through the Public Utilities Board. I know on this particular issue, Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro has provided a fifty-seven page document outlining the information related to reliability of Muskrat Falls.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Having this information publicly available is really part of a transparent evaluation that Newfoundland Power is interested in because they say that the risk involved – and they have applied to the Public Utilities Board to release this information. This is really not commercially sensitive information at all. They say that given the power outages that we experienced in 2013, 2014, and 2015, they want a full understanding of what would happen post-Muskrat Falls, and it is needed.

I ask the Premier: Why won't Hydro release this information and allow for that transparent analysis to occur?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear the Leader of the Opposition talk about how supportive he is of Newfoundland Power and the fact that we are going to need more power, we are going to need to do this, when the whole debate we have had on Muskrat Falls, they have rejected it. They have not supported Muskrat Falls. They have not supported the issue that we need more power.

With respect to Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, Mr. Speaker, they have been open, they have been transparent. They are making all the information available. They are working with the Public Utilities Board.

There is a process, Mr. Speaker, through the regulator that if more information is required, they will ask for it. I can assure you if they ask for the information, Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro will provide the information, as they have done for over 850 requests for information. They have complied with it and they will continue to do so.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is very unfortunate that the minister went down that route because it was not about more power I say, Mr. Speaker. If the minister had listened to the question, it was about a transparent analysis. Now I know they do not like transparent analysis. They like to hide stuff from the people of the Province.

It was not about more power, it was about reliable power. In Manitoba Hydro's report, it said it could take up to two weeks if those transmission lines went down.

I ask the minister, just answer the question: Why won't Hydro release this information?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, Hydro released a fifty-seven page document on the studies that have been done around the reliability of the transmission. Through this process and the evaluations from the PUB and Liberty, independent review, if there is more information required, they will absolutely provide that information.

Mr. Speaker, the audacity of the Leader of the Opposition to stand and talk to us about withholding information, and about transparency and openness, when for weeks people have been looking for the \$10,000-a-plate dinner list and nobody will provide it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: The audacity to stand here and accuse us of withholding information that is of interest to the public when he had not even put out the list of donors for his leadership bid, Mr. Speaker. The list goes on –

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 seems to be very concerned about the great fundraising efforts that we on this side of the House have been doing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BALL: As a matter of fact, he seems to be a little disappointed that he did not attend that function we had. Many of his friends were there, I say, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BALL: Yesterday, referring to P3s, the Minister of Transportation and Works said: There is one contract that we have engaged in with Partnerships BC. He said they were getting great value for a \$35,000 investment, but last week the Premier said they were involved in a \$600,000 contract with Partnerships BC.

I ask the Premier: How many contracts does government have with Partnerships BC? Is the P3 contract worth \$35,000 or \$600,000?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is really interesting to listen to the members opposite today talk about their own positions they take and how they have talked about them, because it was only this week that the Member for Bay of Islands clearly stated that the Liberal position was that they did not agree with any type of private, not-for-profit partnership in health care, Mr. Speaker,

Then the Leader of the Opposition, speaking on behalf of his pharmacy friends, came out and said: I am going to qualify this now. This is only about core health care, Mr. Speaker.

So every time they move, they change their position. They always have the position: never let the facts get in the way of a good story. Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate, because over here we rely on the facts.

We speak for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We are here to do a job. We are going to work hard at doing that job. We are going to protect the best interests of the Province, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If the Premier wants to start with the best interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, maybe he should just answer the question that was just asked: How many contracts does government have with Partnerships BC?

The Minister of Transportation and Works, yesterday, mentioned one of \$35,000. The Premier, speaking out of the other side of his mouth last week, said \$600,000. What is it, one or two?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We had an initial contract through Transportation and Works with Partnerships BC for the \$35,000 that the minister outlined yesterday. We are now in the process of finalizing a second agreement, which is the larger agreement that will take us right to the completion of these projects.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KENT: Speaking of these projects, Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the member opposite and his party do not support constructing thirty-two long-term care beds. They do not support finding smarter ways to deliver health care services, obviously. They do not support attrition plans that will avoid layoffs of public sector workers.

So while we know what they are against, I can tell you that we do support seniors, we do support the public service, and we will find better ways to deliver services to taxpayers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I am very proud of my colleagues on this side of the House in the support for seniors, because what do is we want to make sure that we do control the level of care, we do control the location, and we do control the costs – unlike members on the other side of the House side, who have not laid out one shred of evidence of anything that I just mentioned.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BALL: Bring the details to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, we have learned from Budget Estimates that government has not allocated any funds for participation in the Agreement on Internal Trade. This agreement between provinces helps the free movement of people, goods, services, and investment within Canada. The Deputy Premier said the Province has withdrawn from further negotiations within this agreement.

So, I ask the Premier: Why would you withdraw from negotiations that are aimed at establishing an open, efficient, and stable market?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have addressed that question a number of times in the House here. It relates back to our negotiations on CETA and the position that the federal government has currently taken, which is not to honour an agreement that was negotiated in good faith by our government.

Our position has been very clear all across Newfoundland and Labrador and all across Canada, any chance we have had to speak, that until we find a way forward, it is our position that we cannot trust the federal government to negotiate on our behalf; therefore, we have not entrusted them to negotiate or act on our behalf, or negotiate away any rights that we own here as a Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

That is not to say, Mr. Speaker, that we do not stand in constant communication with those who are doing the trade on behalf of the federal government. We will not give away our right to negotiate on our behalf.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What I just heard was, we are not going to sit at the table, we are not going to send representatives to these trade negotiations, but what we are going to do is we are going to pick up a phone and figure out what went on there. We are going to communicate in some other fashion. That is not the way you effectively manage negotiations, I say, Mr. Speaker.

Raising taxes and withdrawing from trade negotiations sends a message that our Province is not open for business. With all provincial economic indicators pointing in the wrong direction, this further hurts our economy.

So I ask the Premier: With so much of the provincial economy dependent on trade, why are you sending a message that we are not open for business?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is interesting for the leader of the party that does not support expanding health care to support our seniors, and those who need services in the Province the most, to paraphrase

my position on trades. So, let me be very clear. What he just heard is a policy of a government that stands up and fights for the interest of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Not a government that waffles to public opinion and changes their position from day to day depending what the pollsters and others say in the Province, Mr. Speaker.

We took a position that is in the best interest of the Province, and we stand by that position. Until the federal government is prepared to come back to the table in good faith, we will never, never allow somebody else like the federal government to have the right to negotiate away a right that belongs to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. That is a principle of this government, and we stand by it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

MR. LANE: I appreciate the endorsement.

Mr. Speaker, in the Auditor General's update of recommendations dating back to 2009, a number of recommendations relate to radiation equipment used in our hospitals. He references six recommendations from that year that have not been fully implemented by Service NL. It is disturbing because these recommendations relate to approvals for radiation equipment and the need for certificates of approval to be issued when equipment goes into service. This could impact patient safety.

I ask the minister: Can you tell me why, after five years, almost half of those recommendations have been ignored?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, we take the Auditor General's recommendations very seriously. We look into all aspects of what he outlines in his recommendations. We have been working actually and doing a review of our policies; we are doing a review of the act right now, the legislation and regulations, so we are a long way through that review. We are going to be reporting back very soon to the House. Actually, the outstanding recommendations in the Auditor General's report are linked to that review in itself.

We are moving forward on that. The oversight is still there, Mr. Speaker, through our Occupational Health and Safety Division. We will have the results of that review very shortly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: We have been moving forward for five years – wow.

Mr. Speaker, one of the AG's recommendations calls for the re-establishment of a radiation health and safety advisory committee. This is mandatory under the Radiation Health and Safety Act and Regulations.

I ask the minister: Given that you are the one responsible for enforcing safety regulations in this Province, how can you justify breaking those same regulations for over five years?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, we do have an effective program in place for the inspection and monitoring of radiation equipment in the Province. We are going through a very comprehensive review. We are in the process of that review. The results of that review are going to become evident in short order. If there are any changes that are going to be made, they will

be made at that time. That is going on at the same time as the Auditor General has made his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, we are looking into this. We are working on that. The people of the Province are safe and our workers of the Province are safe. We are doing our due diligence.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: The Auditor General provided an update on recommendations made in 2010 for road ambulance services. Mr. Speaker, 80 per cent of the recommendations have not been implemented by the Department of Health. It points to needing a new funding structure for the road ambulance program as well as a need to review standards and policies.

I ask the minister: Why do we still have a substandard ambulance program after all these years?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, we certainly support the recommendations that are outlined by the Auditor General and we have made significant progress. At the same time, there are a number of issues that are related to the health care system that are complex. It will take time to implement the recommendations, but I can assure you that we continue to work on them.

There are four related to road ambulance services that we continue to work on. We are reviewing legislation. We are reviewing existing standards, Mr. Speaker. We are implementing some of the work that came out of the provincial ambulance review.

Recommendations related to ambulances have been partially implemented. We anticipate over the next year they will all be fully implemented, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, it is funny how the Minister of Health talks about it taking time to fix things. I have a bunch of press releases here from 2002 and 2003 from the Opposition Health critic who now is the Minister of Finance. He spent a lot of time talking about government's negligence in dealing with the ambulance operators and not getting contracts signed.

I ask the Minister of Finance: Why has it taken twelve years for you to get nothing done? Can you please confirm to the ambulance operators and paramedics in this Province that you are an absolute hypocrite?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Clearly, the language used by the Member for Burgeo – La Poile was unparliamentary. I ask him to withdraw it, and withdraw it now.

MR. A. PARSONS: Withdrawn.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Well, Mr. Speaker, we see what the members opposite are capable of.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: In terms of the road ambulance review, we have made considerable progress. Again, the recommendations related to road ambulance, all of them have been at least partially implemented.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KENT: The ones that are not fully implemented will be fully implemented over the next year. The review of road ambulances is now complete, it is approved, and as a result of

doing so, the remaining recommendations are now fully implemented.

I should note as well, for the interest of the Opposition, there are private partners involved in the delivery of ambulance service in communities across this Province. Are they against that too, Mr. Speaker?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters.

MS C. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We know that during times of economic hardship, rates of domestic violence go up and women's shelters fill. Sadly, we know this is happening in Lab West where increases in domestic violence are definitely noticeable. The Violence Prevention Action Plan expired in 2012, three years ago, and we were disappointed to see there was no mention of any action plan in the Throne Speech or the Budget to provide direction and oversight to the spending.

I ask the Premier: Why are you budgeting for something over and over again without providing clear direction in a plan?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Clearly, the reduction of violence, domestic violence, violence in the workplace, all forms of violence, Mr. Speaker, are important to our government. We have made significant efforts in that regard in partnering with the police services of Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as numerous organizations, community organizations and community driven organizations around the Province.

Phase II of the action plan will soon be coming, Mr. Speaker. It will be coming in the very near future. The violence prevention initiative has been very successful in this Province. This year, in Budget 2015, we have announced \$2.1

million in the provision of Phase II of the plan and we look forward to it, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters.

MS C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, the plan the Premier refers to was due in 2012. In the absence of a plan, government hid the sexual exploitation report rather than being open about what they doing to combat it. They deprived families in crisis of the Family Violence Prevention Court for over two years before changing their mind again. Prevention and intervention are vital to save lives, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Premier: Do you consider it fiscally, socially, or morally responsible to spend money again and again without a plan, without direction on clear and critical priorities to reduce violence in our Province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, when you initiate plans and you deliver on plans, it does not –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER DAVIS: When you deliver and initiate plans, Mr. Speaker, it is not a, you start and you stop initiative. You continue to grow and develop initiatives. You continue to build on them. You learn from the successes. You learn what happened that worked really well, and you also have to be willing to look at what has not worked as well as you would like it to do. Then you develop future plans.

We have been following our Violence Prevention Initiative very closely, Mr. Speaker. We have made great strides in that regard. We have invested heavily in it. We are working towards Phase II. It will be based on the results of Phase I, and it will be based on what we learned from partners in the community who do great work for the people of the Province in

providing services and supports for those who live in violence.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

August 11, 2011, the eve of the last election, government announced a \$17 million loan for Canada Fluorspar. The money was intended to spark economic activity on the Burin Peninsula. It was to create hundreds of new jobs, expand local business opportunities, and have a net economic impact of \$380 million. It is almost four years later, and none of these things have happened.

I ask the minister: What is the status of this proposal?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: I thank the member for the question, Mr. Speaker.

It is indeed a pleasure for me to be able to stand up and have acknowledged that our government delivered, with my support, a loan of that magnitude to support a growing business in my District of Grand Bank. So I thank the member for raising that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: A very good question. The company continues to work. The workforce in the community has been building over the last couple of years. The latest update that I have, because it is the company that is doing the work – we are just supporting them financially when the time comes – they have drawn down some of the funds, I am told. They are hoping to move forward with the next phase of the project

beyond the environmental assessment phase within the next couple of months.

Mr. Speaker, I will gladly speak to the company on the member's behalf if he would like, because it is a private business that is carrying out the work there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we know that as of 2013 the company had only accessed \$637,000 of the \$17 million. We do not know what has happened since.

Given that over \$13 million of this money has been removed from this year's Budget, I ask the minister: Is the proposal off the table, and how much taxpayers' money has been lost?

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 can say to the member opposite, nothing could be further from the truth that the money is off the table. I clearly understand the insinuation though, that if the Liberals were to ever form the government the money would be off the table. I will make sure that I communicate that to my constituents.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KING: I can say to the member, that clearly the proposal is not off the table. The company has great confidence in the world markets. They have actually discovered more ore over the last couple of months. A new deposit that shines a great light on the future for that operation in St. Lawrence, Mr. Speaker, but it is taking time to get the operation to market.

The money in the forecast is still there for the commitment we made, as a government, to that company and it will remain there. They will draw down from the funds as they see fit.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. SLADE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, the minister stated he was tabling requests, and I quote: documents on the Fortune plant. I was expecting an armload of information but all I got was a mere two sentences.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Will he commit to finishing the job and provide all the information, including audits, on the Fortune plant or is he waiting for Bill 1 to pass before it becomes clear?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to stand to answer the hon. member's question because I have answered the questions in letters to the hon. member. I have also answered and tabled the answer to the question that he asked.

I will quote right from Hansard, "Have there been 110 people working full-time since the plant opened, and will he tell us how many are currently working there?" I answered that question clearly yesterday, and I answered clearly in what I tabled in the House. I went on to describe – and I answered it verbally in this House, saying there are two ships currently at sea and that the company plans on opening up the plant in late May or early June for this particular year and into the fall.

I also went on to say – if not, I will say it here today – that the company has already made arrangements with workers at Fortune. If they want to get work in St. Lawrence –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. GRANTER: I can answer further questions.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. SLADE: Mr. Speaker, I can guarantee the minister, he most certainly did not answer the questions to my letter of January 11 to him.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke with the plant union reps today and their information does not exactly jive with what your two sentence document said. There have not been 110 full-time jobs as per the requirement of the 2012 agreement.

