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*Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA*

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The House met at 2 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

I would like to welcome to the public gallery today Mr. Dan Goodyear, he is the chief executive officer of the Canadian Mental Health Association, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Welcome.

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

**Statements by Members**

**MR. SPEAKER:** For Members' statements today we will hear statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Stephenville - Port au Port, Conception Bay East - Bell Island, Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, and Conception Bay South.

The hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

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

I stand today to recognize an outstanding young volunteer. Abigail Pinsent is the daughter of Paul Pinsent and Dara Best-Pinsent from Stephenville. The level II Stephenville High School student has been a very active member in the Girl Guides movement for a number of years; and, in addition to recently receiving the bronze Chief Commissioners Award, she is a mentor to young Guides and volunteers as junior Sparks leader.

Abigail is also a talented artist whose murals can be seen at the provincial courthouse and the middle school in Stephenville. While maintaining first-class honours, she's a member of the school choir, concert band, drama club and volunteers as a peer tutor.

Abigail has also recently completed the bronze and silver components of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award program and is in the process of completing the gold. It is due to these accomplishments and volunteer efforts that Abigail was recently named Youth of the Year at the annual Stephen Awards banquet.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating Abigail Pinsent on being named the 2018 Youth of the Year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I stand today to acknowledge the Town of Portugal Cove - St. Philip's who were the host of the recent 2018 best of Portugal Cove - St. Philip's community awards during Volunteer Week. This year's awards had dozens of nominations received by the organizing committee who had a tough job to recognize only one in each category.

The 11 categories included all sectors of the community including age, gender, business and various levels of sports.

This year's recipients included: Youth of the Year, Madelyn Drover; Senior of the Year, Betty Tucker; Service Group of the Year, the Portugal Cove - St. Philip's Volunteer Fire Department; Volunteer of the Year, Edward Sharpe; Female Athlete of the Year, Maria Chafe; Male Athlete of the Year, Ryan Drover; Coach of the Year, Neil Hackett; Team of the Year, Brookside Intermediate grade nine Girls Volleyball Team; Employee of the Year, Jo-Ann Squires of Tilt House Bakery; New Business of the Year, The Grounds Café; and Business of the Year, Stable Life Inc. - Spirit Horse NL.

I would like to thank the Town of Portugal Cove - St. Philip's and staff for acknowledging the great group of volunteers, businesses and athletes we have in Portugal Cove - St. Philip's.

This is a great community to live and play.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave.

**MS. P. PARSONS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize a very talented young woman from my district, 17-year-old Anna Mercer of Coley's Point. Although so young, she is blessed with an amazingly mature talent. She is a soprano, and on March 22 she won the prestigious Senior Rose Bowl award at the annual Carbonear Kiwanis Music Festival.

This is Anna's third Rose Bowl win, after claiming the Junior Rose Bowl at age 14 and again at age 16. Anna will now move on to compete in the provincials in Corner Brook this month.

When preparing to perform, she studies voice with retired Canadian Opera Company Soprano Sonya Gosse of Bay Roberts, who we saw here today. Anna also plans to pursue a career in opera upon completion of her high school. Amid her success, she has already been noticed by the opera elite, and was invited to study with Metropolitan Opera Soprano Wendy Nielsen in 2017. She will travel to New Brunswick again this summer to continue her studies and follow her dreams. The art of opera is both prestigious and unique.

On behalf of all Members and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, I congratulate Anna on her talent and determination.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

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

I rise in this hon. House today to deliver accolades to Darlene Jensen Royale, recipient of the second annual Exploits Valley SPCA Animal Hero Award. Darlene has a special place in her heart for animals and has devoted over 17 years working voluntarily with the SPCA. She is very well known in our district for bringing hundreds of cats to safety and caring for them in her own home. Having rescued over 70 kittens in 2017 alone, it is wonderful to see her get this

much deserved recognition for all the work she has done.

Darlene's passion and commitment to addressing the growing stray cat population has included walking from her hometown of Belleoram to English Harbour West to raise funds to support the SPCA. This month she will be helping conduct a trap, neuter and return clinic with a veterinarian in her hometown of Belleoram. This program ensures that community cats are humanely trapped and spayed or neutered, vaccinated, ear tipped and then returned to their outdoor home. For this year's effort, with the support of her community and donors, Darlene has raised over \$3,100.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of this hon. House to join me in congratulating Darlene for her outstanding dedication to rescuing animals and wish her and her partners a successful effort to humanely stabilize the cat population in her community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate the Salvation Army Conception Bay South Corps on the occasion of their 110th anniversary.

On April 20, I had the pleasure of attending the 110th anniversary dinner celebration. The CBS Corps had many events planned to commemorate this special occasion including a family skate, an evening of Christian Choral Music, and a morning and evening worship service to end the weekend of celebrations.

Special guests, Commissioner Susan McMillan and General Andrea Cox, were in attendance. The theme of the anniversary celebrations was: Blessed Heritage - Brilliant Future.

The CBS Corps are led by Majors Lorne and Barbara Pritchett who play an active role in our community. The CBS Corps provide a warming

centre, contribute to the CBS/Paradise Food Bank and donate to the school lunch program at St. George's Elementary. They provide services for youth such as the Pioneers Club and Vocation Bible School programs all free of charge. The Salvation Army Thrift Store in Long Pond receives donations and provides items to families at a minimal cost.

The CBS Corps has been, and continues to be, a very special congregation helping generations of families in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating the Salvation Army Conception Bay South Corps on their 110th anniversary.

Thank you.

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

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

#### Statements by Ministers

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

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** I rise today to recognize May 7 to 13 as Mental Health Week in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, this year's theme is #Get Loud about what mental health really is. Silence hurts and Stigma kills. I encourage everyone to stand up, speak out and talk openly about mental health.

I will participate in the Canadian Mental Health Association of Newfoundland and Labrador's Launch the Light kick-off event on Signal Hill tonight.

I acknowledge the work of the national association and their 100th anniversary as champions of mental health. Your efforts are making a difference for people and families living in communities throughout this province. Here's to 100 more years.

Through the Towards Recovery Action Plan, we are making progress to create greater awareness and improve access to needed supports and services. Initiatives like Doorways, TAO or Therapist Assisted Online, and Roots of Hope on the Burin Peninsula, are all making a real difference.

The impact of these services, in particular walk-in clinics, have already resulted in reduced wait times of between 10 to 20 per cent for counselling services throughout the province.

Wait times have gone from as high as 180 days just a few months ago down to zero wait time on the Burin Peninsula.

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** In Corner Brook, the numbers waiting for adult mental health and addictions counselling have been reduced from 192 people waiting last March to 19 this month.

It is through partnerships like the one we have with the association that we can build on this progress to better support those experiencing challenges.

On behalf of all Members in this hon. House, I thank the many groups, organizations and individuals who continue to advocate for mental health throughout the year.

Let's get loud for mental health.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I thank the Minister of Health for an advance copy of his statement. We join with government in recognizing May 7 to 13 as Mental Health Week in our province. We've long recognized the stigma that surrounds mental health was and remains the reason why many people do not talk about it or attempt to address their own matters, so having this year's theme as Get Loud is so appropriate. As we all need to get loud about

mental health, including us as parliamentarians in our own leadership roles, each and every one of us should take this message out into our districts and communities and spread the word very loudly.

While we have made great progress in this country and in this province on mental health issues, much still remains to be done. Let's continue to work with the community partners and people who've lived experiences. Together, we can make a difference. We need to speak out louder and in support.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister. I want to thank the myriads of activists across the province who has had the courage to get loud about what mental health really is. Their insistence, their persistence, their leadership has changed the way we understand mental health, what we need to do together and how to go forward.

Congratulations to the Canadian Mental Health Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, 100 years of lifesaving service. Let's get loud and give a great big bravo to all those who showed us the way.

Bravo, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to update Newfoundlanders and Labradorians about the steps our government is taking to improve highway infrastructure in our province.

In February, the Department of Transportation and Works updated its five-year roads plan that outlines the projects we will complete.

Our approach has been praised by the Heavy Civil Association of Newfoundland and Labrador as a way for contractors to plan their expenditures, plan their work and keep Newfoundlanders and Labradorians working in the province.

The plan allows us to take better advantage of our short construction season through early tendering, which leads to more competitive bidding and ultimately better value for taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, this approach to transportation infrastructure delivers on the commitments in *The Way Forward* to strengthen the province's economic foundation, operate a more efficient public sector and deliver better services and outcomes for residents.

I am happy to report that 29 tendered projects from the five-year roads plan have already been closed this year, enabling contractors to hit the ground running as soon as asphalt plants are up and running in the coming weeks.

We've also taken steps to improve our summer maintenance activities. We know our municipalities have concerns about highway infrastructure in and near their communities. Earlier this week, I wrote all municipalities in the province, asking them to work with us to identify infrastructure issues, such as potholes, guidrails and highway shoulders that are most important to them.

Mr. Speaker, we anticipate a busy construction season ramping up in the coming weeks. While we take great pride in our province's road plans, we must stress that our top priority for motorists in our province, Mr. Speaker, is safety. We remind all motorists to be patient and drive slowly and cautiously in construction zones.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I thank the hon. Member for the advance copy of his statement. Mr. Speaker, if the state of the roads throughout this province is any indication, then we too anticipate and hope for a busy road construction season this year, as well as a successful summer maintenance program.

I feel a full and transparent update on the provincial roads plan would include the scoring that shows where all roads throughout the province rank in that plan. That is the only way the public will know exactly where the roads fall in terms of being considered for maintenance and construction, and that, Mr. Speaker, is very important.

I will continue to ask for this entire list to be released. It is the only way we can be certain that government has truly taken the politics out of paving. I know many people throughout the province are looking forward to the road improvements that are scheduled to occur this summer. The safety of the motoring public and construction crews must indeed be a top priority, and I wish everyone involved a safe construction season.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I too thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. We, of course, approve of the five-year roads plan and early tendering policy –

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

**MS. MICHAEL:** – as we are on record as being the first ones to call for it.

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

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

**MS. MICHAEL:** The problem is many of our highways and secondary roads are in atrocious

condition, and a lot more money will be needed than is being spent this year. It's interesting not to hear anything from the minister about night construction this season. I understand the project wasn't as successful as he had hoped. Is he going to come with a report to us about that?

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

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

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

Yesterday, this hon. House unanimously adopted a private Member's resolution, that the House will adopt a Legislature-specific harassment policy, similar in principle to the policy in effect in Nova Scotia. This policy, Mr. Speaker, would be complaint driven.

Is the Premier committed to move forward immediately?

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

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

Well first of all, I want to clear up some of the, I guess, misunderstanding that occurred in this House yesterday when it comes to how reports are presented and who they are reported to.

There was almost a bit of an assumption that occurred in the House that reports would all come to the Premier's office. Well, that is not the case. That is not the case, Mr. Speaker. The review process that's in place right now could see reviews that the reports would go to the House Management Commission. So I want to clarify that statement. And the complaints need not necessarily go to the Premier, as well. These complaints can actually be complaint-driven by the MHA, directly to the Commissioner for Legislative Standards.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair that publicly we clarify that. That people would seem to be – that they have been concerned that reports would go through my office. That is simply not the case.

Only complaints that come through me, and I've been asked to put them to the Commissioner, are the ones that we have driven that way.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** The Member for Virginia Waters has been reported in the media as calling for a review process with a public report and public recommendations for change to the toxic workplace culture that impedes our ability to have a functioning democracy.

Is the Premier willing to cause such a review process to be conducted?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** If you look at the announcement and the press release that went out just last week – I think it was Thursday morning – that is the kind of process that was engaged.

When you look at the Commissioner for Legislative Standards, let's not forget that this office can come in to review this, without even requesting. He has the authority to come in, meet with Members; actually compel people to bring evidence and so on to this whole process.

So this is not about the Commissioner being the appropriate person – that is already within our legislation. As I said last week, we are more than willing to engage independent expertise along the way. I've said that, that has been very clear last week.

In the cases that we have to the review commissioner right now, every step along the way, individuals have been involved who understood the complaint process and I have been asked, on their behalf, to send this to the review for the Commissioner.

These are the only ones that I have been involved in, simply at the request of those complaints.

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

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

I ask the Premier: To ensure that the review into harassment complaints are independent, as well as seem to be independent, will the Premier commit to request the Management Commission to engage an independent body with the expertise to investigate these complaints?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, all along the way what I've said to the individuals that would be engaged in this process is that they have every right to speak to the Commissioner at any step they want. I've said that very openly and very clearly.

I have met with the Commissioner last week, and he will do the review or can do the review, and those that are engaged in the process can actually ask and seek the expert advice that's required. We have said this publicly, Mr. Speaker. And this need not necessarily go through my office.

Let's be very clear about this. Any MHA themselves can go through the review process without coming through this office. When that happens, there needs to be a report that would go to somebody. The process that was outlined yesterday by the Opposition would mean comparing it to the ombudsman in Nova Scotia would mean that the report would be through their House of Assembly.

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I stated that I was not comfortable submitting a complaint until the rules for an investigation are changed to ensure the investigation is completely independent of government.

Will the Premier do the right thing and commit today to make a change and support the engagement of an independent body to investigate these complaints?

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

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

The first thing I would say is that the Member opposite certainly knows the Premier is not a part of that. The Commissioner for Legislative Standards is an independent Officer of this House of Assembly and actually was appointed by all 40 Members of this House unanimously. His appointment was actually supported by the Members of the Opposition who spoke to it on record; the NDP, who spoke to it on record.

I would also point out that the Commissioner for Legislative Standards – again, a non-partisan, independent Officer of this House – serves the House of Assembly and has every power to get investigators in, to get expert advice and also has the power to compel witnesses and to order a Member to vacate their seat. It's quite a significant power.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

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

Premier, were any other options considered for another avenue to review the harassment complaints?

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

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

Well, the options that were available are the ones that been outlined and they were described, through me, with meetings that I would've had within the Green report. The legislation that has

put this review process in place comes from the Green report.

Mr. Speaker, many people in other jurisdictions, when you compare what we have in this province, people are telling me that what we have is the envy of the nation. It's the envy of the nation.

People are looking at this, when you compare it to other jurisdictions, and the one that was described yesterday would've been in Nova Scotia, would've been to the ombudsman. But when the ombudsman reports, that person must report to somebody. In their case, it would be to their legislature, Mr. Speaker. So this reporting, as I said all along, must be done. These steps, everyone needs to be comfortable with the process (inaudible) –

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Order, please!

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** The model used in Nova Scotia is certainly one I would be comfortable with.

Will the Premier be prepared to ensure that we change the process and ensure the report is submitted to the Speaker of this hon. House?

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

I do remind the Member again, as I said yesterday, that matters which are the purview of the Legislature should not be directed to the Executive. We're skating, but I'll watch it. I'll leave it to the Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I think you answered the question quite well. The fact is that we have an independent process that's been determined by the Members, every Member of this House. We have a Code of Conduct which is the only enforceable Code of Conduct in country and it's governed by an Officer that was voted on by every single Member of this House unanimously.

Again, the Member opposite knows that the question she's asking should not be directed towards the Premier. It should be directed at her own Opposition leader who sits on the Management Commission.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

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

Is the Premier concerned that the only complaint which has been actually made to the Commissioner to date was the one made by him?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask the Member opposite to withdraw that statement because she is completely wrong in that statement. I have not issued a complaint to the Commissioner. I want to make this very loud and clear; I've not issued any complaint to the Commissioner for Legislative Standards. So I'd ask the Member opposite to withdraw that comment.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

**MS. PERRY:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly will withdraw that comment and apologize. I understood that the Premier had submitted a complaint on behalf of the other individuals.