I ask the minister: Will you show the workers at Fortune the respect they deserve and meet with them on their own turf? Will you also commit to a full independent assessment of this agreement to ensure all commitments are kept?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear, this government was behind the people of Fortune when they were in trouble.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, this government will be behind the people of Fortune in the weeks and the months and the years ahead.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, there is information that is proprietary in any company that does business in the Province. I am not sure if the member opposite or if the government opposite want us to disclose –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: – or the Opposition opposite –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. GRANTER: – want to disclose –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. GRANTER: – if they want to disclose. I am not sure what they would do, Mr. Speaker. Would they disclose proprietary information to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

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

We have learned that the Board of Regents at Memorial University are being told today about government directed tuition increases for international students and graduate students. Many international students want to stay and contribute to our Province and fee increases will drive them away.

I ask the Premier: Why are you imposing these fees on international students going against government's immigration strategy?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, as we went through an exercise through the Budget process, Memorial being a part of boards and agencies, were asked to find their part of it. The member knows that we do not hold the autonomy. The Board of Regents and Memorial have the autonomy to make their own decisions. If they

choose to move down this route, they do so within that structure.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

We have been informed that the presentation being made to the Board of Regents –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: – this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, indicates certain cuts that are being directed by government.

I am asking the Premier: Will he confirm that they are being informed today of government's demand for them to make \$4.8 million increases in fees on the backs of students, the international and graduate students?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, we cannot impose on Memorial. As I have said, they have autonomy. One thing we have committed to again in this Budget is to maintain a tuition freeze for our Canadian undergraduate students. That has been in place since 2005.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I met with some students from the students' union just before we came over here. They recognize what this government has done. Again, I will say the autonomy rests with Memorial University.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: I am asking the minister and the Premier: Have they seen the presentation which has been made to some groups in this Province and which is being made to the Board of Regents today?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, what I believe I am hearing is that she is asking that we interfere in the operations of Memorial. As I have said, Memorial is autonomous. They make their own decisions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In 2012, an independent review of psychiatric services at HMP recommended government immediately implement the recovery model, the accepted mental health best practice, noting it is compatible with safety for inmates and the community, yet this is not possible in the current facility.

Since a new prison is years down the road, I ask the Minister of Justice: What is he going to do to implement his expert's recommendations?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the question. Our government will continue to do in the future what we have done for the last seven or eight years. We have made significant investments into HMP.

Most recently in the aftermath of the particular report the hon. member mentions, I had meetings with correctional workers down there and the leadership team. We have invested in a security system. We have invested in infrastructure upgrades to support not only the

correctional officers but as well as the inmates, and we will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

There have been millions of dollars put into Her Majesty's Penitentiary because we recognize there are health and safety concerns but we have also invested on the programming side of things in partnership with the John Howard Society, and we will continue to do that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, the minister's mental health experts say therapeutic best practices for mental health are based on the recovery model; yet, his own planners and officials said the recovery model could not be done in the existing Waterford building, people are suffering.

I ask the minister: What is he going to do to ensure the recovery model can be used if the new Waterford building is years and years away?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, we will continue to do as we have always done. We will provide resources to support the staff we have at Her Majesty's Penitentiary, and I have great confidence in the kinds of programming they are able to deliver for inmates in partnership with John Howard Society and others.

We provide, as I said a few moments ago, significant investments in HMP to support not only infrastructure but programming, and we will continue to do that. We have great personnel there who are working within the conditions they have, making the best programming decisions they can, and we provide monetary support and human resource support to the extent that we can and we will continue to do that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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: 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 oral health is intrinsically linked to overall health and health care is universally covered in our Province; and

WHEREAS many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have been forced to wait for a year or longer for much needed oral surgeries; and

WHEREAS residents with emergency cases and others who need oral surgery must seek medical attention in other provinces; and

WHEREAS the cost of access to oral surgery outside the Province is prohibitively expensive for many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians; and

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador covers only 50 per cent of travel costs and requires a \$400 deductible; and

WHEREAS this financial burden and the lack of adequate oral surgery services in Newfoundland and Labrador is creating a two-tier system with health care system;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to ensure that a more adequate level of access to specialist primary care based oral surgery and oral surgical procedures is provided in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We further urge government to review the level of financial assistance currently provided through the Medical Transportation Assistance Program to residents who must leave the Province for oral surgeries.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, thank God most of us do not have to access the health care system frequently. My recent experience with the health care system, due to illness in my family, has really shaken my confidence. I know people are working very hard in our health care system, but there are a lot of holes in the health care system. I cannot figure out how it is we are spending the sort of money we are spending and getting some of the things that I personally have witnessed in the last couple of weeks. I cannot figure it out.

We are supposed to have a universal system. We have the Canada Health Act. We are supposed to have a universal system but we have these people in this petition with oral surgeries, there are just no surgeons around to do it, so they have to go out of the Province.

I had a constituent contact me the other day. She said we are selling tickets, \$1 each, on \$100 or some prize because her husband has to go out of the Province for surgery, and on and on it goes. I do not know where this ends but at some point this government, or the government over here, as the Member for Humber West pointed out, is going to have to get this fixed. We cannot continue to spend that sort of money and to have the sorts of holes and problems and issues that we have.

I was down in the hospital the other day – I mean, there are people out in the hallways in emergency. Unbelievable; it is like something from a third-world country, sometimes, when you look around. I think we have absolutely got to get a handle on this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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 the Heart's Content Barrens is a very busy connecting road between Trinity Bay and Conception Bay; and

WHEREAS following the paving and roadwork completed in 2013, the shoulders of the road has become very narrow; and

WHEREAS the narrow shoulders of the road have created a very unsafe condition for the travelling public;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to eliminate this unsafe condition by widening the shoulders of the Heart's Content Barrens.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in my place this afternoon and enter this petition on behalf of the residents of Trinity – Bay de Verde. Route 74, or what those of us from the district call the barrens, is one of the busiest roads in the district. It is an important link between Trinity and Conception Bay. Two ambulance services alone, Mr. Speaker, travel this road over 500 times a year to transport patients to the Carbonear Hospital.

Following the roadwork last summer, the shoulders of the road became very narrow. The minister and his department are aware of the

situation, Mr. Speaker, and I would thank them for being very responsive to the issue.

There is more work scheduled to happen on the Heart's Content Barrens this summer, and the petitioners are asking the department to ensure that upon completion of this work in 2015, that safety is first and foremost in minds when dealing with these shoulders.

I would be remiss also to not mention, Mr. Speaker, that this section of road, Route 74, does not have cellphone coverage, which is also a grave concern to the residents of Trinity – Bay de Verde.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HILLIER: 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 Route 2 on the Conception Bay South Bypass Road is the second busiest highway in the Province; and

WHEREAS we must ensure the safety of the residents who use the access road, especially when driving at night; and

WHEREAS brush clearing can reduce the risk to drivers from the local moose population;

We, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge the government to allocate funding to include brush clearing for the Manuels Access Road.

Mr. Speaker, this is several times I have brought this petition forward. The area we are talking about is the area from Weir's Pit basically to Fowler's Road. We know that we have a significant moose population there. The Department of Transportation and Works has

erected moose signs there to let the people know that there are moose in the area.

Mr. Speaker, people already know that there are moose in the area. Moose collisions are common in that area. We often hear of a moose-car collision near Weir's Pit. This is the area we are talking about. Not only do we have the collisions there, but the near misses are the concerns.

This is the second busiest highway in the Province. We have about 25,000 cars a day. On peak days, we are up over 30,000 cars. These vehicles are coming from Holyrood, which is in the District of Harbour Main. They are coming from the District of Conception Bay South. They are coming from the District of Topsail. In fact, Mr. Speaker, this particular petition comes from a group of people in the Topsail district who really have not gotten any satisfaction in the past in contacting their MHA.

When I was a council member in Conception Bay South, I received emails from this group of people asking me to speak with the Minister of Transportation, who happened to be their MHA at the time; nothing happened, Mr. Speaker. The town has written government, the Member for Labrador West when he was the Minister of Transportation; nothing has happened. The town has written the current Minister of Transportation; again, nothing happened. His answer is when we get a new tender, perhaps you will be included.

Mr. Speaker, the last tender was for nine areas in the Province; all nine were in government districts. Liberal districts, the Opposition districts, we have moose problems. We have woods where moose come out of. We also have highways where people drive –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. HILLIER: 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.

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 in 2012 the provincial government lifted the 8 per cent provincial portion of the HST on residential heat and light by introducing the Residential Energy Rebate; and

WHEREAS heat is a necessity of life and a health concern, particularly for seniors; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has projected oil prices to increase in the next five years;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to stop taxing home energy and reverse its decision to abolish the Residential Energy Rebate.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this will be the first of many petitions that I will be presenting in the House of Assembly on this issue. On March 28 of 2001 this House was also entertained with a petition signed by approximately 55,000 residents of Newfoundland and Labrador at a time when oil prices were low, when home energy was rising, too, at the same time, asking for government, urging government at that time, to lift the tax off heat and light in their homes, particularly light as it pertains to being used as a heat source. It was a big issue with people. A lot of people signed it.

We know, and government knows too, that in their consultation when they brought it in – the minister at the time said he had a conversation with an older lady on Riverside Drive, which I believe was in his constituency over in the Corner Brook area. At that particular time she asked government why they were taxing energy and making it hard on her.

At the time, the minister of the day thought it was a good idea in that particular Budget to lift the tax off heat so it would not be so hard on seniors. Yet, Mr. Speaker, we have government in this Budget now putting the tax back on a

necessity. I keep wondering if it is still a necessity for that older lady who is on Riverside Drive. Did government consult with her and get the answer from her that it was okay to raise the energy cost in her home?

Mr. Speaker, this is also money – disposable income, if you will – that consumers could be spending elsewhere. Spending it on more important things like food, because we know one of the most important issues out there centered around, and still center around, the whole question of being able to afford food or fuel.

Mr. Speaker, this will be the first of many. It is out there in the general public now. I thank these constituents for signing this petition at this particular time.

I bring notice to government: consider reversing your decision to abolish the Residential Energy Rebate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS the Strait of Belle Isle is a very important transportation link between Labrador and the Island of Newfoundland; and

WHEREAS both commercial and residential traffic is continuously increasing because of the opening of the Trans-Labrador Highway and increased development in Labrador; and

WHEREAS the existing ferry service can no longer effectively handle the traffic; and

WHEREAS there have been many interruptions in the ferry service, especially during the 2014-2015 winter season;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the

House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to complete a comprehensive feasibility study for a fixed link across the Strait of Belle Isle that would include a geological assessment and a full cost analysis.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, if there is anybody in the entire Province of Newfoundland and Labrador not aware of the ferry woes that continue to plague the residents of Labrador and other users around the Province, that Strait of Belle Isle ferry service, they must be hiding under a rock not to be aware.

Until you are able to have an efficient flow of goods and services from point A to point B – freight, passengers, vehicles – Mr. Speaker, the region cannot help themselves. The region cannot help themselves to become sustainable.

We have seen this government bungle ferry contracts so bad. After three delays, the RFP closed in June 2014, Mr. Speaker, and we are still no closer to a ferry than we were when they put it out. It is very disheartening. I had a mayor say to me yesterday it is an insult to the people and it is a joke that they are going to go back and do more PR exercises. It is a stall tactic. It is nothing but lip service.

Mr. Speaker, the region has been calling. With a little bit of long-term planning and vision, we should be looking at the viability of a fixed link. We have recently been hearing in the media some movement again now with Route 138 coming down through. That is going to make a tremendous difference for the people. It is going to give the people of Labrador a way out that the government has refused to do.

We look at the cost of the ferries; \$30 million again in this year's Budget, Mr. Speaker. We would not have to look very far into the future before we could see the benefits of a fixed link. I am happy to know that our government is on the record that we would support something like this.

It is what the people want. It is what the people need. It is what we need to advance tourism in

the region, Mr. Speaker. I will continue to petition for this study.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move to the Orders of the Day, Motion 1, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

MR. SPEAKER: We are going into Motion 1, the Budget Speech.

The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile speaking to the amendment.

MR. A. PARSONS: It is not to the amendment. I will take the time though, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile, yes, my recollection is that you have approximately ten minutes speaking to the amendment.

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

I am going to continue on speaking to the non-confidence motion that was brought in by the Member for Virginia Waters. I will continue on with some of the comments that I had to make previously and I will continue on after.

One of the things I wanted to discuss – I mentioned previously that I was going to talk about health care, I was going to talk about justice, and I am going to talk about my own district. So I want to go to the Health budget and that particular aspect of this. We all know that Health makes up a very large portion of our Budget. There is no disagreement amongst any member here about the importance of health but it is amazing how over the course of time things that have been promised, things that have been asked for, do not always seem to happen.

Last year, there was an announcement in Budget 2014 about ambulance service, and that is a topic I brought up here in the House today. I brought up ambulance. I do not know about members on the other side, but I get a number of calls and emails from ambulance operators, from paramedics, and from people who have a concern with the ambulance program.

The Minister of Health wanted to provide a refresher on private operators. I know full well there are private operators. Do you know why? Because they have been without a contract for three years, because members on the other side do not feel they are important enough to have one with.

Again, I think it is quite hypocritical that we have press releases from when government was on this side. You can look at them here; I have them right here.

AN HON. MEMBER: Who said it?

MR. A. PARSONS: It was the Minister of Finance, who was the Opposition Health critic at the time. It is not from Hansard, it is press releases.

We are talking about here: government's negligence in dealing with private ambulance operators. The minister shows inflexibility. This one is funny here: they are amazed that the government waited to hold its first contract talks until five days before the existing contract became due. Right now, the private operators have been without a contract for three years.

It is amazing that you are going to stand here and say something, and then get in on the other side – the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Health – and do nothing to help the private ambulance operators of this Province. We know there was a bunch of money that was budgeted last year for a centralized dispatch and to fix things. Do you know what? I do not believe – and the Minister of Health can correct me if I am wrong, I will certainly sit down. He is going to get an opportunity. Tell me how much money is in this year's Budget for ambulance operators, for the private operators all over this Province. Tell me, because right now, I did not see anything.

Last year, oh, we are going to do this, we are going to do that. They have been waiting years for a contract, and they actually agreed in good faith to hold off negotiations to allow for government's ambulance report to be done because that was going to determine how government was going to proceed. They got the report. That was two years ago, and still these paramedics, the ones we rely on to get us to safety, they are sitting there and they have nothing. They have nothing, and working without a contract.

Again, I say to the government, you talk about – I think the term used here is balance and choices. Well, forgive me if me and every single paramedic and ambulance operator and citizen in this Province says no thank you; you lost any trust that you had. You lost absolutely every bit. You had the opportunity, you had it at first, and you have lost that. We continue to see that on an everyday basis, I say, Mr. Speaker.