Mr. Speaker, would the Premier inform the House whether any employees of the public service have made complaints to the Premier, or his staff, about the conduct of ministers towards them?

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

**PREMIER BALL:** Mr. Speaker, I have to be honest with you, it's a little bewildering today. There is a harassment policy in place within our departments. I think, at this stage, Members in this House of Assembly would be aware of how that harassment policy would work. That would not necessarily come to me at all.

Mr. Speaker, I think the line of questioning that we're going down today is really questioning the powers of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards. This is a person that went to the Independent Appointments Commission, a group of individuals with a reputable reputation.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind people the quotes from the Members opposite on this particular line of questioning, it was the leader of the Opposition that said the person has experience, knowledge and the expertise, he is non-biased as the operational sides by also the legislative standards (inaudible) –

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

I would remind everyone in the room to please understand the differences between the Legislature and the Executive in your questioning.

Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

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

Yesterday, when asked if she had seen the kind of bullying and intimidation referenced by her colleagues, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women responded: "Did I feel it was bullying, intimidation to me? No."

When you, as the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, don't see a problem, doesn't this clearly illustrate just how systemic this problem truly is within your government?

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

**MS. COADY:** I thank the Member opposite for the question.

Harassment, bullying, intimidation of any kind, as I've said repeatedly, and violence against women, against men, repeatedly I've said in this House, is not acceptable. It's not to be tolerated. It is to be exercised out of our society.

So I will say to the Member opposite, when we look at harassment policies, and I think we have had a good discourse over the last 24 hours in this House, about what may be able to be changed in the future for this Legislature, and I supported her rapidly yesterday in her request to send this for further review.

I certainly think that we can do better in this House of Assembly and I think that we all (inaudible).

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

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

You said yourself that every person is different on how they interpret things. Minister, your colleagues, myself included, clearly interpreted this behaviour as bullying and intimidation.

As Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, shouldn't that be enough to warrant your full support?

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

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

Again, I thank the Member opposite for the question. I will again – and I say again, Mr. Speaker – reiterate publicly and in this House, my full support, my absolute full support for anyone who comes forward with a complaint of harassment, intimidation, abuse of any kind, Mr. Speaker. I've said so publicly. I've said so in this House. I reiterate it again here, unequivocally, Mr. Speaker.

We have a process that we have to go through for harassment complaints. I think we need to go through that process. I support – as this is a tipping point for all of us in this House of Assembly – a review of the harassment policies for this Legislature.

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

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

**MR. LESTER:** Mr. Speaker, historically, the Provincial Agrifoods Assistance Program was available to producers in early March. It is now the end of the first week of May and producers are well in to their season with no applications or associated deadlines. The only thing the industry knows at this point, Mr. Speaker, is that the program has been cut by \$500,000.

I ask the minister: What is the current status of this program?

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to talk about the agricultural industry and our programs and services and support of the agriculture industry because we have so many of them.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, we have been working with our federal colleagues to unveil, to release the Canadian Agricultural Partnership Program. That will be a \$37 million program cost shared between the federal Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. It includes a suite of programs that will benefit farmers, but included in that, at that time we will be making further announcements on a provincial agricultural program as well, Mr. Speaker, and full details will be provided because I think the hon. Member knows some interested applicants himself.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** For the record of the House, I, as an MHA, am not permitted to apply under any of these programs, kind of like the ones with NLHC.

The Canadian Agricultural Adaption Program, or CAAP, is in a similar situation. Mr. Speaker, this program was known to be on the way for the past two years. There have been industry consultations.

I ask the minister: Will you please get to work and get these programs out and available to producers when they need them?

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

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, I see an application there at the top of the list already, I think.

We will be processing applications very, very soon. We've been working with our federal government but we'll also be working with other partners in the agricultural community. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to stand on my feet and talk about this because – and the Member is so, so anxious and enthusiastic to hear about it because he knows what a great value this will be for the entire farm community of Newfoundland and Labrador, and applications will be available very, very soon.

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

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

**MR. LESTER:** Yes, I can understand your enthusiasm, Minister, but the issue is farmers do not take holidays during the summer. They don't have time to fill out applications. The rate of approval – okay, say if the applications get out by the end of next week, I would say and hazard a guess that those applications will not be approved until the end of summer, the end of the season.

Can I ask the minister, if he can commit to have those programs in force within the next two weeks and approvals in the farmers hands before the end of June?

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

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

**MR. BYRNE:** Mr. Speaker, to quote a fellow, a famous, famous parliamentarian: "Just watch me."

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

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

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

The minister previously laid the blame for inaction on the Sequence Bio proposal on the complexity of the file and because of challenges with recruiting for the Health Research Ethics Board; however, since he made those claims new light has been shed on this issue. A former ethics officer of the provincial board has come forward alleging unethical and unprofessional behaviour from some members of the very board they trusted to uphold moral practices.

How does the minister respond to such serious allegations?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The issue with the Health Research Ethics Board, we are working through. We have been conscious of criticism. We have external expertise brought in to advise them on how to improve their processes, and we are working diligently on a very important file related to oncology studies.

We hope to have that latter clued up rapidly. And as far as the other is concerned, I will await the opinion of the external review.

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** Can the minister confirm that while he blamed recruitment challenges for delays on the Sequence Bio proposal, the former ethics officer was removed from the file by the director after they had expressed support for it. In actual fact, that leaving later in the process did little to impact the timelines as she was not permitted to work on the file.

Do you think this is appropriate actions by the board?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker.

The Member opposite is conflating two issues. One is an internal one with staffing, which did not, as he admits, impact the process in the slightest. The challenge we had was actually recruiting members with the right expertise to sit on the Health Research Ethics Board itself. The issue he's referring to is support for that board, and that was never inadequate, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** The minister is right; it didn't have an impact on the time frame.

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** Mr. Speaker, do you know why it didn't have an impact? A 30-day process went over 200 days. They did absolutely nothing. They removed somebody who wanted to support it and did absolutely nothing with the file, and the minister was aware of that.

The former ethics officer stated in a letter, sent to both myself and to the minister, that the supervisor, who was the ethics director, had a personal vendetta against Sequence Bio and individuals associated with that company. As she stated: the director's goal was to put up as many roadblocks as possible to prevent Sequence Bio from ever getting approval.

Does the ethics director in question still hold a position on the board?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Mr. Speaker, it's an interesting line of questioning. I think if a member of the public or an employee of an organization feels they have in some way been unjustly treated,

then I think that is something that the Member opposite and I can work together to address.

However, I would reiterate that as far as this process is concerned, the target time for assessment commencing by the Health Research Ethics Board is 30 days, not the time at which a decision should be received.

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** I'll just clarify it, that's not the operational procedures in other provinces, and we do have a need here to address particularly medical research. So I think the minister needs to move to ensure that it's done in an appropriate time frame.

Will the minister immediately launch an investigation into the alleged behaviour and actions of the province's Ethics Board and report back to the House of Assembly in a timely manner?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to take this opportunity to state that one of the things this province does very badly is celebrate the things it actually does very well. We have one of the best pieces of health research ethics legislation in the country, and I take my hat off to the opposite side who introduced it when they were in government. It's their creature that we are working with, and it stands in a class on its own.

I am quite happy, as I have said, to facilitate a review of those processes because there is nothing that can't be improved by a second look and a sober, second thought. And I am happy to support the work of the reviewers, and I await their report with anticipation.

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** I agree again with the minister –

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** – the legislation is a great piece of legislation that was implemented a number of years ago. The problem is enacting that legislation and following the rules put in play. There's the problem we have here with being able to get medical research done in a timely fashion, which would help all of us from a medical – some of this is life-saving research that's necessary.

There are yet again more issues at the James Paton Memorial Hospital in Gander. The hospital's obstetrical services have been suspended since February, and to make matters worse, they won't return until October.

Can the minister confirm this?

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

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

I can't speak to the personnel issues in specific form, but I do know that once again there have been challenges with recruitment for rural Newfoundland and Labrador. As recently as last night, we had discussions with the interim CEO of Central Health to find some novel ways of assisting them with recruiting staff.

The important thing is that there is an obstetrical service available in Central, and in the not-too-distant future that will be augmented by midwifery. But unfortunately, for the short term, there is a challenge recruiting obstetricians to the James Paton site.

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

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

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

I ask the minister: Will all gynecology services and programs be suspended as well?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** No, Mr. Speaker, for personnel reasons I will get into, for reasons of privacy. There will be gynecology services available at both sites through the summer.

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** This is troubling news, not only for the residents of Gander but for the thousands of people in outlying areas that rely on the hospital's services.

Does the minister believe it's reasonable for women to travel, in some cases, 2½ hours to access this vital service?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Mr. Speaker, the evidence shows very clearly – evidence in actual fact, produced in this province, and nationally recognized by clinicians here – that the outcomes for delivery are best with shorter travel distances.

That is why it is crucial in the medium- and long-term, that we have obstetric services in both James Paton Hospital and Central Newfoundland Regional Health Centre. That is what we are working to, and we are working as fast as the circumstances will permit, and are prepared to put extra resources into recruitment for Central Health to get them over this. And I've alluded to that already.

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** I'm just trying to get some clarification. So if a woman arrives in Gander Hospital in active labour, what services can she expect?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** She can expect, Mr. Speaker, quality care. She will be received by physicians and nurses able to deliver that baby, and in actual fact there are full pediatric supports available in Gander.

It is simply there is no facility at the present for complex obstetrical services. And that is why in the PSA it has quite clearly stated that it is in the best interests of the woman to go earlier rather than to leave it to the last minute.

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

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

Will the minister commit here today that the obstetrical services will in fact return to Gander Hospital in October, or is the plan to transition the temporary plan to a permanent one?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Back in 2016, at my very first Estimates, I was asked that question by the leader of the Opposition who was the health critic. I said then, and I've actually said in an answer to an earlier question, I am committed to having obstetrical services in both locations henceforth.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South for a very quick question, please.

**MR. PETTEN:** According to recent reports from the Conference Board of Canada, the carbon tax will cost each Canadian household an extra \$2500 annually by 2025.

Minister, do you have any evidence to dispute this?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Office of Climate Change.

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

My first question on environment, so I thank the Member opposite. What I would suggest is that if the Member read down a little bit further than

the press release, he would see the eco-council came out and actually contradicted that.

Thank you very much.

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, for six weeks over 1,300 workers have been on strike in Labrador West and are now watching IOC fly in replacement workers to do their jobs. Government still has not passed anti-replacement worker legislation. IOC is not likely to return to the bargaining table because they are permitted to bring in these workers from the outside.

I ask the Premier: Will he finally stand up for the workers of this province and immediately amend the *Labour Relations Act* to prohibit the use of replacement workers?

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

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

As I made reference many times standing in this House, that it's important for me as minister I represent both employers and employees. I've stated many, many times as well that the best settlement is a negotiated settlement, and we respect – we have provided the services that's within my department to ensure that we have a negotiated settlement.

Mr. Speaker, we go through the process. And there is a process that you go through in any negotiations. And unfortunately there are workers that are on the picket line. That happens. But, Mr. Speaker, we are going through the process and hopefully there will be a negotiated settlement as soon as both sides are able to get back to the table.

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker the minister totally ignored the question. I'm talking about legislation for scab workers – anti-replacement legislation. Our natural resources must be developed for the maximum benefit of our

people. For decades, government has allowed multinationals to exploit our resources and our workers. This multinational corporation reported profits last year of \$5.2 billion, \$157 million from this operation alone.

I ask the Premier: Whose side is government on? Will he do the fair and just thing, protect our workers' rights, and introduce anti-replacement worker legislation?

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

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

The information that the honourable Member opposite just quoted would certainly be, I would consider, means for negotiation. If these numbers are accurate, what she's saying, then that would become part of a negotiation. Because you see, Mr. Speaker, the way in which it works is that you go into a collective bargaining and collective agreement, and through a collective – that's what it says, collective – which means both sides sit down and try to have what they considered to be a fair, negotiated settlement for both workers and employers.

Because not only workers, employers make a significant contribution to this province as well, Mr. Speaker. So we can't lose sight of that. So that's the whole idea of a collective bargaining. We give everybody an opportunity to have their say.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

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

When the Minister of Health and Community Services was asked in Estimates about dropping the IQ 70 test that disqualifies people from autism services, he answered: It's now part of a bigger funding model they are still working on. After three years of election promises, *Way*

*Forward* commitments and mandate letters about eliminating IQ 70, it's now buried in red tape. Taking care of the needs of people with autism is not a money saving matter.

I ask the minister: Will this government immediately discontinue the use of IQ 70 which denies desperately needed services to those living with autism and which the Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador has been asking for, for years?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker.

I think autism has been a focus of my mandate. We have introduced new and cutting-edge proven techniques for helping preschool and non-verbal autistic children. I refer to the JASPER Program – and in Estimates I couldn't remember the acronym. It's Joint Attention Symbolic Play Engagement Regulation.

The specific question about the autism action plan is it is not marred in red tape, Mr. Speaker. We are working through a process to figure out how to replace and remove the IQ 70 piece in part of a sensible, coordinated response to dealing with the challenges of folk with autism.

We will have that plan, and we will announce it in due course.

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

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

**MS. MICHAEL:** Mr. Speaker, I say to the minister, it's as simple as getting rid of it as they've done in other provinces.

Last night, I was at the panel that the Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador presented. This is still a major issue. They outlined the levels that need to be assessed for people with autism, and the intelligent quotient is not the one.

Will the minister listen to the people in this province who have children who are not getting the correct treatment?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Yes.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Oral Questions is over.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

### Tabling of Documents

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

Pursuant to section 8 and section 10 of the *Public Tender Act*, I hereby table report of *Public Tender Act* Exceptions for February 2018, as presented by the Chief Operating Officer of the Government Purchasing Agency.

Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

### Notices of Motion

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

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

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting Children, Youth And Families, Bill 14.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Jury Act, 1991, Bill 13.

I further give notice under Standing Order 11(1) that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, May 14.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** 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 opioid addiction is a very serious problem affecting many individuals and families in our province and the Bell Island area is no exception; and

WHEREAS the effect of these problems have implications that negatively impact many people old and young; and

WHEREAS support and treatment programs have been proven to break the cycle of addiction and have helped many into recovery;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to establish a Suboxone, methadone treatment plan for Bell Island which would include a drug addictions counsellor at the hospital and a drug awareness program in the local school.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I've spoken to this and presented this on behalf of the residents of not only Bell Island, but there are a number of petitions that are going around. Every week I get a new one in

signed by people from all over this great province who see the benefits of programs and services, particularly in isolated, rural communities that have some of the amenities to be able to actually support what's being proposed here.

Unfortunately, there are a number of people who are struggling with addictions issues on Bell Island. There are a number of organizations there trying to provide supports. There are all kinds of moral support. There are all kinds of emotional support, but what's lacking is the professional support in being able to actually address the addiction issue and that's the interventions, the weening off, the additional supports that are needed, the medical interventions that are so important to ensure that the recovery is not only complete, but it's successful.

What we're asking here is, because there are a number of individuals challenged with opioid addictions who are travelling to St. John's to methadone clinics for Suboxone injections, and for other ones who are also looking at other services they need, but there's a group who doesn't have any of those services, don't have the wherewithal, don't have the fortitude right now to jump into one of those programs by coming over here, either for social reasons, economic reasons, whatever it may be.

Having these services provided locally where they're more comfortable, where there are supports of their families, where there are other professionals who have a stake in the community, where there's the volunteer sector but where they're in a comfortable setting because their friends who can encourage them can also support what they need to do for their recovery.