Now again, I am going to move on because there are so many different aspects to health care in this Province. The ambulance program is just one failure of this Budget. I am going to move on to primary health care, something very important. We know it is important because the Premier back when he was running for his leadership said: I am going to have a health summit. I am going to have this big health summit. We are going to go around the Province. We are going to have big meetings. We are going to bring in people. He did it – and again, kudos to consultation.

Sometimes I know that consultation is a code word for this government for delay. When it comes to the Labrador ferries, they are going to consult now. They have already been told what they want, but they are not doing anything about it and they just continue to be slippery about what they are going to do for the people of Labrador. I will leave the members that we have for Labrador, who represent them on a daily basis, to talk more about that.

Going back to primary health care, there was a consultation. There was a Premier's summit, a big fancy event. I attended a number of the meetings. I sat with people. People took the time to come out. It is funny because one of the things that came out, one of the key messages,

was primary health care. Now, the irony is that it was this government that cut the primary health office in 2006. You cut it and now you have completely – I do not know if you would call that a 180 or you do a 360, I guess. You went the opposite, you cut it, and now you have gone back to that.

To me, sometimes it seems like when you have been there long enough that you are completely reversing your own decisions, you have to question the direction that you are going in. Anyway, I am going to move on – and there is a \$2 million investment in primary health care this year. It is much needed. We knew it was much needed; we said so. This was the government that cut it and now they are bringing it back, and we will see how that goes. Again, primary health care is obviously crucial.

I want to move on to infrastructure. I mentioned this a little bit in my previous conversation. There is a lot of infrastructure that has been announced by this government over the past. Again, I use a phrase from the Member for Bay of Islands, who has been probably the loudest advocate for the Corner Brook hospital – it the Corner Brook hospital but we, on the West Coast, know that it is going to service everybody. The equivalent of what they have done this year, eight years after it was promised, was equivalent to oh, we have enough money for another box of nails.

The former Premier – I do not know if it is the former Premier or the former, former or the one in between because they have had three-and-a-half in the last year, but the former Premier was the one who stood in this House and said: I am not quitting until the steel is up. I say to the Member for Bay of Islands, is the steel up?

MR. JOYCE: No.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay, the steel is not up, so that is another broken promise. Now look, we heard it in election 2007, we are going to build a hospital; election 2011, we are going to build a hospital. The Member for Humber West, by-election 2011, heard that promise. I am pretty sure that in election 2015, you can probably save your ads and save a bit of money because it is the same promise. It is the same promise. There has been nothing done.

You spent \$40 million, according to the Minister of Health, on this facility for the West Coast. The only thing I can be led to believe is one of two things: (a) you do not know what you are doing because you promised it and we are no farther ahead – we have the biggest dog park in the Province over there on the West Coast or a driving range, depending on what you like – or (b), you do not care about the people of the West Coast. You promised it to them; we need it.

Every day I am getting calls from people in my district who cannot get a bed in Port aux Basques. They cannot get a bed in Stephenville. They cannot get a bed in Corner Brook. Yet we have seen nothing through all your promises over the last eight years. I say to you: Good luck with that promise when you go back to the polls because I am telling you what, people will not fall for it again.

They fell for it before, they gave you their trust, and you broke that trust. You broke that promise to the people of the West Coast – the entire West Coast. You broke that promise. It is not acceptable, but maybe you do not know what you are doing. Maybe we can forgive you if that is the case. I do not know if that is incompetence or whatever it is.

That is just one piece of infrastructure. There is another one called the Waterford. It is Her Majesty's Penitentiary's older sister. It was built in 1854 and there was a promise that we are going to fix this; we are going to build it. Do you know what? We have heard now through this Budget that is on hold. That is being paused until the fiscal situation improves.

From what I can gather, the fiscal situation is not going to improve until the next decade. It would be nice if we had confirmation. If the Waterford Hospital is on hold until the next decade, we would like to know that. A straight answer would be appreciated for all the people in this Province who rely on that service. It is funny how actions speak louder than words. The words are mental health is a priority; the actions are you are not getting the facility that we promised to you because of the financial mess that we have created here.

On that note – and I see that my time is running out – I would like to move, Mr. Speaker, a

subamendment, seconded by the Member for Bay of Islands, that the amendment that was previously presented, the non-confidence motion, be amended by changing the period at the end thereof to a comma, and by adding immediately thereafter the following words: and that this House also condemns the government for its failure to present a Budget that reflects the possibilities which exist in terms of addressing the needs of the people of this Province.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The House will take a brief recess to consider the amendment.

This House is now in recess.

Recess

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

We have considered the amendment to be in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

It is good to be two for two. I will continue on, and I have another twenty minutes to speak to Budget 2015, so I am going to switch gears from Health and I just want to ensure I speak about a couple of other things as I continue on. One of those, obviously, is my other critic role, which is Justice – as it is now called, Justice and Public Safety. It used to be called Public Safety, and Justice. It has been switched around. A bit of flip-flop going on with the Justice department, depending on who you listen to.

What I can say about Justice this year, from my initial glance of the Budget, is that Justice does not appear to be particularly hard hit. I will get a better opportunity through Estimates – I am talking about in terms of manpower. I am not talking about infrastructure, because infrastructure is a different story. Again, in Justice, the Budget looks to be relatively the same.

That is probably a good thing, because Justice was so hard hit in Budget 2013 when this government moved ahead and cut the guts out of it. They had a big uproar and then two days later they brought in the special committee and they switched everything that they did. There was a bit of a flip-flop on Justice there too. It is a word that they like to use sometimes, but it is funny, sometimes you have to look in the mirror, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to the individuals involved in the system, I think there has been maintenance of the number of people, whether that is Crowns, whether that is Legal Aid – in fact, there was a top-up of the Legal Aid rates for private lawyers. So not Legal Aid lawyers, but the individuals that get private lawyers, there was a raise in those fees. They have been the same since the 1970s. That can be a bit of a contentious issue, but certainly I think when you have the same fees that you had thirty years ago that is a necessary thing.

I have not heard yet from people whether there are any cuts in that system. Now, the Premier's comments in the House lead us to believe that there are more cuts coming. Sometimes they use the word attrition, but we know that, especially in health care too – and that is the part that I will come back to at some point, the jobs that are being lost in health care, because there are jobs being lost when you have this consolidation.

One of the big things for Justice is that there has been a number of big announcements, big-ticket items, and I am going to get an opportunity again in Estimates for Justice, when I get to sit down and look across at the entire department and all the heads and ask questions. It is like Christmas when you think about it; I love to sit down and look across and ask the questions and actually get answers, which is not always the case, not what you always get in Question Period. In fact, these days, it seems like we get more questions than we get answers, which we are fine with that as well.

If you look at last year in Budget 2014 there was a courthouse in Stephenville announced. I think there was an RFP on that, but I have not seen a whole lot moving forward with that. I think it must be – and if I am wrong, the minister and his staff will correct me and say no, no we are

moving ahead, but I think that one is probably being paused as well.

You need the courthouse in Stephenville. It is necessary. The current courthouse is not a very good facility. Stephenville handles more because it was this government that shut down circuit courts all across the Province. For savings of \$600 and \$700, they shut down courthouses, shut down circuits. Access to justice becomes an issue.

Now, we will move to another courthouse. This is one that was actually announced just in the fall and it was the former minister, Judy Manning, and the Premier went down to Courtroom No. 7 and made the big announcement. It is nice to see an announcement. The problem was that we got no information on it. We have no idea when, we got no idea where, we got no idea how – we did get the why. We know why it is needed, but they make these announcements and there is nothing behind it. It is sort of, I guess, emblematic of this government: a lot of talk but nothing behind it. That is what it seems to be, Mr. Speaker. That is again another big-ticket item announced; we will see what happens.

I am hoping it is not like the Corner Brook hospital where you announced it and you spend a bunch of money getting a plan but you take so long that you have to go back and spend more millions to get a new plan, and it is a waste of money. In this case I am wondering if there is going to be that waste of money there, because we are obviously not in the position to be wasting money.

Another one – this was another big-ticket item, and that is Her Majesty's Penitentiary. Look, we know that it is needed. Like I said I think the pen was actually built in 1859, and there is no need to reiterate how decrepit that facility is and how it is really hard to work there. Again, my primary fear is not just for the inmates, I fear about the staff in there because they do very tough work.

It is only when you see a video like we had last year with that riot. We saw that riot last year and you actually get to watch it. It is one of those videos where you have to turn off the news if you are sat home watching with your kids – I

turned it off because I do not want my kids to see what went on there. It was horrific. It was brutal, but it is reality.

So we know we need a new facility. We know there was an announcement made, but it is the same thing. It is an announcement with no substance behind it. Again, it is very symptomatic of the current government.

We did see one announcement related to the workers at the penitentiary. I always make the joke that by the time it gets done, it is going to be His Majesty's Penitentiary as opposed to Her Majesty's; that is when we will see it. We did an announcement of \$100,000 for uniforms for the inmates. I cannot stand here and criticize that because I have asked for it. In fact, I asked Judy Manning about it when I had a briefing with her back when she was the minister. I said: Is this something you are looking at? Now, I did not get much detail from her then, but we know that it is in the Budget. I will get an opportunity to ask the current minister and his staff about the clothing.

People may say: Why are you doing that? The reason is two-fold. Number one, we know there is a drug problem at the penitentiary and a lot of the drugs get into the pen through clothes. People are getting it sown into their clothes and brought in. We know that. The guards see it every day. You have to search them. You have to go through it. It is amazing the ingenuity that is there.

The second part is there is a lot of bad behaviour that goes on in the penitentiary that is related to clothes. So if we can eliminate that, there is going to be a savings to people's safety and it is going to be a savings when it comes to money that we have to spend to replace clothes or things along those lines. If we can cut down on the drug trade that is going into that penitentiary, then it is going to make things that much better.

I think it is a smart investment. I was surprised to see it this year. I was surprised to see it, but, look, it is the right move and it is what the guards want. It is the correctional officers – they will tell you; they get the least glory of anybody within the system. You have the police that go out and they are the ones that catch the bad guy and they go through the system, but it is

these guards, 24-7, that have to stand there and watch these individuals and live among them.

So I say to the correctional officers that are out there: Thank you for the job that you are doing. I know sometimes you do not always get the support you need, but we are happy to ask the questions and get things done, as we have done in the past. Certainly, I am happy to do it. I have been in that penitentiary. I know what it is like. So I want to have that opportunity to thank them for what they do.

Like I say, Mr. Speaker, it is hard – and I will get an opportunity again to speak to this Budget – when you have not done your Estimates, because Estimates is when you can really get into the nitty-gritty of this Budget that this government brought down.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. A. PARSONS: I have not had that opportunity, but I will get the chance to ask about: what are their plans, what are their policies. There are a lot of questions I am going to ask in Estimates.

There was no money actually allotted for inquiries this year. There is \$1,000. They allot \$1,000 for inquiries every year. It has not been spent in the last little while. This year they did not allot any money for an inquiry, but it is my belief that there is going to be money needed for an inquiry this year. I am willing to go on the record and say it is going to be needed. We will see what happens there.

There are a lot of things I can ask about. I can ask about Crown prosecutors. They do a great job. In fact, they are so good that they were just asked to do some more work to oversee an RNC investigation in Corner Brook. That is something else I can ask about too, ask about what is going on with that. I look forward to the opportunity to ask questions about the Crown prosecutor review.

Overall, this government has invested money in justice. You can look at it and see it. The problem is sometimes it is almost like they take away from the money that they have spent by

making these ham-handed decisions to cut the guts out of it, and then they have to come back and fix what they did. It comes back to this overall message – I think the people are really seeing – it is about management. It is the management that is going on. Right now, we do not have good management over there. That is why we think we should be there, because we will provide good management.

I am going to move forward. I want to talk about my district for a second, Burgeo – La Poile, which is my home area. I live in Port aux Basques. I go to a number of communities. I am going to Burgeo tomorrow. One thing I want to talk about is the Burgeo road. I heard the Minister of Transportation and Works say today: Yes, we are keeping that amount of money for roads in the Province.

Now, a couple of things about the Burgeo road, Route 480, it is about 148 kilometres in length. There is no cell service on it. The funny thing is they talk about the money they have spent, but I would like to see, and I hope we will get this information of where that money is spent. Because the Burgeo road just got voted – and this is one of those sort of infamous things, you do not want to famous, you want to infamous.

Well, infamously, Burgeo road is now ranked the fourth worse road in Atlantic Canada. It is so bad that a culvert in the road, just prior to Christmas, collapsed – it collapsed. It would be funny if it was not for the fact that a man almost died. An employee of Transportation and Works drove out there on his way to work at 5:00 o'clock in the morning and the road collapsed. He went across, thankfully. He never went down. He would likely be dead. I have had opportunity to speak to this gentleman.

I am going to talk a little bit more about this because it affects another area. He went across, the vehicle totalled. He thought the vehicle was on fire. With a broken back, he managed to crawl out of the vehicle to the side of the road. Now, it is 5:00 o'clock in the morning, it is pitch-black. There are fish trucks coming back and forth and he was scared for his life. He crawled to the side of the road.

He could hear the radio in the truck, he could hear that. He could not get to it again because

he was lying there unable to move. He cannot call anybody because there is no cellphone service. We have not seen any movement on that. He has a cellphone, but he cannot talk, he cannot use it. Thankfully, later on somebody came upon him. He was airlifted and he is on his way to recovery.

I will not talk about the absolute travesty that is the agency, Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission, because what they have done to this gentleman is absolutely disgraceful and shameful. All I can say is what they have done to this person, this employee of this government who was gravely injured doing his job – what they have done to him, they should be ashamed of themselves.

He had to fight to get a walker. I was not planning on talking about this today, but he wants to talk about it because he is home relearning how to walk. This government, through the workplace – that is my topic area, but he is trying to get back upright and he has to fight workers' comp every step of the way. It is shameful and it is shocking. If I worked over there I would likely be embarrassed because, God forbid – and I appreciate the programs they do. They talked about the safety programs to teach kids. We need them, because God forbid if you end up on workers' comp. I tell you what, God forbid.

Anyways, going back to the Burgeo road that he almost died on, I have asked the minister, and the mayor has asked the minister, to come down and look at the roads. This is the second time we have had a road collapse in the last two years. We are lucky no one has died.

I have asked the minister – now I appreciate the fact that the minister is busy. I get that, I know that. I will give his department credit for the work they did when the road collapsed prior to Christmas and getting people back and forth. They did their best. The problem is if you are from Burgeo, or if you go to Burgeo, you do not know when the next one is going to happen. It is scary that the department has not come down yet to inspect the other culverts in the road to see if they are possibly going to collapse.

I look forward to that road being fixed. It is not right now, there is still nothing done. I hope to

see it done this summer season. We will see what happens. Let alone the fact that the road is in a deplorable condition because this government refuses to do anything for that road because, I do not know, maybe they are the wrong colour down there. Maybe they vote the wrong way. I do not know how they grade the roads. I do not know.

Some members on the other side want to talk about it. Well, I invite you to come down and drive the road. Come on down. I will take you for a tour and we will go past the culverts that are collapsing. If you want to keep talking about it, get up and talk about it.

Now, they are talking about the roads. Some of them do not have to worry because their roads are fine, because they get an investment in their roads. They get that investment.

I would like to see some investment in that road this year. I would like to know the road is safe for the people who travel to and from Burgeo, and Ramea, and Grey River, and François. They would like to know the road is safe and that it is not going to collapse under them and get injured. It is real, it has happened, and if you do not do something about it, it is going to happen again. So please do not stand there and tell me I am not talking about something that is important and criticize me for criticizing the state of the road. It is horrible.

I could talk about the tourism industry. Again, I love the ads the department puts out. They are great ads. We all love them, but the problem is that tourists like to travel places but it is hard to travel there when the road is not fit to go on. When you see contests out there all across Atlantic Canada talking about the worst roads, so you are making a decision, well, where am I going to travel? Let's go to Burgeo. No, I am not going to bring my camper down there to beautiful Sandbanks Park because I am going to tear the guts out of it driving it down there. They are not going.

This is one of the few growth areas that rural Newfoundland and Labrador has, we know it is a growth area, but this government does nothing to help promote it. They are stifling it, and it is unfortunate because they have so much there. You have the Island of Ramea, it is gorgeous,

but to get there you have to take that road. I guess they are in the wrong spot. It is funny actually, and I have a letter sent off.

I am going to talk about Route 470. I do not want to leave out my constituents who live in Margaree, Fox Roost, Isle aux Mort, Burnt Island, Rose Blanche, Harbour Le Cou, Diamond Cove, and La Poile who have to travel Route 470. Now their road is a bit better because it has not collapsed, but it still has not seen any significant work in some time. Last year, actually, they got a bit of work, and it was only because they threatened to pull the school buses off because it was not fit to go on. If I am wrong, we could see a classification – it is like capital works, which I will probably get into after. Last year, for instance, the Town of Port aux Basques got a goose egg. They got shut out and got nothing for capital works. The first time in years, they told me, first time in years.

So I say, look, I thought that there was a grading done and we follow that grading to see who should get what and when they should get it. I would like to see that. I think the community would like to see that, but last year Port aux Basques got nothing, not a thing.

We continue past Port aux Basques, which is the main point of rubber tire traffic entering into this Province through Marine Atlantic – again, another area where this government fails to speak. Oh, Marine Atlantic is federal; well let's leave that to them. Let's leave that to the feds to take care of that. It does not affect us. That is a topic for another day. I do not have enough time to talk about it all, unfortunately.

You go down that road, Route 470, they have not had any significant work either. In fact, we showed a picture yesterday. The Member for St. John's South showed a picture of two residents of Rose Blanche canoeing in a pothole in the community. There is actual photo evidence of it. It is funny, because it is laughable. This community has not seen the funds to fix it, because I guess they are just not important enough.

I find it hard every time I hear members talk about the investment in the communities when I literally have not seen any investment in those communities. That is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker.

I see I have a tiny little bit of time left, so what I would like to end off with is – and I will get at least one more opportunity to speak to this Budget. Look, right now, there has been a lot of promises made. This Budget continues to make promises, as the Budget before did, and the Budget before did, and the Budget before did, but there has been no delivery on those promises to a lot of people.

That is unfortunate, and it is called a breach of trust – a broken promise is a breach of trust. Right now, the people of the Province, especially in my district, they say that there is a breach of trust here, and they are not going to believe any more promises that this government wants to make.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Littlejohn): The hon. the Member for Exploits.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is always a pleasure to get up and represent the wonderful District of Exploits and the people of Exploits and to be able to speak on the Budget. You can tell the commitment over on this side. You just look at the Members for Mount Pearl North and Harbour Main. They would certainly rather spend their birthday here than anywhere else, so Happy Birthday to both.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: I use the word commitment, because we are committed. As our Budget states, it is a balanced approach and it is all about choices.

When the Opposition and the Third Party get up, they will always come out with information that is not exactly correct. Hopefully, as we go along, we can get the opportunity to correct them; but, they come up with so much of it, it is a job to correct them half of the time because when you do tell them the truth, they still get it wrong.

I will try my best in twenty minutes, which is not going to be very long, to get through some of the items because we do have a commitment to seniors. We do have a commitment to infrastructure. We do have a commitment to education. That is what our Budget states, Mr. Speaker.

There were several things that I wanted to get into right away but because the Opposition gets up – and even during Question Period the Member for St. John's East made a statement that was incorrect, but I will straighten that out as I go along and hopefully he will understand it, as the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

Just let me say that from 2008 to 2014, the provincial government has invested \$820 million in more than 1,200 waste water, recreational, and municipal infrastructure projects; \$184 million has been invested in water-related projects since 2008, including the ongoing construction and commissioning of twenty-five portable water dispensing units.

Budget 2015, Mr. Speaker, will build on this progress. The reason I mention that now and I wanted to get into it right away – and there will be times that the Opposition will use waste, and that is unfortunate because I would certainly like for them to go out in the District of Exploits and tell them that the money they got for the schools, roads, and municipal infrastructure was a waste.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Burgeo – La Poile got up and he started talking about roads. I think that his party or his party members represented that district when they were in power and have been representing them for the past number of years. Just to show a comparison, when I got elected in 2005, which was ten years ago – I missed the first Budget. We have not gotten our allowance for this year, so in eight years for roadwork – I have been there ten. Ten years prior to that, the Member for Exploits at that time, who was a Liberal member and also the Premier of the day, invested \$2.5 million in roadwork. Since I have been there, we have invested \$22 million in roadwork in eight years.

There is no doubt that under the leadership that we had, the revenues were good, and we were happy to get it. Did we say no, we do not want it? Of course we did not. We wanted the

district to be brought up to standard. That is what we were trying to do.

Mr. Speaker, I just spoke about investment in municipal water and infrastructure. In 2005, when I sat down with the Minister of Municipal Affairs –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. FORSEY: Yes, they do not want to hear all the good stuff. They will get up and they will just say the things that are not correct, I say, Mr. Speaker. That is what they will do. They will get up there and they will try to mislead the people of the Province, but that is not going to happen. The people of the Province are more intelligent than that.

Out in the District of Exploits, they know what we have done. They know what we received. They know where we are right now. They know that we have choices to make and they are hoping that we make some good choices. That is why we are out there and we are explaining the choices that we made. Hopefully, it is going to resonate with the people.

Mr. Speaker, in 2005 – actually 2006 because like I said I missed the Budget in 2005; I could not believe it. When I got the requests from the communities, just in the District of Exploits, it was \$35 million worth of requests. I do not know what the former Administration did when they were there because they represented the district for fifteen years.

They just do not seem to want to listen. They do not understand the facts. They do not understand why the money was invested. The money was invested because we had an infrastructure deficit. We were in a very poor condition. This year, when I looked at the requests from the municipalities out there, the request this year was less than 10 per cent of what it was ten years ago.

That is an investment in infrastructure that communities like the Town of Northern Arm, or the Town of Peterview, or the Town of Bishop's Falls, or Cottrell's Cove, or Point of Bay, or Leading Tickles, or Phillips Head – these people

needed their water lines. They needed it done; they need upgrades, Mr. Speaker.

As well, Bishop's Falls, this year we are completing or trying to complete a \$14 million sewage treatment system in the Town of Bishop's Falls. We will have the best – I see the Minister of Municipal Affairs is looking at me there and I hope he is still with me after I sit down too because we need to finish that project. We do have one of the best salmon recreational fishing rivers in North America in the Exploits River, and we want to make sure that it is pristine and we want to make sure that we can use it for recreation and whatever else that is going to attract tourism in the area.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: Mr. Speaker, in Budget 2013 our commitment to completing a review of provincial-municipal fiscal framework within two years, under the Member for Gander when he started this work with MNL – well, it is now two years later and we have delivered on that commitment.

Our Premier has announced the new Community Sustainability Partnership will provide an additional investment of \$46 million over the next three years to assist communities in ensuring they can provide quality services to the residents and businesses of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: Now, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of information there, but I probably will not get to all of it.

What was the response from MNL, Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador? Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador have applauded the commitment of our government. Their president has said that this Budget finally set in motion a long-term plan towards sustainable revenue that will allow municipalities to meet demands such as drinking water, waste water, and fire services. That is from the President of MNL.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I also mentioned fire services. When the Member for St. John's –

because I am not going to leave out the Third Party either. When the Member for St. John's East – maybe it is because he got shaved yesterday with the Minister of Health and maybe he lost a few things while he was doing it. He got up to say that we cut the budget for fire and emergency equipment. He got up and that is what he said. Now he is going to get up and say that it is different.

MR. MURPHY: A point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

A point of order, the hon. the Member for St. John's East.

MR. MURPHY: Just to correct the Member for Exploits. I said there was a cut in Emergency Services, 6.1.03 in the Budget, page 18.20, the monies amount goes from \$2.7 million to \$646,000. It is on the record.

MR. SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

The hon. the Member for Exploits.

MR. FORSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that.

Now, anybody can have this document I have here.

AN HON. MEMBER: Table it.

MR. FORSEY: Not a problem. It is from the fire chiefs association of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Member for St. John's East and anybody else over there can say that we are not doing the right thing. Well, listen to this, he says – the name is Vince MacKenzie by the way, if you do not know; he is a friend of mine from Central Newfoundland – “The provincial budget came down today and I am pleased that there were no cuts to the fire service” – I remind the Member for St. John's East. “Funding for fire trucks and equipment remained at last year's record high level of over \$5 million.”

MR. J. BENNETT: That is because it is an election year.

MR. FORSEY: It was not an election year last year, I say to the Member for St. Barbe. They still seem to heckle and they do a lot of smiling over there. I guess they do not take the operations of the Province very serious, Mr. Speaker, because everything is a joke to them. Everything they have to laugh at or heckle at. That is all they seem to do over there. I have seen parties being arrogant before, but I think this takes the cake.

“This is the second year in a row that this funding is in place over the core funding of 1.6 million. That means there will be a continued effort to upgrade fire equipment in the province.”

Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for firefighters, volunteer firefighters especially, and most of our members on this side do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: We do. As a matter of fact, last Saturday night I did spend time with the volunteer fire department of Peterview. It was their fiftieth anniversary. Fifty years of providing protection to the community and the surrounding area. They need equipment like this so they can do their job, Mr. Speaker.

Have we done the right things? I believe we did. Have we investment more than probably we should have? Maybe we have, but the cause and the need was there. We wanted to make sure they had the services and the equipment to do it.

He goes on to say: “Our NL Fire Services Association has worked hard over the years to lobby for increases” – and they have; I talked to Vince many times about it. He has turned up to Budget consultations and I have seen him there. He was very consistent in what he was doing because he is one of the main supporters of fire services. “... in the cost shared program and we are pleased that the funding was held even through this tough budget.”

Was it a tough Budget? Yes, it was. Of course it was a tough Budget, but it is all about choices. Under the leadership of our Premier, he came up with some new ways to move forward.

MR. RUSSELL: Strike a balance.

MR. FORSEY: Strike a balance, absolutely, I say to the Member for Lake Melville and Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs. Strike a balance; that is what this is all about. It is all about the approach and the choices, Mr. Speaker. Our leader is doing this and doing it very well.

“Grants for our Learn Not To Burn Program and the association’s operating grant were maintained as well. Again, I am pleased with the result of this year’s budget announcements and thank government for continued support to fire services.”

The association will continue to work further. There is still much work to be done around the areas of training and regionalization. That was another thing that was brought into the Budget as well, Mr. Speaker, to set up to work with the communities, to work and look at regionalization. We have been doing it out in Central Newfoundland.

Right now in our district and in Grand Falls-Windsor, in our communities, we share services now. When one community needs a backup for fire services, all they have to do is call their neighbour next door and they got it. We share the same water services, we share the same waste disposal, we share a lot of services, and that is the way to go. This is what he is saying here. They do a lot of training today. Why? Because we support them in it, because we need them, and they offer their best.

So they say: We ask for more protection officers in the Province to support fire departments. Given this year’s deficit Budget, the job cuts, we have to wait further to come to fruition. So he was not sure, but this year’s Budget maintains current levels. We are thankful for that. There you go. He is thankful for this year’s Budget and what we did last year and what we did this year, Mr. Speaker.

Did we do wrong by doing that? I do not think so. If you leave it to the Opposition over there, they get up, one wants to cut, one wants to sharpen their pencil. I was listening to her on a talk show the other day, the Member for Virginia Waters. The host said: What are you going to do? Well, we are going to repeal the 2

per cent, but we are going to sharpen our pencils because we need to cut down, basically.

Now, they are sharpening their pencils, but they are not telling us where they are going to start cutting, making all those little marks and crossing people out and –

AN HON. MEMBER: Cutting services.

MR. FORSEY: – cutting services, but they are going to do it. That is the scary part; they are going to do it.

Now, the other way is their leader is not sure. He figures they should borrow more and go more and more and more in debt, but they cannot seem to be onside on that and they do not have a plan to do so. I guess they just have different opinions, Mr. Speaker. That is basically where they are.

Mr. Speaker, when I started I said that we have made a commitment to seniors and age-friendly communities; investing in inclusive communities and age-friendly communities. Budget 2015, and I will just name a couple, approximately \$180 million in the Provincial Home Support Program; \$42.1 million in Low Income Seniors Tax Benefit.

That seniors' tax benefit comes out every fall, and it is up to \$1,059. Did we cut it? No, we did not. We did not cut it because we believe in seniors. That is why our leader formed a department responsible for seniors. I think our minister is doing a great job and he is a good advocate. He is a good advocate for the seniors of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER: He is a senior himself.

MR. FORSEY: He is getting there himself, so there you go.

Mr. Speaker, we have had people out there saying, because they do not listen – again, they do not listen – they will always say something but they will always say something that is not right.

I heard the other day that one of the members over there got up and said: government over there, they love to hear themselves talk. That is what he said. Not any more than they do, Mr. Speaker, but the only thing is when we talk we have something to say. That is the difference.

AN HON. MEMBER: We speak from actions.

MR. FORSEY: Yes, we can speak from actions, more than just words, Mr. Speaker.

To aid active, healthy living, \$24.9 million to sport and recreational infrastructure projects, bringing the total investment since 2004 to \$169.6 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. FORSEY: Is there a problem over there, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, I know you have not said order very much because there is no noise on this side, I am able to control myself, but on the other side it is not very quiet. It is too bad they do not have something to say when they get up. They do have something to say because they do like to hear themselves talk, but it is all words and no action.