It all has an impact on the community, the well-being of the community. It has an impact on our financial well-being. It definitely has a well-being on being able to make those individuals who are struggling with opioid addictions be more productive citizens and get them back more engaged in our society.

What's being proposed is that we work with Eastern Health and the department to put in a

counselling service that would be beneficial to address these issues.

Mr. Speaker, I'll present this and have a chance to speak to this again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

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

I'm pleased to stand today to present a petition on behalf of the residents of the Ferryland district.

Route 10 on the Southern Avalon forms a large section of the Irish Loop between Renewes and St. Shott's. This section of roadway is currently in need of major repairs. The designation of a World Heritage UNESCO site in Portugal Cove South has increased traffic in and out of the Southern Avalon. The roadway is an important link to the UNESCO site and will enable further economic development in the area.

Therefore, we the undersigned, petition the hon. House of Assembly. The five-year road program announced on February 7, 2018, the updated one, identified this road as beginning in 2019. We believe in those to undersign immediate upgrades to the piece of infrastructure to occur to enhance and improve the flow of traffic on the Irish Loop. This roadwork would enhance safety of communities and enable continued economic development for the region, and certainly as a service.

The Southern Avalon – and certainly to the economic development piece and the significant flow of traffic in and out of that region. Last year, if you look at the Colony of Avalon, it's roughly anywhere between 18,000 and 20,000 visitors to that particular area. You certainly want to flow them further south on the Irish Loop, down to areas like Renewes and then on to Portugal Cove South, Trepassey and around further on the Irish Loop.

Last year, we had about 10,000 visitors to the interpretation centre in Portugal Cove South. It's a UNESCO designation. We certainly expect that to continue to improve.

What we're looking at here is basic maintenance being done in an opportune time as the spring season comes on. Then we'll look at further enhancements to the highway as we move forward through this year.

Over the past couple of years we've done about 14 kilometres of that highway, rebuilt it. No one is expecting it to be done all in a year but based on the economic conditions that are available – as well, the residents in that area, acute care facilities, diagnostic testing is all done through St. John's. So there's a significant commute for those folks to come in and do that. At the maximum, it's probably three, three-plus hours. In recognizing to get those health care services, a lot of those people travel over that highway, so it's extremely important that that's maintained to a level for service delivery, and certainly to drive economic opportunity in the Irish Loop.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** Mr. Speaker, third time lucky, hopefully. These are the reasons for the petition:

The Adult Dental Program coverage for clients of the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program under the Access and 65Plus Plans were eliminated in *Budget 2016*;

Many low-income individuals and families can no longer access basic dental care, and those same individuals can now no longer access dentures leading to many other digestive and medical issues.

Therefore, we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call on the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to reinstate the Adult Dental Program to cover low-

income individuals and families to better ensure oral health and quality of life and dignity.

Mr. Speaker, the minister in this capacity is very well educated and experienced with the benefits of good oral health. I ask him on behalf of the individuals who signed, who are part of some of our most vulnerable sectors of society, to address this issue at least with an explanation of why it hasn't been done yet.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

### Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader, now in her place.

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

Order 4, third reading Bill 5.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Member for Labrador West, that Bill 5, An Act To Amend The Pension Benefits Act, 1997, be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against?

This motion is carried.

**CLERK (Barnes):** A bill, An Act To Amend The Pension Benefits Act, 1997. (Bill 5)

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

On motion, a bill, “An Act To Amend The Pension Benefits Act, 1997,” read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 5)

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

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

I call Orders of the Day, Order 3, Concurrence Motion – Resource Committee.

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

**MR. LESTER:** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to speak to Concurrence and of course to the Resource issues. I'd like to initially start off by commenting on my own industry, being the agriculture industry.

Opportunity exists in all areas of our province. Do you know why? Because people eat; that's why the opportunity exists. Do you know what? People have always eaten. The opportunity has always been there but what has been missing is the viability of our agricultural industry.

Time and time again, right back from commission government to early Confederation days, to the mid-60s, agriculture has been in the crosshairs of government as to be an area where we can expand. It's widely known that we produce a very small percentage of the food that we can produce here, but since Confederation our food production has continually declined in all areas except for supply-managed industries; supply-managed industries being eggs, chicken and dairy.

There are other livestock industries that are not supply managed and do operate on a small scale, such as pork, turkey, lamb, goat and beef, but again, it's a fraction of what it was at Confederation. One of the biggest reasons for that is the viability of industries; horticulture, a prime example. Horticulture is the production of edible food crops.

Prior to Confederation, we were self-sufficient in potatoes, carrots, turnips, cabbage and many other commodities that now we're only producing a pittance, less than 10 per cent of

what we consume. The reasons for that is the viability of those industries. We're continually having to compete with farmers elsewhere in our country, elsewhere on our continent where the cost of production is much lower, they are able to operate on a much larger scale, and they have the logistics of marketing, packaging and distribution worked out.

Our grocery industry, our food supply industry is now nationalized. We basically only have three big players. Yes, we do have some smaller local ones and, I guess, to their credit, such as Colemans, Belbin's, Bidgood's and any other independents. We need to see more of those because they are the ones who have really, really excelled in carrying local products.

Some of the big players now, they've also shown interest. When we look at pricing of products, often pricing of products is not reflective of what the product costs to get here to Newfoundland. Most times, big corporations, be it food supply or merchandise supply are purchasing or bidding on the supply of a region's goods. Because we're such a small percentage of the national grocery markets, or our merchandised markets, often their cost of getting their product to our store shelves and to our people is not reflected because they're probably making a larger margin elsewhere in larger centres or on the mainland.

The product that we sell here – for example, a head of broccoli for 99 cents here in St. John's is still a head of broccoli for 99 cents in Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, Vancouver. So it's all about national pricing. And that puts us as an industry at an unfair disadvantage. We're trying to build a food supply and develop food security, but it's not viably possible.

We see a big push now to get more new entrants in, but what's actually happening is our existing consumers are getting really concerned that this new push of new entrants are going to come in, there's been all sorts of efforts put into production, very little into the strategic and organized marketing. Without strategic and organized marketing, we're going to have market floods. We're going to have price drops and producers who are now in the industry and producing and supplying food are going to be

compromised. Where are we going to be if our existing producers, who've been here for many years, are compromised?

The success rate of a new entrant in farming is very, very low. Even in a business, general business ratios are one in five businesses will survive five years. In farming, it's one in 10 – long hours, low pay, too many variables. It's actually worse than fishing, because up until this year, we couldn't collect unemployment.

What we need to do is, as a government, we need to look at legislation that would enact market availability in such that local products get sold first. Local products get sold first at a fair return for the producer, which would ensure their long-term viability.

And we could go beyond agriculture for that. I know there'll be lots of interprovincial competition and trade barriers, but we, as an island, and as a government are responsible for the well-being of our people and hungry people are not very well.

Why can't we, as a legislature, look at something like that? Why can't we look at putting in, I guess, a marketing advantage for our producers that would enable our producers to expand their industries and not deflate the existing markets by overproduction? That priority would always be given to local products. That's what we need to look at in addition to production. Because there's no sense in us filling this room with kale if we could only sell what kale could be put on that table. And that is what's happening.

We're looking at producing all sorts of new products where there's no viability and no market. That's a big issue because it's going to dishearten anybody from getting into the agriculture industry.

I'd also like to speak to our mineral resources. I often hear – and yesterday, I did enjoy the perspectives of the Members opposite about our vast amount of minerals which are available and yet to be developed. That's absolutely fantastic news but once that comes out of the ground and we're paying for it, that's the last dollar we're going to see from that mineral. Why can't we look at, yes, we need to develop these resources

but we need to value add so that when products leave our province, we're after maximizing the absolute value.

I hear about the expansion and the quality of ore in Labrador. Forgive me for not knowing 100 per cent of probably what I should to speak on it, but the thoughts of oh, look, we got the best ore in the entire world. So the best ore in the entire world should produce the best steel. There should be a market for the best steel in the entire world.