Mr. Speaker, \$8.8 million under the Home Repair Program – getting back to the Home Heating Rebate Program, that is still in place. We kept that in place. Some people said, oh, that is cancelled. Well, it is not cancelled. That is not cancelled, I say to the people out in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and to the seniors. That is not cancelled.

We also moved the GST rebate that you can get, GST credit, from \$40 to \$300. Not only did we raise the income of it but we also raised the income of the –

MS PERRY: Threshold.

MR. FORSEY: Threshold, thank you very much. Every now and then you are looking for a word, and I thank the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

We went from \$15,000 to \$30,000. Anyone with a \$30,000 income or less, can now avail of

that \$300; \$5.4 million to create new affordable housing units through the investment in Affordable Housing Program.

I see my time is just about up. I am sure I will get another chance, and I thank you very much for the opportunity.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the Budget this year. I am going to start on questions that I asked this week in the House of Assembly because this Province has gone through the wealthiest period, the wealthiest decade we have ever witnessed, and even though we have had the wealthiest decade this Province has ever witnessed, the Province, the provincial government, the PC Government has failed to ensure that during that wealthy period that they put a little bit of money aside to ensure that the Province was able to sustain a drop in oil prices.

We knew there was a drop in oil production. We knew that oil production was slowing down. That was well documented. It was well known. Government knew it, the economists knew it, the Auditor General knew it. The Auditor General talked about it in 2006 and gave a warning to government at that particular time that government cannot put all of its eggs in the oil basket, but unfortunately that is what happened, Mr. Speaker.

Government failed to ensure that not only at the time were they living within their means because they continued to let the deficit grow and grow, even though we had great wealth, even though they knew oil production was going to slow and that the prices of oil were volatile. In fact, the proof of that was just a couple of years ago when Premier Dunderdale, at that time, predicted \$124 a barrel of oil on an annual basis. That was the average on an annual basis. Most people, at that particular time, said that number was absolutely out to lunch. They did not achieve the \$124 on an annual basis. I am not

even sure if they broke \$124 a barrel that year; nevertheless, they certainly did not come anywhere near \$124 on an annual basis.

Instead of using oil royalties to do one-time spending, if you need to fix a building, repair a school, build a hospital, all right, we will put money in the Budget on a one-time basis this year out of the oil royalties, but not add it to the Budget and allow the Budget to continue to balloon. In 2003, the Budget of this Province was, I think, \$4.3 billion. This year, Mr. Speaker, it is over \$8 billion, closer to \$9 billion.

We have essentially, as a Province, doubled our annual Budget, which government knew. The economists, the Auditor General, everybody knew that would not be sustainable once oil production started to slow, but that is what government did.

The questions that I asked this week, Mr. Speaker, were about the roads in the Province. Government continuously stand and they boast – and I will talk a little bit about that through my comments during the twenty minutes that I have to speak to the Budget; but, Mr. Speaker, government continuously stand and talk about how good this is, how good that is, how good a job they are doing in different areas.

Mr. Speaker, on roads alone – and we have had the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Transportation before that, and the Premier say what a fantastic job they were doing on roads in this Province. We know that the people of Nippers Harbour stood in protest because of the condition of their roads. They asked government to either relocate them or repair their road, do one or the other, but their pleas to government, their calls to government went unheard.

In Conche their road is full of potholes. In fact, they are that big they call them craters on the Great Northern Peninsula. They have great potholes, Mr. Speaker. We know that Placentia, Cape St. Mary's, and Argentia, those areas have been complaining for years. We have seen pictures in the paper. We have heard people complain. We have heard calls to the Open Line shows. Those calls, for a large part, have gone unanswered.

We know in the paper this week there was a story about the road from Charlottetown to Port Hope Simpson where people were complaining there was nothing left on the road to grade. There were ruts in the road and there was nothing left to grade. The road is atrocious. It is absolutely deplorable.

We talked about Rose Blanche and the fact that in Rose Blanche people canoed in the pothole two years ago as a demonstration to try and get attention to the fact they needed the road done. They have been asking for repairs for years prior to that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. OSBORNE: They canoed in the pothole when there was enough water in that pothole to put a canoe in it. In the picture you can see the canoe in the pothole and a vehicle driving through the pothole as well. It is still there. It is still not repaired.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen calls from the people of Port aux Basques, from Bristol's Hope, Freshwater, and Riverhead. We have received calls from all of these communities every time government talks about how great the roads are. I have talked about the road from York Harbour to Lark Harbour and how people had a storm there a couple of years ago and storm damage. They are still waiting on repairs to that. I received calls from people in Duntara. We have received calls from people around the Province, from all areas of the Province. We have received several calls. Continuously, we receive calls from around the Province.

Mr. Speaker, just since the Budget of last week – it is one week ago today that the Budget was brought down. I just want to look at some of the newspaper articles since the Budget was brought down.

There is no money for a LGBT Office, Mr. Speaker. There was an editorial in the paper the same day by Russell Wangersky who talked about: Economist Wade Locke made the point. So did Vic Young, when he was head of the Royal Commission on our place in Canada. Successive auditors general made the point

repeatedly in their reports having said that we cannot put all of our financial eggs in the oil basket because the bottom could drop out of it.

He talks about how Auditor General John Noseworthy in 2006 said, “However, it has to be recognized that oil revenues are volatile and oil is a non-renewable resource with a limited life. While it is encouraging that government has made some progress regarding past annual deficits, prudent fiscal management and spending within its means has to remain a priority for government if it is to make progress in improving the province’s financial position.” Russell Wangersky says of government: “They obviously got right on that”, because they did not.

From the same day in the media, Mr. Speaker, the headline: “Are we tumbling into a bottomless pit?” It talks about how in March 2010, Tom Marshall was reflecting on the diminishing returns of oil. He had a chart up that showed mineral production in the Province was hitting a wall. He was Finance Minister at that time. He said that, “The natural production, there was a big decline that started this year and it is going to continue.”

He said that, “The government has been perfectly aware all along that oil wealth is limited and unpredictable, that it is non-renewable.

“Marshall admitted that the good times were coming to an end – or at least that things would never be quite as good as they were”

That was in 2010, Mr. Speaker. We are now looking at the 2015 Budget. So government will say it was unpredictable, it was out of our control. We could not control what happened with oil prices, but they predicted it in 2010. The Auditor General predicted it in 2006, but this year the Finance Minister stood – it was out of our control. We could not control it. They had to borrow \$2 billion. It is a billion dollar deficit.

They are going to raise the HST which is absolutely a job killer. It will absolutely slow the economy. Now government predicts it will only slow the economy by half a percentage in the GDP. At least they are acknowledging that

it will slow the economy. It will slow the economy. That is the reality. It will kill jobs, and that is the reality.

Mr. Speaker, government says it is out of their control. It was not out of their control. They knew it all along. They could have lived within their means. They could have put money into a heritage fund like Alberta did so that when the bottom fell out of oil prices, or oil production slowed down, they would be able to continue to provide the services that they say people have become accustomed to.

Mr. Speaker, we look at the Budget this year and the fact that government projected, I think it was 1,400-and-some-odd jobs were going to be eliminated through attrition. Well they did not tell the whole truth. They did not reveal all the numbers on Budget day because we have since found out that through the health boards there are more cuts. We have since found that out, almost another 300.

Then on top of that, a couple of days ago when our leader during Question Period asked: Well is that it, are there any more? You obviously were not forthright in telling the people that it was not just 1,400, it is closer to 1,800. We found out through a little bit of digging, a little bit of question asking, but we found out. Are there any more than that? The Premier waltzes out to the scrum area, stands before the cameras and says yes, there could be more. Well how many? We are not prepared to say yet. We cannot tell you that yet. We are still working on it.

Mr. Speaker, you know something. That has been a pattern of this government where they will only tell you a little bit and you have to figure out the rest. Now they tried under Bill 29 a couple of years ago. They tried under Bill 29 to ensure that the media would not be able to dig, that the Opposition or the Third Party would not be able to dig, and that the general public would not be able to dig to find out what was not being told as the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Even Bill 29, even though it was told again and again that it was not a good piece of legislation – under public pressure, pressure from the Opposition, and pressure from the media – they finally repealed Bill 29, Mr. Speaker, but at a cost of a million dollars to the taxpayers of this Province.

I want to go back to the fact that they will talk – and I have reams of statements or articles from the media. I want to go back and talk about an announcement that was made the day before Budget day last week, last Wednesday, just to give an indication of exactly how government operates. I have already talked about the fact that on Budget day there was 1,420 or 1,430 jobs going to be cut, and now we find out that it is 1,800-plus because we still do not have all the figures.

We know that on Wednesday of last week municipalities were all brought into a room. They were all told of a new fiscal arrangement that government was going to make with municipalities. The municipalities all cheered. It was great news. Less than twenty-four hours later, Mr. Speaker, after the municipalities all gave their statements in the media, rah, rah, rah, what a great announcement.

Less than twenty-four hours later, Mr. Speaker, we had some folks from different municipalities saying that they were absolutely shocked to find out that the HST was going to go up because that took away some of the great news they got the day before. No doubt there is still benefit in the announcement that was made the day before, but the point is the government opposite, the PC government, will only give you some of the story. They will only give you some of the details. When you dig and find out the rest and put all the pieces of the puzzle together to get the full picture, you realize that they only gave you half the goods. I will say that they only give you the half the goods because the rest of it was not so good at all. What had to be dug out was not so good at all.

I will continue on with some of the media reports again from May 4, “Mayor concerned about ferry service.” Another story, “Co-operation needed to find ferry service solutions.” Mr. Speaker: residents voting for possible relocation, and that is in the community of McCallum. By the way, I got a call from somebody in that community complaining about their roads as well, oddly enough.

Talking about P3s, Mr. Speaker, and people complaining about P3s: The “Privatization of Health Care” – now, this is all from the same day, May 4, one day, May 4, and I have every

day. I took collections of different media stories every day since the Budget. “Privatization of Health Care” – people complaining about the privatization of health care. Now, opposite, they will tell you what a great position government is in, what a great position the Province is in. No need to complain, Mr. Speaker. It is only the Opposition who are complaining. Well, we did not write these stories; we did not write these headlines. These are people around the Province.

Food bank in Labrador West is finding it hard to keep the shelves stocked, Mr. Speaker, another story from May 4. The Budget, “Devastating to Small Schools,” another headline. “A lot of frustration” – that comes from a Mr. Dinn talking about the cuts in Labrador to education. “RFP review ongoing: Transportation and Works” – and that story was also on May 4, and that was as a result of complaints in Muskrat Falls that the protocol is not being followed for job hiring in Muskrat Falls – but there is nothing to complain about.

Here we go, here is a story, Mr. Speaker, about the Trans-Labrador Highway: Large ruts in the Trans-Labrador Highway – complaining – yet the roads are great, all the roads are great. That is from May 4 as well. This is the story I was talking about: “... no topping left on the road to grade.” That is from Cartwright to Port Hope Simpson –

MS DEMPSTER: Charlottetown.

MR. OSBORNE: Charlottetown, sorry, to Port Hope Simpson.

Another story: “Businesses will suffer from HST hike” These are just the headlines, Mr. Speaker, all the details are in the stories, but government paints a very rosy picture. That is not what we are reading in the headlines. Again, that is a headline from May 4.

MR. WISEMAN: Don Mills (inaudible).

MR. OSBORNE: No, we have not gotten to Don Mills yet, I say to the Finance Minister. We have not gotten to Don Mills yet.

Mr. Speaker, broken equipment delays breast biopsy, again from May 4. There is no backup

plan in place. MUN staring down \$20 million in cuts – everything is rosy; the Minister of Finance will try to tell you everything is rosy. I do not think so; I do not think it is. LGBT advocates disappointed with the lack of movement of inclusion within the provincial Budget.

Mr. Speaker, I see that you are asking me to wind things up here. I have lots more to say on the Budget and I will get to those. I have media stories from every day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Again today it is a pleasure to get up here to represent the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis. I know my colleague for Exploits wanted to wish a couple of birthday greetings today but I do too, to my colleague here on the side of me and to the gentleman down there where the light is shining off his head and there is kind of a glare coming up this way. Happy birthday to both of you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: I congratulate the two hon. members in here for doing what they did yesterday in taking the Shave for the Brave. It is a great cause and it is great to see that you do that stuff, a really good job out there to do that stuff. I really appreciate it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I am going to get up here today and I am going to try to be positive. There is a lot to be positive about. We live in a great country, we live in a great Province, and I live in a great community. I try to do the best I can, but I know the poor Member for Burgeo – La Poile yesterday with his cufflinks – I notice he does not have them on

today – he is not very positive today. He is in a bit of a sad mood, but that is another story altogether. I will not go there at all.

Mr. Speaker, we are here today and we are talking about the Budget. The Budget is an interesting thing because what is going to happen and what you will see in the next couple of weeks is a difference of opinions. People will have a different opinion and that side will have one opinion and we will have another opinion. I am not saying who is right and wrong, but it is a different way of putting out the perspective of how we see things actually are.

I have two children and I look at a budget – they have households. I have one son who is trying to build a house now and I have another daughter who just built a house a little while ago. You sit down and you talk to them, like my father did with me.

We realize that, listen here, there is so much money to be spent and you have to spend it the best way you can. Your wishes are not always what you – you can wish for what you want, but you can only afford to spend so much, and that is so important. It is no different with government; it is no different with businesses. I am sure there are businesses in the Province, when they do up their budgets they have a wish list that is a mile long, and it is the same thing in here.

In my district, for example, I have all kinds of things that I would like to see done, and hope to get done. I would like to have everything perfect. Over the last number of years I have to say we did pretty good, but there are still a lot of things to be done, just like there are in all other districts.

I look at today, and I know the situation government finds itself in today is a little different than what I see happening in this neck of the woods, in the Northeast Avalon. I drive down Torbay Road in the evenings and I see new buildings, a big new Canadian Tire. I think it is the biggest Canadian Tire store in Eastern Canada that is down there now; if you go down towards Stavanger Drive area, all these new businesses there.

In my district, yes, there is good growth. I was in the garage the other day and a young fellow came by the house and told me that he is planning on starting his house this year too. Himself and his girlfriend, both of them are working. He is a fisherman, actually. He is doing very well with the fishery. I am going to talk a little bit about the fishery later on. His girlfriend has a good job, she is an engineer. They are planning on building their house. I was talking to him about what kind of house they are going to build and things like that, but they have a budget. They realize that while they are doing good they have to budget their money properly. That is what we are doing, and that is what we are trying to do.

We can have all different ways, and people have different ideas of how to spend money, how to do it and what we should do, what we should spend it on, and what we should not spend it on. Today I am just going to touch base on what we have done. We have made a choice, and that is what governments have to do. You have choices to make and you make choices.

Right now with revenues that we have seen, and people on the other side will say, oh, you should have known it was going to drop down to \$45 a barrel. You should have known this. This is common knowledge. Everyone out there knew it. I do not think so.