Why can't we, with our abundance of power resources, look at processing the steel on site? Why does it have to be shipped to Sudbury or why does it have to be shipped down to Michigan or Detroit or wherever it's going? Why can't it be developed in Labrador?

There should be not be one grain – we should look at every resource that we export in its raw state and ask ourselves before that goes on the boat or on the plane or however it may be shipped out, ask ourselves: Have we got the maximum benefit and value to the people and the province from that resource?

Now, as I say that, I can see some Members around me here on this side and that side, they're nodding their heads and saying no, that's not. Do you know what? For far too long that's been the case. As I said, our minerals and our oil resources are non-renewable. The more we take them out, the less time they're going to be there for future generations.

Those monies that we're taking in now are not going to be a continual stream. Eventually, there will be no more. So what we have to do is we have to concentrate on maximizing that value. That's through the ultimate processing of all these resources. We need to look at that. We have power, we have people, we have land, we have water, so all those elements are there for us to set that up. What's keeping us from doing that?

What's keeping us from doing that – and it's not just now; it's been over the course of the past 60-odd years – it's been get the money in the pocket as fast as you can, even if it is only a pittance of what we could probably put in over

the course of time. That has to stop. We need to increase the value of everything we do.

In reference to the forestry industry, yes, we're all faced with the big challenge now with our partner to the south, but we have to look at again this is a bump in the road. Our forest industry has been here for hundreds of years and we need it to be here for hundreds of years in the future. We need to continue the proactive management and, again, maximum use of our forest resources.

Clear-cutting is probably the fastest and easiest way to harvest timber, but it is not the easiest way or the best way for the environment or for the maximization of value of a particular resource. We need more approaches such as what's in Scandinavia where we actually have – in Scandinavia, they have stewards of a particular forest and their job is to maximize the return on the piece of forestry property that they have. That's something that we can learn by.

We need to look at smaller based industries, smaller based value-added industries, even in the forestry. We have a pretty good vertically integrated system now between the harvesters, the mills, the biofuels and lumber and specialty products and the firewood industry – that can change, but that provides opportunity for the future. That's why I'm really concerned when I look at the scale back of tree reforestation, forest management. That's a big concern because trees that we don't plant today will not be ready in 25 or 30 years' time when we need to harvest that resource.

I heard an interesting commentary on the radio this morning and it was about butter. The radio announcers were commenting on oh, you know, I like this type of butter. I like Mom's margarine. I like Eversweet margarine. I like Parkay. Actually, I said margarine, but they said butter. Then one of the announcers said no, I like butter. I like the hard stuff. For the life of them, they couldn't figure out what the difference was between margarine and butter.

Did you know that in 1949 when we joined Canada, the officials of the day thought it more important to put in our Terms of Union that we were going to be allowed to colour our margarine, whereas everywhere else in Canada it

was legislated, not permitted. We were allowed to colour our margarine. They were more concerned with that particular clause than joint management of our fishery. That's a disgrace.

Now, today we look at those two products. We look at butter and margarine.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** What's the difference?

**MR. LESTER:** What's the difference? Well, I guess butter probably really does come from a plant but it goes through a cow first. Margarine, there is all sorts of speculation about how close it is to plastic.

The real thing we have to look at is we need to plan for the future. Nobody back then thought that our fishery would be in the state it is today. I can never remember a time when we were satisfied with federal government management of our fishery. I think it's been to our own detriment. Even today and recently, we've seen part of a resource that's off our shores taken from us and sent to Nova Scotia.

I'd love to be able to say: Okay, I want to take all of the agricultural land in the Annapolis Valley and move it to St. John's. You can't do it. Why can't you do it? Well, it's physically not impossible, but the concept, I think if we did do that, the Nova Scotians would have a big issue about it and not let us do it.

So why do we continually – it's almost like we push hard, push hard, push hard. No, we want this. We want joint management. We want to be in control of resources off our shore. Just as we almost seem like we're about to get to that pinnacle point, it just fades away.

I'm not saying that it's the current government that's doing that. That's happened time and time again. So I challenge this government to stand up for our resource and we have to see a completion of action. The people of this province deserve it. The people of this province need it.

The ocean resources in the form of our fishery could provide so much more economic activity and so much more potential for our rural communities.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Adjacency.

**MR. LESTER:** Adjacency, that's not something really – it's not hard to understand but for some reason the federal government cannot understand that. When it comes to the Arctic Ocean, and you talk about the Russians encroaching on our Arctic Ocean, the federal will say: Hey, look, that's next to us; those are our resources.

So why can't the federal government translate that concept down to us, down to the provinces? I don't understand it. If it's good for one, why is it not good for the other?

I guess I'd be remiss to not mention a small portion of my opportunity to the budget. I had the opportunity of attending one of the budget consultations. The Minister of Finance was actually the moderator of the event. The first thing he got up and said – I apologize if it's not the exact words, so I guess I'll have to paraphrase it – was ladies and gentlemen, there wasn't many people around the caucus table that supported the budget of 2016.

I don't know if that's a real, fair thing for him to say. I would wonder if he could stand up and say that here in this House.

We went through the budget consultation process and the questions kind of centred around secondary schools and the ferries, but when I looked at the budget there wasn't a whole lot of change. So I kind of question whether, maybe my – well, not my, but the session I attended to and I saw the results, they were indicating we need major change, and we didn't see it.

Maybe next year we should probably bypass the budget consultation processes and save the people of the province money. Unless we're going to listen to the people of the province, I don't think we should pull a sham over their face and say: Yay, we're listening but we're going to do something totally different. We need to listen to what the people of the province are saying.

I'm always about opportunity. I'm always about optimism, but do you know what? It has taken decades and decades to build optimism, industry, economy.

As I said in my maiden speech, in the '90s it was pretty dark times. We were all so thrilled with the invention of duct tape because we used to be able to do body work on all our cars. You'd see so many cars covered in duct tape and spray painted over. That was because nobody could afford a new car.

Last week, I was driving down Freshwater Road and I saw a car rebuilt with duct tape. So, ladies and gentlemen, are we back to the '90s? That's a good question.

It's taken decades and decades to build up our economy and it's only taken two years to destroy it.

**MR. SPEAKER (Warr):** The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

**MR. KING:** Oh, Mr. Speaker, it's going to be a challenge to follow up that speech, but I'll do my best.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I'd like to stand here today and congratulate Judy Foote on becoming our next Lieutenant-Governor, our first female Lieutenant-Governor. It was certainly quite the spectacle here this morning to see such great performances, to see a woman such as Judy Foote assume the highest office in this province. It was second to none.

On top of that, it was great to see several friends and colleagues, both political and military –

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

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

**MR. KING:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

I'm sure they'll get their turn to speak now the once.

It was; I got to see a lot of political and military colleagues I haven't seen in a while. It was certainly one of the highlights of my time as an MHA.

Just to talk about the duct-tape cars, come on, the economy is destroyed in two years. Well, they had a good hand in leading us down that

road and we've done a great job getting us back on track, Mr. Speaker.

Let me remind the Member for Mount Pearl North –

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

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

**MR. KING:** Let me remind the Member for Mount Pearl North, when we took office on December 14, 2015, Mr. Speaker, when the Premier met with the Department of Finance, what did they tell him? You're not going to make payroll this month. If you don't do anything now, you're not going to make payroll. Two weeks before Christmas, the previous government led us down a road with a \$2.7 billion deficit and almost not making payroll. That's their legacy, Mr. Speaker.

The Member for CBS is chirping over there. He's saying I can't let it go. The Member for Mount Pearl North just got up and talked about the 2016 budget, that's all he talked about. They must love the 2018 budget because they haven't mentioned a word on that one yet.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** It's the same thing, the same budget.

**MR. KING:** It's not the same budget.

Let me give you a little history. What we've done is reduced our deficit from \$2.7 billion – that's the gift that keeps on giving from the Tories – down to \$1.1 billion in 2016-2017; \$852 million in 2017-18, and this year we're projecting a deficit of \$683 million. That's taking almost \$2 billion from the deficit in a span of two years.

When they put their budget forward in 2015, Mr. Speaker, they said – and I think the Minister of Transportation and Works has a copy there of *Budget 2015* – the deficit is going to be \$1.1 billion and a barrel of oil is going to be \$71 all year. Well, Mr. Speaker, we found that deficit was \$2.7 billion and that barrel of oil went down to \$26 in early 2016. Faced with the mess that was left by the previous government, we had some tough choices to make but we've been making those tough choices.

We have a Premier here that I support wholeheartedly who made the tough choices. The former Leader of the Opposition, the former premier couldn't make those tough choices. So I'm proud to be a part of a government that makes tough choices. When making tough choices, you have to move on and keep building your infrastructure, investing in things that are going to grow our economy.

When they say things are doom and gloom, the sky is falling, people are not having a hop in their step, you're putting cars together with duct tape, that's foolishness, Mr. Speaker. We've been working hard for the past two-and-a-half years to grow our economy, because what they did, Mr. Speaker, they put all their eggs in one basket.

They loved oil – they loved it. They wouldn't focus on anything else. At one point, 25 per cent that all spending was based on was revenue from oil. Just imagine that. We're down to less than 10 per cent on oil revenue spending right now.

What we did was we created *The Way Forward* document. That's the principle that's going to get us back to fiscal balance in 2022. That's not that far away. We've put ourselves – and we've seen the reduction in deficit year after year after year. They didn't have the guts to make the tough decisions. We have the guts to make those tough decisions, Mr. Speaker.

What you've seen is major infrastructure in infrastructure renewal, both municipal and on our highways. We've been able to do that through partnerships with our federal government and with our municipalities. The Municipal Symposium is taking place this weekend in Gander. So I'd like to give a shout out to all the municipalities in my district.

With that said though, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to give a big shout out to all the people who have put their names forward on the upcoming George's Brook-Milton municipal election, our newest municipality in Newfoundland and Labrador. They'll be voting on their new council on Tuesday. So congratulations to them, and I wish them all the best.

Getting back to municipal infrastructure, I just talked about George's Brook-Milton. Mr.

Speaker, do you know how many years Milton has been without a proper water source? You'd have to go and measure the height of Lily Pond, the water level of Lily Pond for several years, three, four or five years, and pray for rain in the summertime because it would drop that low. Their former member, the former Member for Trinity North, didn't get anything done on that. Mr. Speaker, through the partnership with the federal government, and with the former local service district of George's Brook-Milton and ourselves we were able to take advantage of the clean water, waste water fund to a tune of \$1.6 million so Milton actually has a reliable water source, Mr. Speaker. That's actually action. So there's no doom and gloom for the people of George's Brook-Milton.

I tell you, Mr. Speaker, these partnerships have allowed us to do a number of great things. Conduct water and sewer projects in Bonavista, a new water tower in Bonavista. We've seen lift stations being funded for Trinity Bay North, a bar bridge in my hometown of Catalina in Trinity Bay North, among other things.

This year, I have \$6.9 million coming to my district for roadwork. That's 9 per cent of the provincial roads budget of \$77 million. Do you know how that was done, Mr. Speaker? That wasn't done the way the Tories did it where you do a kilometre there or a kilometre there, hopefully in a few places where you'd pick up a few votes. That's how they did it.

If you look at the Auditor General's report that was released last summer, close to 50 per cent of the roadwork that was done in 2015 was all hand selected by MHAs – pork-barrel politics, Mr. Speaker. What we've done, we got clear of that pork-barrel politics that the Tories were good at and we've developed our five-year Roads Plan where we have a scoring matrix and all roads are evaluated and scored. Starting with the TCH, major trunk roads and then moving further down the line.

Last year, I had the neck, Route 230A done between George's Brook and the Bonavista highway. Something that should have been done 15 years ago but, thank God, we got it done. It scored high every year but never got done because the two MHAs adjacent to each other

couldn't determine who wanted it done or it wasn't a priority to them.

Mr. Speaker, this summer we're going to finally see the road to Elliston paved. I know the Minister of Service NL talked about the Markland Road is number four, the worse one in Atlantic Canada, but Elliston has to be up there, and I think it was at one point. So thank God we're getting that done. It's long overdue.

We're getting roadwork done on Route 230, between the Musgrave turnoff and the Winter Brook turnoff on Route 230 in Lethbridge. As well, we're getting roadwork done between Musgravetown and Bunyan's Cove. That is a significant amount of work.

We've seen brush cutting done at an unprecedented level. The safety of our Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, our constituents, our residents, our visitors – we're seeing that done all over the place, Mr. Speaker.

I can't forget but talk about my good friend, the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation, who has been in my district I think – he spends almost as much time there as I do, and I spend quite a bit of time there. He's been out time after time after time promoting just not tourism or culture, but he's been promoting industry in my district; funding announcement after funding announcement after funding announcement, helping businesses and non-profit organizations grow so that we can grow and our economy.

Now, I have to give a shout-out to my friend, the Member for Twillingate - Lewisporte. We have a steak dinner on the line to try and determine who is number two and number three in rural tourism visits. I'll admit, he's number two, I'm number three – but they're still busy spots, Mr. Speaker.

We've seen unprecedented tourist visits in the District of Bonavista, and that's growing right now. Years ago you could drive up the Bonavista Peninsula and get a hotel anywhere. You could get a hotel anywhere. Now, if you go along anywhere, you have to book well in advance. You're not getting a spot. If you come down without a booking you're probably going to have to go up in Clarendville.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible) turning away thousands.

**MR. KING:** Yes. The minister is saying we turned away thousands of people, which is true. We're in very high demand because of the people we have working in our tourism industry. The people who come together, they've been working together for 25 years. They've built the infrastructure that has allowed the Bonavista Peninsula to be a hub of tourism in the province.

Mr. Speaker, the Skerwink Trail in Port Rexton alone saw 34,000 hikers last year – 34,000 hikers. If you look around at licence plates – if I go to my office in Bonavista on a Wednesday afternoon or a Friday morning or a Monday morning, whenever it is, if I drive around Bonavista, like I normally do before I go to my office, I like to do that just to see where the licence plates are from, and they're not all from Newfoundland. You've got them from Ontario, Quebec, other parts of Canada, but you've got an awful lot that are from the United States and other places, and that's bringing in revenue.

We have a goal to increase our tourism revenue from \$1 billion, which it currently was last year, to \$1.6 billion. We're well on our way to doing that through support of TCII, and I think the tourism operators, the industry leaders in my region are certainly happy with the support. They certainly were very vocal in that last week when I went to the Bonavista-Trinity Regional Chamber of Commerce dinner on Thursday night. They talked about the support they had from the provincial government and they were very happy.

One of the things we actually have taking place, Mr. Speaker, and the provincial government is a partner of this, is dream local, the commons. What it is, is an office space in a public building in Bonavista where anyone can go and use this office space. So you're not held to trying to rent office space or trying to come up with the money.

I can't remember how much it is. I saw the presentation last week and I made a note, but for a low fee you can rent office space by a month. So you go set up, you can go in and have a cup of coffee, you can book the boardroom. It's very similar to what the HUB used to have in Halifax,

a place called the HUB. It's a community place but it puts people together, puts entrepreneurs together so they can work together, create good ideas and get the economy rolling in the Bonavista region.

Like the Opposition said, like the Third Party said, this isn't doom and gloom. This is people working together who know, they're confident that we're doing good, Mr. Speaker.

Business is booming on the Bonavista Peninsula. Sexton Lumber in the Lethbridge area is doing remarkable work. I think I've talked time and time and time again how Kevin Sexton just wants to keep expanding and do different things; finger joining. Now he's in to the pressure-treated lumber. That's creating more and more jobs, bringing in more and more revenue to the province. These aren't people who are all about doom and gloom. These are entrepreneurs who are working hard to grow our economy, who have confidence in our economy.