I look around at what is happening in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the rest of Canada, I do not think everybody realized there was going to be a drop in oil prices, and that is a drop in revenue – except probably George Murphy, now he would probably know. I am sorry, the Member for St. John's East.

When things happen like that you have to make adjustments, and we are making adjustments along the way. There are things we have to do. Do you know what? Our spending is still up there. We are still spending \$8.1 billion on the needs. There are a lot of good things we are doing, and that is what I want to talk about today, the good things that we are doing in this Province.

We have a plan; there is a plan in place. I have listened to the Opposition. I listened to their plan. I will talk a little bit about that later on,

the difference between them and the difference between us. In your life you will always find that there are ups and downs.

In 2002-2003, when we came into government – I was not a part of this government then, but it was a pretty rough time for the Province, the finances of the Province. There was talk of bankruptcy and everything else like that. We got through that. We made a plan. There was a plan that went forward and that plan worked out. That came true. Oil prices went up and everything was good. We started spending money on infrastructure, to put money back into schools and roads and hospitals and everything else. That is what you have to do.

If we look at what happened in 2008 and the economy down in the United States with the housing and everything else, it just dropped off. It went boom, down like that, but we had a plan then also. We invested in infrastructure. I would say out of all the provinces in Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador came out way ahead of everyone else because there was a plan in place.

Our minister put toward a plan the other day, and this is the plan we have for five years to make sure that we stay where we are. While there are some bumps in the road here in government and with the revenues we have, I believe that outside – I will talk a little bit now about the fishery. I understand because I know a bit about the fishery. I have a brother who is involved in it. I have a lot of friends who are involved in the fishery.

Who thought when the moratorium came in that we would have a fishery like we have today? Our fishermen – and I know the members who talked about it here, that most fishermen today are doing really, really well. They are doing well because the crab is doing well. Now there are some parts of the Province where the crab is not so good. I talked to a fisherman the other night who told me he was off from using it. He went out and hauled 300 pots and never got what they normally get out in that area.

I know down my way, they went out the other day and normally where they get 7,000 or 8,000 pounds, they came in with 17,000 or 18,000 pounds. The fishermen are doing well. That is a

part of our economy that people did not realize was going to do as good as what it is doing.

These people are doing well. That is great to see, because no one believed the fishery would ever come back to where it was in the heyday of the cod fishery, because the cod fishery was huge. It was huge for us. My family owned a trucking company. We used to truck cod out of Torbay, Flatrock, Pouch Cove, Bauline, Portugal Cove, and St. John's. So we used to truck millions of pounds of cod. I think one year it was 22 million, and we used to truck a lot of capelin.

When the cod moratorium came in everybody thought the fishery was gone, but do you know what? That is the type of people we are. We went to somewhere else. We went into the crab, and that is what Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are all about.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: We will adjust to the times, when times are good and times are bad. We will make adjustments and make sure that we get that level play and everybody's life is good because we live in a great Province.

Just a little bit on the fishery. It is great to see that our fishermen are doing good because they are the heart and soul. I look at the cod fishery – I love going out jigging cod. I love it. I love getting out to the food fishery. I have noticed in the last couple of years that it is unbelievable. One drift and you have your fifteen fish and you are in out of there. The size of the fish is after growing and it is really good. Hopefully, we can make adjustments.

I know in this Budget there is some money there for marketing. I think that is where we have to be. When our cod fishery does come back – and it is important that our cod fishery does come back because it is going to be important for rural Newfoundland and Labrador, it is going to be really important for rural Newfoundland and Labrador, it will keep people in their communities – we have to make sure that we have a plan. That is the big thing; make sure we have a plan in place.

What happened in the 1970s and 1980s with our cod cannot happen again in the future because people want quality. You have to make sure that – I can remember when we used to be down we would prong the fish out of the boat, prong the fish up on the wharf, prong the fish in the back of the truck, and there was no ice on it. By the time it got up to the fish plant it was almost like soup. We cannot be in that stage anymore. That is a plan that has to be made in the fishery. That is where we are today with our Budget, we have to make a plan.

Mr. Speaker, I got off track a little bit. I did not want to talk that much about that. I want to talk about our public servants. I go over in the department of – hardworking department, a lot of good people in the Department of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development. I watch every day people coming in and out of the office. I was on the phone the other day in the parking lot and I was watching all the young people coming in and out in the morning, coming out of our building.

People may say listen here, the public service is too big. It is way too big; you have to do something about the public service. It is way too big. The plan we have in place is not to eliminate all the young people. If we had massive layoffs in our public service, like some people are after suggesting, who would get laid off? It would be the people who are just getting hired.

Mr. Speaker, they are the people we have to make sure that we keep. Through attrition, as people in the next – I think there are 46,000 employees in our public service. Through the next number of years there are going to be I think 9,600 up for retirement. If we have to reduce our public service, the way to do it is to make sure that we keep our young people in.

The plan that we have in place, the plan that the minister put forward – and it seems to me that it is a great plan – for every ten who do retire, we are going to make sure that eight comes back. So there definitely will be two who will not be replaced. Through this plan, we are going to keep the people who we should be keeping. We are going to keep the young people working. We are going to keep the young people.

If you go with a layoff or anything in the public service, the first ones to get cut are the young people. These are young people, like I just spoke about a little while ago, who are starting homes, who are hoping to start a family in the next couple of years. How devastating would that be for a young person to come in here after Budget day and told okay, we are going to cut 400 jobs here and we are going to cut 400 jobs there. Who is going to feel it? They are the ones going to feel it. Their plan probably is reduce the public service, get rid of all these young people. That is not our plan; we are going to keep our young people working because they are our biggest asset.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, again, I have listened to members over the way and they talk about the Auditor General, the Auditor General says yes, our public service is too big; but I believe that the plan that the minister and our Premier put in place, with attrition, is the way to go. It is the way to go because we are going to keep the biggest resource, and we are not going to impact – the impact that comes with massive layoffs and stuff like this is huge because it affects the whole economy, it affects all our communities, when young people are laid off.

I spoke to a gentleman last night and we were talking about the same thing. He said this and that, and I explained to him why I felt attrition was the way to go. He said: I never even thought of it like that. I did not realize that; that is true.

The people who are working in our public service – I went to a retirement the other day over in a department, a lady retired after thirty-seven years. She put her time in, thirty-seven years. I was talking to some other people that they are going within the next year or so or next two years. That is great to see that they are going to get their retirement and everything else, but do you know what? They look forward to going and they are going to go but at least the young person – there were young people there that day and they have a whole future ahead of them, and that is the important thing. That is why this plan is a great plan.

I love the plan that we are doing with public service because we all agree – the Auditor General is after telling us it is way too big and everything else. We agree with that, there is no doubt about it, and we have to find efficiencies to make sure that we run everything. It would be a bad move, a brutal move, to do that to young people in this Province.

So this is a plan we have – and today, I look back and I look at my phone sometimes and my daughter and son are around and I will hand it to them to do something for me. Because our young people today are really educated, they are smart, they are great when it comes to technologies, and they know all the new technologies and everything else. I look at the young Pages here today; I bet you they could teach me a lot on how to run my BlackBerry or get on and do this or whatever because that is what they do today. The information that they could find, they would find it a hundred times faster than what I will ever find it. It is important that we keep young in work and it is important that we show them that we appreciate everything that they do.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I also want to talk – I know the hon. member across the way for St. John's South talked about municipalities and the money that we gave to municipalities last week. It is very important because I am a former Mayor of the Town of Flatrock. Do you know what? When people got money, like towns got money, it shows that if there is money there people become interested because you can attract more people to run for councils and stuff like that. It is a hard time when municipalities are out there fighting for every cent and people say what am I going to do that for, but when they see what we have done last week in putting money back into municipalities – I am just going to give you an example of some of the towns in my district.

A town like Pouch Cove, in three years' time, they are going to get an additional \$96,000, and that is huge; \$96,000 is what that town is going to get. That is over and above their municipal capital operating grant from what it is now. That gives that town the ability – they have some issues.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. K. PARSONS: They do not want to do that at all.

Do you know what that does, Mr. Speaker? They can go look now and say okay, when we do our budget in three years' time we are hoping that we will get an increase because most towns in the Province, the only income that they have is through residential taxes. You do not want to be charging your mill rates up so high – but everybody has a want.

It is like what is across the way, Oppositions, they have a want; we have a want in our district for our people, and there is only so much money to go around. That is why we have budgets. That is why we do budgets like we do. Isn't this a great thing to do for our towns because what it is doing, it will encourage people to run – and these are volunteers, by the way. They get up and volunteer because they can see that they can make a difference in their towns.

I spoke to all of the mayors in my district and they were all happy with this. They said it is a great move; this is fantastic. Also, at the announcement the minister spoke about some things that towns can do to offset costs to other towns. In my district there are towns that share services and that is a great thing to do; fire services are shared by all of the towns in the area. That is what you have to do because as much as we would all want to have six or seven fire departments, sometimes you just cannot afford it. This is huge and it is nice to see.

I know the minister encouraged that that day and also the President of MNL said this is the way we have to go, and it is. It is being smart with our money and stuff like that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit too because I know I am getting down there and I really want to talk about education. Education to me is important because it is what we need to do; we need to make sure that everybody in this Province gets the best possible education they can have.

Do you know what would have been an easy thing to do in this Budget? It would have been: Listen, we put a tuition freeze in there for this number of years so look, we just cannot afford it anymore. We did not do that, because we value

our students. We value making sure that they get the best possible education. I am sure come Budget time every year that students are concerned about it, and they are always concerned about it.

We are investing money in the post-secondary education like never before. We have to make sure that our students have the opportunities to do have everything that is out there – engineering. There are all kinds of opportunities in this Province. Never before are the opportunities there.

Our students have the lowest tuition rate in all of Canada. That shows the importance that this government places on our post-secondary students. That is so important because they are our future. They are the people who will be in these seats someday, and they are the people who will be starting businesses and starting everything else. It is so important that we show them that we support them. It is important that they do not come out with debt loads that are unbearable, that they have to wait ten years to build a home, or buy their first car, or whatever. It is important that we really do support them.

Mr. Speaker, I look at the Budget again and I look at positive things we are doing in education. I am not going to mention on this speech because I know I am going to get another twenty minutes later on and I will talk about it a little bit more. The schools that we are building – and here in the Northeast Avalon we have noticed in Paradise, CBS, and even up the Southern Shore up in Mobile, the new school for Witless Bay area.

I drove up and watched the hockey game one night. I had not been up there in a while since I used to go up there playing hockey where they were all cheering for me. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I drove up there and all the news homes that are up there now, it is amazing. It is amazing to see. It is important that we do these investments.

Mr. Speaker, there is only so much money to go around and here is the plan that we put in place. We said okay, we are going to have to raise taxes a little bit. Now I heard two plans from the other side. One plan was to – as far as I could read what she was talking about – mainly cut the public service. That would be a plan to

do. Like I said earlier, I would not want to do that because if we do, we cut the young people. We cut the people who are just starting off in life and need that break. As an MHA I always try to do my best for young people because once they get their foot in the door, they will prove themselves. That is what they do here in public service in our Province.

The other solution that I saw was to borrow more, to stretch our deficits out a longer period of time. Mr. Speaker, who is going to pay for it in the future? Our young people will pay for it, and our children, and someday my grandchildren – hopefully – will end up paying for those costs.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the plan that we put forward is the right plan. It is the right plan for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I am very proud to be part of that plan.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I am delighted to be able to stand and speak in the first round on the Budget. I say first round because, of course, I will get two more opportunities specifically as part of the Budget debate as all the rest of us. I will not try to cover everything today that I want to say. That is impossible, but I am going to set a framework for the discussions I want to hold as this Budget debate continues.

It was sort of hard to figure out where to start with this Budget. Let's go. Let's see what I have decided. Let's hope that the members of the government across the way understand what it is I am talking about because there is an awful lot they do not seem to understand, Mr. Speaker. I am going to try to get them to understand the reality of what it is they have presented to us.

When I look at the Budget Speech – and it is important to do that, it is important to see what the government is saying and what they are laying out, not just look at the figures and the

numbers. We see some interesting things in the Budget Speech.

The first thing I would like to say – and this is at the very beginning of the Speech, the minister actually said, “Let me begin by speaking, not about the immediate, short-term fiscal challenges we are facing, but about the new approaches we are taking to build a stronger province for the long term.” I thought that was a very interesting statement; I am not going to look just at the immediate, the little short term, I want to look at the big picture.

I cannot help but think what a different position we would be in today if this government had to have had the same thinking five years ago, seven years ago, or nine years ago. If they had to have had that same thinking I do not think we would be where we are today. I think we would be in a much better situation.

I am going to go back for the moment to 2007. In 2007, this government was so short sighted, was so much focused on the short term, on the short plan, that they made decisions then that have helped us get into the position we are in today and that was the decision to start cutting. Not cutting expenditures, but to start cutting revenue, to start cutting income; to start cutting taxes from those who could afford to pay taxes; to stop cutting taxes from corporations. That was the beginning. That was so short sighted that it is shocking because it is the basis of where we are today.

I want to speak about some more language in that Budget because it helps me get focused on what it is I want to talk about. The government is good at using language to sort of fog things over, to use language that is sort of highfalutin. People are going to be impressed by the language. So what they do in this Budget is they have based the Budget discussion on what they are calling: Eight Long-Term Principles.

When you look at their Eight Long-Term Principles what do we really see? Are they principles? A principle – and I am sure everybody has this understanding – is something that is a basic value. A principle is something that is at the basis of what we believe. A principle is something that drives us.

Fairness is a principle. Justice is a principle. Trust is a principle. They are principles. What do we have here? Principle number one: We Will Cultivate a Culture of Cost Management. That is an action. That is not a principle. I do not see what principle is involved in that.

Let’s look at number two: We Will Refocus to Strengthen Health Services. That is not a principle. Again, it is plan, it is a thought. It is something they may do. We Will Ensure Trades Education is Industry-Driven. That is not a principle. Once again, it is a thought they are having that they are probably going to do this. They do not even say how they are going to do it. The fourth one: We Will Develop an Attrition Plan. None of these are principles.

I would love it if they had thought about the principles that should be in a Budget to drive the Budget. The principle of taking care of people, that is a principle. Putting people first, that is a principle. Treating people with fairness and justice; these are principles, not these actions that they put there. Let’s use the word “principle” because it makes people think that we are thinking on a high plane.

They are not thinking on a high plane. That is the problem. They are trying to get people to think we are in a situation that they had no control over, that we are in a situation that is almost impossible to deal with, that we are in a situation that requires drastic actions that hurt people. If you want a principle, hurting people seems to be their principle. That is what this Budget is all about, people who are going to suffer from the actions that are in this Budget.

I want to look at two of the so-called principles they have here, Mr. Speaker. I want to look at the first one. The first one is cultivating a culture of cost management. What the language really is: “... we will launch a process to overhaul our existing program and service delivery model in order to contain expenditure growth.”

What does that mean, Mr. Speaker? To contain expenditure growth, that means –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is hard enough to speak here when there is a normal sound. When you have people shouting across the room at each other I just find it unacceptable, I have to say. People in the room can think whatever they want about my saying that, but it is not right.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: Talking about the so-called first principle, they want to put in place something to contain expenditure growth. The message to the people is that expenditures are out of control, expenditures are going mad, and expenditures are growing.

You do not talk about expenditures in isolation. If you talk about expenditures you do it in the context of revenue as well. An expenditure is either small or large depending on the money that people have, the money that is in the Budget. If the Budget can deal with the expenditures, it is not necessarily expenditure growth. That is what this government is not doing. It uses language without basing it in facts.

Let's look at some facts with regard to expenditure growth. I am going to be making reference during my speech this afternoon to a study that was done by two economists who did an analysis of our economy in 2014. The report came out in November of 2014. It is called *Newfoundland and Labrador: Options for a Strong Economy*. The economists are Diana Gibson and Greg Flanagan. I put all that out there so that the government may go look for it and they might learn something if they read this report, which is an excellent report.

Now, this report looks at revenue and the revenue realities of this Province, and it looks at expenditures. I want to talk about what they say about expenditures. I am taking the point form from the executive summary, but the report backs up everything that I am going to be saying.

This report has found by doing research and economic analysis that the provincial

government expenditures have fallen from 30 per cent of the GDP – the Gross Domestic Product – in the 1990s to 18 per cent in 2013 – two years ago. So, in the context of our Gross Domestic Product and our capabilities around production, what these economists have found in actual fact is not that we are going mad with expenditures, but we are more and more dealing with our expenditures in a very good way in terms of our capability.

This is really important, because it puts us – that 18 per cent in 2013 – right in the middle of the pack in Canada. We were not down at the bottom. We were not up at the top. We were right in the middle of the pack. That was a change from the 1990s to 2013.

Now what they also found, which should not be a surprise, is something that the government says they want to find by hiring an external consultant. Under their number one so-called principle – I am going to call it action – they want to “appoint an external consultant with the expertise to examine the structure of the provincial government and its agencies for efficiency improvements.” Here is the one I love – “... help us answer questions such as: Why does it cost 45 per cent more in this province than in certain other jurisdictions to deliver the services people need?”

Now, how much money are they going to spend on hiring an external consultant to answer that question, when we have a study done right here – by we, I mean us, the public, a publicly published document – in my hands. This document says, “Delivering services in NL costs more due to: a much older population, difficult geography, more rural population, cost of living increases (resource booms are expensive), and higher rates of unemployment and poverty. NL needs to spend more than other provinces to offer citizens the same level of services. The report concludes that spending is not out of control.”

Now, I find that really fascinating. So we are going to hire a consultant, this government is going to hire an external consultant, to come up with the same thing. Spending is not out of control –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: Yet this government is trying to get people to believe that cutting inside of government is essential, that it is needed and it is part of a long-term plan. That means that they do not see a reversal. They are saying that they are not looking at the short term. They are saying that this is for the future.

Let's look at it. When somebody goes in now to get their driver's licence – because every so many years you have to have your picture taken. So, now you go in and you sit and you wait for two-and-a-half hours. What are we going to get with this consultant when he comes up with a plan or she comes up with a plan? It only takes a whole day now to have to go and get your picture taken. So, go in and wait for four or five hours.

Go into an ER, sit there for seven hours now. What are we going to do, sit there for twenty hours? You go on the phone to people on Income Support, go on the phone to try to get somebody to speak to and deal with a problem they have; sometimes they are sitting on the phone for up to three hours. How long are they going to have to wait now, five hours, six hours, or a whole day on the phone?

This government is not being realistic about what we already know. We do not need an external consultant to tell us what the Gibson and Flanagan report tells us about why it is more expensive. We do not need a report to tell us that and we surely do not a report to tell us that we do not have enough front-line workers delivering services to people. We do not. Every place you go now in government departments where you originally may have had places for people to be served by maybe six people, you now see maybe half of the kiosks where they can go and get served and nobody in them, because this government already cut people back in 2010. Now, some of them they had to bring back because they found out they had made big mistakes.

This is a wonderful plan they have in place: hire an external consultant to tell us what other people already have told us. We know the reason for it. So that more cuts can be made, people will get less services, and you will have

overloaded staff people, people working overloaded.

I would like this government, I would like the ministers – they cannot look around their departments and see that their staff are working all the time, nonstop? They cannot see it? If they see that there are people sitting around doing nothing, wouldn't they be able inside of their department, without an external consultant, to figure out if something was going wrong? This is fantastic to hear them say this.

The other so-called principle that they are talking about is the principle: "We Will Develop an Attrition Plan." So we will develop a plan to get rid of positions. We will develop a plan whereby our younger people will not have as many jobs available to them. We will develop a plan where a position that was deemed necessary, when all of a sudden somebody is retiring, is no longer deemed necessary. That means somebody else is going to have to do that person's job along with the job they are now doing. That is what it means.

That is not a principle and that is not an act that has any sense behind it whatsoever. That type of thinking and the type of thinking that they have outlined is cost management. I love the language: cost management. Those so-called principles are principles that in actual fact are identified by economists as bad for the economy.

The report done by Gibson and Flanagan is called Prosperity for All. They did two reports actually. One was the one I was quoting from and then they did one called Prosperity for All. Both of these documents, both of these reports, through economic analysis, indicate that a strong public sector is actually strong for the economy. We should not be hitting ourselves on the back because we have a strong public sector. We should be looking at the fact that is good for the economy because we have workers who are working for good salaries. We have workers who have benefits. We have workers who are giving to the economy. Getting rid of jobs of that nature hurts the economy.

What is bothering me is they are saying this is their vision for the future. They are not using that word, but that is what they are saying. This

is their plan for the future: have fewer people working. What is going to happen with our young people who are looking for jobs? They are already leaving the Province. They are going to continue.

When they looked at oil and gas, which is where they have put all their hopes and dreams – oil and gas, the industry here in this Province is not a big employer. When it comes to industry it has, per capita, the least employment per capita. So putting your eggs in a basket of that industry is not helping the unemployment in our Province.

What is this government going to be doing about unemployment? Because that is one of the things shown as a reason why we need so many services. We have so many people unemployed and we still have so many people living in poverty. What are they doing about that? Where is their plan in the future for dealing with that?

Where is their plan in the future for having a health care system based on primary health care so that people are healthier and not needing as much chronic care? Where is their plan for that? Where is their plan for youth retention? Because everything they are doing here is working against our youth. It is working against young people having a hope of staying in this Province with a well-paying job. That is the problem.

The latest news about what they did to Memorial, we know what they did, \$20 million is no longer going from the government to Memorial University, and then letting Memorial University – places where they think they can start doing cutting. That will be on the backs of the students, on the backs of our young people.

Mr. Speaker, that is their plan for the future, the plan of not looking just at the moment. I agree with not just looking at the moment and having a plan for the future, but not their plan, which is going to be a plan of further pain and suffering of people in this Province.

It is too bad their plan did not include, for example, undoing some of the tax cuts they did for the people who are better off in this Province. Why, when they looked at the tax

system, didn't they go back to where we were in 2007 when they first started these cuts?

I do not have time to go there today, Mr. Speaker, but that is where I will be picking up the second time I speak to this Budget.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. POLLARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am certainly delighted to take my place in the House of Assembly this afternoon to speak to *Budget 2015: Balancing Choices for a Promising Future*.

Mr. Speaker, I am also proud to be part of the Premier's team who is bold, decisive, dedicated, hardworking, determined, very sincere and is willing to think outside the box. I am proud to be part of that team. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts and the outstanding work and job of the Minister of Finance and his department. In fact, the whole Cabinet for their diligent and stellar work on preparing this Budget, Mr. Speaker.

Furthermore, I think this is – I am sure it is. This week is Mental Health Week. I just want to applaud all stakeholders for working together to increase awareness, to increase the stigma, and to increase access to programs and services that are provided by our government, and through communities and agencies and whatever. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say that Budget 2015 will enhance these initiatives as well.

I would also like to acknowledge the stellar efforts of the Transportation and Works officials, Fire and Emergency Services Newfoundland and Labrador, the Premier, the Minister of Transportation and Works, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and the Minister Responsible for Fire and Emergency Services. Mr. Speaker, you ask why?

Well, as you all know, this past weekend there was excessive flooding due to – I think it was over 34 millimetres of rain fall on the Northeast Coast of the Province. My area received a lot of damage. Last weekend I travelled around the district. I went on the Baie Verte Peninsula. I visited the mayors in the Baie Verte area, Middle Arm, Burlington area, to examine the damage due to the flooding. I went to Beachside, Little Bay area. I went to King's Point area, Rattling Brook area.

For two days, Friday and Saturday, I travelled these areas and I had some good discussions with the people on the ground. Guess what? I want to applaud the RCMP as well, the local people, the local responders like the firefighters, the mayors, councillors, and Central Health. Because I asked a question to the people in that area: Were there any holes, any gaps in your emergency plan? They said, no, they were very, very pleased with the way everybody responded.

They had good words to say about the highway workers. I was in King's Point where they received a lot of damage. Their mayor and officials were really, really appreciative of the early response. Everybody was on top of the – what should I say – damage and flooding in that area. Everybody was happy. It could have been a lot worse they say, so they displayed a very positive attitude towards it all.

As their MHA, I am proud to say that they are happy. Government officials really provided a quick response as well. I just want to pass that on, Mr. Speaker, because it is very important to everybody.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. POLLARD: Everybody worked together and saw their emergency plan, the protocols that the town officials put in place worked. I want to applaud everybody, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, that leads us into the next topic. I would like to throw out a big shout out to all the volunteers. As you know, the past couple of weeks I suppose or so, there was volunteer awareness week as well. Again a big shout out to mayors, councillors, coaches, firefighters, you name it, Mr. Speaker, volunteers which we all know is the backbone of any community. They

sustain our community. They enrich our community.

Without our volunteers, especially the seniors, Mr. Speaker, I do not know where we would be. Seniors and other volunteers as well, including youth, they continue to give up their valuable time, talent, and energy to offer their programs and services to enrich our communities and our lives.

I just want to say a great big thank you as well to the volunteers, not only in my district, Mr. Speaker, but the entire Province. As MHAs here, we all know – I have conversed with most MHAs here. They all do appreciate the work of our tireless volunteers. On behalf of everybody, I just want to say a great big thank you to our volunteers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. POLLARD: I am happy to note as well, Mr. Speaker, that in *Budget 2015: Balancing Choices for a Promising Future* the Fire and Emergency Services budget is maintained and protected. That is huge. I am sure they will appreciate that. As you heard the Member for Exploits say, the provincial Fire Chief, Vince MacKenzie, was very happy with the Budget.

Mr. Speaker, the choices we made as a government are grounded – I like this – in one core or one overarching, overriding principle. What is that principle? That principle is every decision that we make as a government, what is in the best interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador? That is the key question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. POLLARD: That is the premise, that is the foundation upon which every decision as a government can be made.

I like the eight long-term principles upon which our Budget is built. I will just go over them very quickly, just name them and then I will move on: 1. says it will cultivate a cost-management culture; 2. Strengthen Health Services; 3. Ensure Trades Education is Industry-Driven; 4., there will be an attrition plan developed; 5. We Will Adopt Longer-Range Infrastructure Planning; 6.

We Will Focus on Regional Clusters; 7. We Will Implement a Strategic Deficit Reduction Plan; and 8. We Will Establish a Generations Fund. I look upon these eight long-term foundations or long-term principles or long-term planks, I think that each one of these are very solid so that we could build a solid foundation in the future.

Mr. Speaker, part of the Budget as well – I think the Member for Cape St. Francis alluded to earlier – was the section dealing with communities. As a former mayor and deputy mayor and councillor, I spent seven years serving the Town of Springdale; four years as mayor. Like my colleague, and several others here who served on council or as mayors, we do appreciate the needs of communities. Some of them are very small, some of them have a very shrinking tax base, and they operate on a shoestring budget. So any extra dollars that communities can get, they will take it and they will be happy to take it.

I applaud the Premier and this government and the work of the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and the current Minister of Municipal Affairs in the last two years, and the MNL president by the way, for working and partnering upon this new Community Sustainability Partnership that we have forged in this Budget. They say – I am looking at it now – it is over \$46 million over the next three years for this new funding, so to speak.

I am very proud of that, Mr. Speaker, because I know first-hand – I served as mayor and deputy mayor and councillor of a town below 3,000, and I know the importance of extra dollars to these communities for water and sewer projects, for infrastructure projects, to offer programs for their seniors. That is very, very important and I want to commend this government for forging that relationship with our communities, getting the job done, Mr. Speaker.

Now, in this Budget, still with the theme of municipalities, this Budget protects the cost-shared ratios. I talked to mayors in my district, Mr. Speaker. They were very, very proud that the 90-10, the 80-20, and the 70-30, to my understanding, is protected, is maintained, for the next three years, the cost-shared ratios. In my district, it is all 90-10. I do not have a community that is 80-20, so it is all 90-10. They

are very proud. What does that do, Mr. Speaker? It gives those small communities the ability to do some work because they can manage to come up with their 10 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

Further in this Budget, the MOGs are maintained; I believe it is \$22 million. That is huge, Mr. Speaker. That is protected in this Budget as well. Of course, the third thing in the Budget pertaining to the communities that I gleaned out of the *Budget 2015: Balancing Choices for a Promising Future* was a new Community Sustainability Partnership. Like my colleague earlier, the Member for Cape St. Francis, alluded to – I think I have over thirty communities in my district – that is huge; that is extra money that they will get due to this new partnership.

I have had the opportunity to probably phone eight or ten mayors so far – I am in the process of contacting all of the mayors of these communities to let them know how they are impacted. Just as an example, Mr. Speaker, if I could – I do not think I can see this without putting on my magnifying glasses, so you do not have to make fun at me – that is better.

The Town of Baie Verte, over the next three years, due to the extra revenue from the HST rebate and sharing the gas tax, the Town of Baie Verte will receive – rough figures – \$115,000; the Town of Burlington will receive \$49,000; Fleur de Lys, for example, will receive \$42,000; King's Point will receive \$53,000; Middle Arm, \$36,000; Westport, \$39,000; La Scie, \$82,000; Springdale, \$187,000. Now, those are some examples. I apologize I do not have every community here added up yet, but I will certainly contact every town there and let them know how they are impacted.

So, that is huge, Mr. Speaker. The mayors and councillors, they welcome that new revenue that they can get. I do again, I have to emphasize, I have to reinforce, and I have to applaud the efforts of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and our Premier, and former Municipal Affairs Ministers, for forging and developing this partnership for our communities, because that is what working together is all about. It is all about partnering, and it is all about making our

communities safe and sustainable for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, also in this Budget, I would like to point out that there are solid investments in infrastructure. In Budget 2015, we have \$600 million allotted for public infrastructure. Over the past ten years, I just might point out, \$6.6 billion was invested in schools, health care facilities, roads, ferries, and helicopters. You might say well, what is the importance of that? Well, the importance of that infrastructure is this: We created jobs. We created a legacy. We improved the quality of life for the people of the Province. We have left a legacy of quality. It was certainly an investment. It was not squandered. It was not wasted. It was an investment. The experts, the economists, say that when you invest in infrastructure, it is a wise decision. It is a wise move. So that is exactly what we did.

I will just give you an example, Mr. Speaker, over the years. I am sure every MHA in this room can point out example after example after example probably in every community in their district of some way they have shaped and impacted their district, or their towns, or their communities. For example, in Fleur de Lys should I have gone to them and said no, you cannot have your \$1 million fire hall? We cannot afford it. We are going to save it instead so go without your fire hall. No.

Would I go to Baie Verte and say no, you cannot have your \$2.5 million for Phase I of your municipal complex and the fire hall will be opening hopefully this summer? We are going to save the money instead. We are not going to spend it on you. We are not going to invest it in the fire hall.

Should we not have built the \$16.7 million K-12 school in Baie Verte? Should we not have invested \$7 million in water quality in the Town of Baie Verte? I can go on. Every community I can give you examples, Mr. Speaker, of how we have spent or how we have invested wisely in every community in my district. Most every MHA can do the same thing here.

That is good stuff. That is good investment, Mr. Speaker. That is showing that you are effective. It is showing that you care about people. You

want to invest in infrastructure. When you are investing in infrastructure, you are also investing in people. That is very, very important.

Another example is we have invested \$27 million in the ferry in Little Bay Islands and Long Island. We have invested in numerous water and sewer projects in my district, and Springdale availed of that. I am happy to say, Mr. Speaker, that in this year's Budget, I am happy to report that \$2.3 million is in Budget 2015 for further developments of the new Green Bay health care facility that will be built in Springdale.

I am proud, Mr. Speaker, to see that is moving forward. I appreciate the efforts of this government and the minister. I might point out as well, while I remember this, I really have to applaud the Minister of Health and Community Services. He is like a whirlwind in the office. Nobody can keep up with him. He is energetic, he is smart, and he is doing a tremendous job.

Furthermore, I would like to applaud the efforts of the executive team and the Department of Health and Community Services. They are outstanding people. They are very, very professional and very, very knowledgeable. It is great. It is good to see. Again, I just wanted to applaud the efforts of the Health and Community Services department.

Mr. Speaker, I have a few minutes left. It is very, very important for me and I am delighted to speak to this Budget this afternoon. I am sure I will have other opportunities as well to speak to some amendments, subamendments, or whatever.

Have a good evening everybody and have a good weekend.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace.

MR. SLADE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Member for Exploits, you are still a little bit out of season, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know what it is in this House. Every time I have to get up here to speak I always end up on the back of the last member who spoke, the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale. I will tell you it is a job to get up behind him. He is a wonderful fellow.

AN HON. MEMBER: He is a hard act to follow.

MR. SLADE: He is a hard act to follow.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SLADE: Mr. Speaker, I am going to do a little bit on my district. I have heard you guys over there talk before about all that you do and the roads and that. In some cases you do, there is no doubt about that. In some cases you do.

I have some concerns in my district and I am going to bring them to the forefront here. If it sounds like I am being repetitive it is because I am being repetitive. You guys did nothing to help in regard to those situations. That is where I am on that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about Freshwater. It might sound funny to call it Freshwater because Freshwater is loaded with arsenic. So it is not really fresh water, it is very bad water. I have brought it here. I have brought it here in a petition. I have brought it here in other forms. I spoke to the minister on the issue. Hopefully somebody over there is going to listen and do something with that situation in Freshwater this year rather than next year. We have people down there drinking that water and I am very concerned. I am very concerned for the people of my district and I will continue to bring it here until this government does something about it.

Mr. Speaker, again in Bristol's Hope and Freshwater we have a lot of issues with regard to the Beach Road area. I brought that here on a petition too. I am going to tell you the Beach Road area was something that was given up on by this government. It was given up on because they were the ones who maintained those two roads.

What you have done now, by leaving them alone and letting them decay the way they have, you have actually barred people in, pinned people in.

In the case of an emergency, a fire or anything, you could have had the job done on those people. I am going to tell you something, if anything happens in either one of those communities, I will certainly be holding this government responsible for the neglect that they have done to those people, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, just imagine, to date we have 150 towns and communities on boil water orders, and a number are on do not consume orders. This is the case in Freshwater. The arsenic levels in this well are four times the allowable Canadian limit. It is just not good enough. It is just not good enough to say the people in Freshwater do not deserve decent drinking water. They have to have it and this government has a responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, when I was on council, when I was the Mayor of Carbonear, I will tell you something that the government was doing at that point in time. I have attended many seminars over my years out around Gander and that. At one point in time, government did actually have something in place where their first order of business was clean drinking waters for communities. At that point in time they were putting money into it. It kind of just fell off the rails. It is gone. They do not care. They have no concern about people. I am concerned about the people in Freshwater I can assure you of that.

Mr. Speaker, many communities in my district – and we all know that they need infrastructure. Every community in Newfoundland and Labrador always needs infrastructure. In my district, we talk about paving roads and one thing or another. Last year, the Minister of Transportation and Works asked us to –

AN HON. MEMBER: What?

MR. SLADE: Not the present minister, the former minister. They asked us to put three roads forward that you felt needed to be paved and we did so. Mr. Speaker, that was a useless exercise I have to say.

AN HON. MEMBER: You never got a cent.

MR. SLADE: No, not one of them got done. Now at that point in time they could have – the

minister at that time, I think, was from Labrador West. I am not right sure.

Mr. Speaker, it was a useless exercise. Unfortunately, they could have probably, at that point in time, tack coated them and saved them. After this winter, there is no saving those roads now – absolutely no saving those roads now.

In Bryant's Cove, you have a road going out over there that is called Point Road. The buses are now in a position where they are going to refuse to go out over those roads to pick up the school children for the simple fact that it is just too dangerous. It is too dangerous for the kids to be aboard the buses, bouncing around and that. Mr. Speaker, that was one of the roads that this Province probably could have saved too.

Mr. Speaker, in Riverhead, Harbour Grace, the government went a few years ago and did do a little bit of paving along there. What they did was the ditch that was on the high side of the road. The road was elevated to the opposite. Now I have six homes down there that every time there is a rainfall, the water is actually going in through the houses. That is not good enough. That is simply not good enough.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SLADE: Then the government turns around, looks at it and says: It is not our responsibility. You are the one who did it, so it is your responsibility, Mr. Speaker. It is just absolutely unbelievable.

AN HON. MEMBER: How about Harvey Street, Sam?

MR. SLADE: Mr. Speaker, Harvey Street in Harbour Grace was supposed to be completed over two years ago. It was supposed to be finished and it is not done. When you leave Riverhead to go into Harbour Grace, I will tell you something. I would suggest to the Minister of Transportation and Works and I would ask him in a very respectful way: Mr. Minister, could you please go and look at it because it needs to be done.

Mr. Speaker, just to add to that, of course the Tickett Road is no better. I explained that the last time I was here. I spoke about how the

boundary line is on part of the Member for Port de Grave's district and that side of the road is fine. The side that is down in my end of the district is just absolutely gone. It is not fit to drive over.

The Member for Port de Grave, he is quite content, as we say, with the road up in his side of the district, Mr. Speaker, I assure you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SLADE: Now, Mr. Speaker, those guys over there, they think they are being funny here today. They think they are being very funny by doing that, but I can assure them of one thing, that the people in Newfoundland and Labrador will remember you guys over there, I will promise you. So you can make all the fun you want over there. You can make all the fun you want over there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SLADE: I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, they can turn around and make all the fun they want over there. I will guarantee you that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): Order, please!

MR. SLADE: Mr. Speaker, I often heard it said here that Carbonear got the new hospital, or the new long-term health care facility, and you got a new school. So what does that mean? Can anybody over there answer me? What does that mean? Does that mean that Carbonear – Harbour Grace District deserves not a decent road to drive on? Is that what you are saying to me? If that is what they are saying to me, they are wrong, and the people in my district will remember what you did.

Mr. Speaker, the line painting in Carbonear in front of the TC Square.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. SLADE: Now listen, Mr. Speaker, we had to fight with this government – and I will give credit where credit is due. Mr. Kennedy was

here; he went out there one day and got involved in an accident himself. He came back here and got the lights put there by the mall. It is something the Town of Carbonear was fighting for, for years. Guess what? The lights are there, but when the Department of Transportation does the roads, they paint the stripping on it but they do not put any directional arrows on it. I am telling you something, it is a wonderful crowd – wonderful crowd, wonderful.

Lady Lake Road, they have been on a list here for twenty years to get a bit of work done on it. Tickett Road the same thing, and on and on it goes.

Now, I am going to tell you, I heard the members across the way talking about how wonderful and how much they care about the people in the Province. They talk about how much they care about our seniors. I am going to tell you something, there is nobody in this House any more respectful of our seniors than I am – nobody.

I made a special trip to the mall last Friday, a special trip to the mall to go over there and talk to constituents, talk to our senior citizens. One senior citizen came up and said to me: Sam, I am going to tell you something. You often heard the old cliché about our seniors over around the malls in the wintertime to stay warm. I said: yes, ma'am. She said: we are going to living over here now. If that is what you guys are going to do to our senior citizens, shame on you, shame on you.

I am going to stray clear of the district there just for a little. I am going to tell you something, I am very proud to serve the people in my district. I am indeed, Mr. Speaker. I will tell you something, if you have compassion about you and you listen to the people, and you hear what people are saying, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, they know that you are genuine and sincere. They know from this lot across here that they are certainly not genuine or sincere.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you what does not please me. It is the disinterest and lack of direction and missed opportunity this government has displayed towards the fishery. Our fishery department used to be one of the most prominent departments in government. They used to have

high-profile ministers who had vision and stayed around for a few years to learn the ropes. Instead, what we have is this Tory government. In the last twelve years, there have been revolving doors around the fishery ministers. None of them are staying around long enough to get their heads wrapped around the job that needs to be done and very few with the heart and soul for this important resource.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Member for Cape St. Francis over there today speaking, and when the Member for Cape St. Francis speaks I always listen. I will tell you the reason why, Mr. Speaker. There is a man who has compassion in his heart about the fishermen, about the fish plant workers, what they go through and what they accomplish.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. SLADE: Like I said here before, Mr. Speaker, I have no problem making that comment. If they are fair over there, I will say they are fair. If I don't think they are fair, they are not fair, and that is just being down to earth.

Take notice, the member over there from Harbour Main is doing a little bit of mumbling. I say to that member over there, Mr. Speaker, he will get his twenty minutes now later on, so just hang on there now.

This government has been all about turning on an oil tap. With this government, the fishery be damned, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I do not even know where to begin to start thinking about this government. Maybe we can begin with the recent austerity Budget. There was a little over \$21 million allocated for the fishery. They slashed the fishery budget by \$8 million from last year. Guess what, Mr. Speaker? They did not spend all of their budget last year; \$4 million was left on the table.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to just elaborate a little bit on that. What do I say to fish harvesters in 3PS who for the last three years had to leave their fish in the water because they had no markets? If somebody on the other side was bright enough, maybe they would have said,

God, you know, there is \$4 million there, maybe guys we should be out looking for markets.

God, I cannot believe it. I cannot believe you guys would let that go unchallenged. I will tell you something, you are getting marked with it. I assure them, Mr. Speaker, they are getting marked with it.

MR. DALLEY: A point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

MR. DALLEY: (Inaudible) I would just like to inform the member opposite, we put \$80 million on the table for market to support private business in this Province, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace.

MR. SLADE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, they also sold the marketing arm of FPI. The gentlemen who purchased that are up there now boasting about the billions that is doing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. SLADE: Mr. Speaker, if they had the energy, vision, and interest that \$4 million would have been spent, but that is not the most telling statistic. Let's go back to 2012. They allocated nearly \$50 million. So a clear sign they lost interest in the fishery since 2012.

The fishery budget had dropped from \$49.7 million all the way down to this year's allocation of \$21.6 million. That is a 56.8 per cent loss in the fishery budget, Mr. Speaker. This is a government that claims that they are interested in steering the fishing boat through successful

times. This is a government that uses as their Budget theme balancing choices and promising futures. You cannot grow a future if you are not interested. You certainly cannot grow it if you are not investing in it.

Mr. Speaker, I rose in the House several times, including today, and asked about the plant in Fortune. The workers down there feel they have been ignored and mistreated, not just by their employer, but by their very own government. I am not too good at math either, but I am going to try this.

OCI are going to open the doors for the first time on June 1. Correct? That is six months. They are going to close their doors again by July 30 and then again sometime in October. Mr. Speaker, I am not good on math either, but I think I might be a little bit better, we will say, than the Minister of Finance – I am thinking.

Mr. Speaker, guess what? That tells me that the 110 jobs that were promised down there to be full time are nowhere near full time. That is what that tells me.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SLADE: That is exactly what that tells me. I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, what he did yesterday in this House certainly was not very respectful. To hand a one-pager with two words on it, or two lines, two sentences; that is not helping those workers down in Fortune who deserves a little respect and deserves to have representation in this House from their members. They deserve representation. While I have a breath in my body, I will stand here and fight for their cause, I will tell you that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: A point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

MR. DALLEY: A really good speech. The point being, Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear he is going to stand and support the people of Fortune because when we had to make that decision to

support them, the Liberals were nowhere to be found.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace.

MR. SLADE: Mr. Speaker, I will say this: Right now with the people in Fortune and the plant workers in Fortune, the Tories are nowhere to be found. I will say that. They are nowhere to be found.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SLADE: They know what is going on down there. They know it is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely unbelievable what is happening in this place, for members who represent the people down there, which are on that side of the House, not to be speaking there. If the company is doing wrong, tell the company you are breaking your lease, you are breaking your contract with the people down in Fortune and stand up and fight for them. That is what needs to be done here. It is unbelievable.

I do not have much very much time left, but I am sure I will get a chance to get up and speak again. Do you know when government fell down on the job here when it came to the fishery? I am going to tell you. It was back in 2005 when government tried to introduce RMS. After that did not get through this House, from there the fish harvesters were dropped, the fish plant workers were dropped, and this government has done nothing since to improve that. Those are the facts.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, I know because I was one of the ones who was standing out on that parking lot fighting for my very being and the people who were around me. I know because I was there when you guys tried to turn around and take away our rights.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, my time is out.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Acting Government House Leader.

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, given the time of day, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that the House now close.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

This House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 o'clock.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Monday, 1:30 p.m.