Our Cabinet Committee on Jobs, the agriculture sector. I know the Member for Mount Pearl North is part of the agriculture industry. The District of Bonavista has quite a bit as well. Now, he would like to see it all on the Avalon Peninsula, all the investments on the Avalon Peninsula, but we have several young farmers and established farmers who are growing their operations in my district.

Through PAAP and *Growing Forward 2* and our new funding – I can't remember the name of the new agreement that was put in place. These funding sources are giving farmers new opportunities to expand and grow.

Three Mile Ridge ranch, they're open year-round now. They said to me, because of the opportunities that were provided through these funding programs, they've become more efficient on their farm. So when the gentleman was working two jobs, he's focused on farming now.

When we say we're focused on growing our own food for this province and raising it from 10 per cent up to 20 per cent by 2020 or 2022 – I can't remember, 2020, I believe – we're well on the right path.

Bonavista Social Club, another success story. They're just getting ready to open up – the Boreal Diner is opening up this weekend. They have their own gardens at the Social Club where they use their own product. We've actually helped – we invested in them last year to buy their own building and to grow their operation so they can prepackage things and send it out.

One thing I'm going to mention, Mr. Speaker, and I still haven't gotten through my speech. This is the second 20-minute time I've gotten up and I still haven't gotten to my second page because there's so many good things to talk about. While they talk about doom and gloom, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about growing our economy.

When I was at the tech summit – and I know I joke to you about the grey hair – there wasn't much down there at the tech summit. I can't joke because look at my hairline, but 40 tech companies, Mr. Speaker, is what we're focusing on right now, partnering with industry. That's exciting.

Tech companies, you can set them up anywhere. You can focus them here in Bonavista. I know there are some in Clarendville. I know they're all throughout the province, but one thing the Minister of International Trade said, and it stood out to me, Minister Champlain, he said: Bonavista is no different than Berlin. That's his exact quote. I wrote that down, as soon as he said it I jotted it down, Mr. Speaker. He said: Bonavista is no different than Berlin. And in this global economy that is very much true.

You have several businesses now that are shipping all over the world. You have East Coast Glow who are doing remarkable things. They're shipping all over the world. They're down doing events down in New York City. They're doing events here in the province, all over the country, but they're able to ship to Berlin. So when they say Bonavista is no different than Berlin, it's very much true.

Mr. Speaker, right now, I'd like to give a moment to thank our fishermen and our plant workers for doing the good work that they do. When you think of the District of Bonavista you think of the fishery. You've got the men and

women in our fishery who are doing the great work to grow our economy through the fishery.

Right now, the Bonavista plant is in full operation so we're hoping to have another good season. I know the crab numbers, the quotas are down a little bit, but we have the lobster season. We'll see how the cod turns out. So I want to give a shout-out to those fine folks.

I know the Member for Mount Pearl North mentioned that we need to better look after our fishery. I totally agree. It's always been an important part of my region and it's still an important part of my region. It's a very big employer. So we have to find the ways to modernize our fishery, to grow our fishery. With the \$100 million Fisheries Fund, which is being rolled out as we speak, there has been major funds already allocated to different parts of the province.

I tell people: Get out and apply, get some of that money, modernize your boats, modernize the technology that you use to harvest the fish because it is very important that we keep this industry alive in rural Newfoundland, Mr. Speaker. I want to give a big shout out to those fine folks as well.

With 15 seconds left, this is my last opportunity I'm going to get a chance to speak in the House, so I want to wish my mother a Happy Mother's Day. It's the weekend after next. We're not in next week.

Happy Mother's Day, Mom.

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

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

**MR. PETTEN:** That's a good son, Mr. Speaker.

I guess that's the way. In anticipation, I was going to take it easy on him until he finishes off with that quote. Yes, his mom is watching.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** He's a mommy's boy.

**MR. PETTEN:** Yes, there you go.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** There's nothing wrong with that.

**MR. PETTEN:** No, there's nothing wrong with that is right.

Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to get up and speak today on Concurrence. It's all part of our budget process and every opportunity I get to speak on the budget is a good time because we can speak on a wide variety of issues that are important to us and important to the people of the province. We get a wide variety of views.

You hear my colleague from Mount Pearl North who was very focused on agriculture and very much expertise in that region. We learn every day, every time I hear him get on his feet, I kind of sit and listen because this man has a lifetime of knowledge. He makes a lot of sense when he talks and he puts things in a lot more perspective than if you're not around that industry, we don't understand. He picks up stuff that we don't get. Other Members of this House have their own interests when they speak. In between the banter, you learn a lot of things from people because of their unique interests.

Mr. Speaker, I have just a couple of points on what the Member for Bonavista brought up. He made reference, specifically, that all he hears me talk about is *Budget 2016* and nothing about *Budget 2018*, meaning that *Budget 2018* is fine. I'd like to remind them that *Budget 2018* is the same budget as 2016. A few changes here and there. We're still saddled with those 300 taxes and fees. That's why I keep referring back to 2016.

If 2018's budget was different, I'd be talking about 2018's budget, and I'd probably pass along a compliment or two about some reductions. In addition, we've got a carbon tax that's coming our way too, so we've got to add on to that.

In Question Period today, I referenced one question at the last minute, I never have enough time, but the Conference Board of Canada are saying now, roughly in 2025, the average family will be charged about \$2,500 a year extra as a result of carbon pricing.

I've asked that question in this House numerous times. The answers I got back were well-publicized. I think most Members of this House, at one time or another, would have seen it in the last week or two. I was glad, actually, because that was a serious question; that's an important question to a lot of people in this province who are still living under the pressures of the 2016 budget. People do want to know what extra costs are coming that are going to hit their families.

If \$2,500 is the fee, I hope government takes that into consideration when they're making the decision what they're going to do, and if they're going to fight back for the people of this province, like I've asked them. My colleagues, our caucus is basically asking government to stand up for the people because, as I said before, carbon pricing – the federal government is bringing this in, but there are a lot of changing dynamics throughout the country.

There's a lot of – I don't know what the word is – internal debate going on about carbon pricing now. As I said, you have Ontario, you have Alberta. We don't know what's going to happen there, the politics. They're uncertain times. I know if the governments change there, it's a good chance those provinces will oppose the carbon pricing. That will put an awful lot of pressure on any federal government, no matter what the stripe.

If Ontario goes against the federal government with their weight they have in federal seats. As we all know, they carry a lot of weight, and from right now all indications look that if the Ford administration wins in June, he's pretty well on record that carbon pricing is not on for Ontario. That's going to cause a lot of debate within the federal government, and rightfully so. Again, it's not a party thing, that's a fact and that's something that they'll have to deal with.

I think when we look at carbon pricing – I get up and ask questions in the House a lot of times on it. I understand Members of this House and people of the public maybe don't grasp it, and I get that, it's a dry issue. Sometimes I read over and over, and I got stuff here, I was just looking at it again, on carbon pricing. I had to educate myself because I was around it in my previous life.

I worked with the former minister of Environment a few years back and we were dealing with climate change and what have you then and carbon pricing. I attended a few conferences with him. I did get a grasp on the concept, but it was a dry issue. You kept reading and you'd read two pages and you realize that you didn't remember the second page you just read so you'd have to go back and read the second page. It just took you forever to penetrate the issue.

In saying that, this carbon pricing, I was reading an article there recently – this past week actually – it's going to be a valid question in 2019 federally. This issue, on the national scene, has made more waves than it has here. I think the reason for that is – and I keep saying this a lot, and I talk to a lot of people and I've talked to a lot of educated people; they don't grasp it. Everyone has always been of the notion that carbon pricing only affects big industry; it's Come by Chance, it's Holyrood, it's IOC and it's Corner Brook – a big polluter. Holyrood is in my backyard, so I've always been familiar with that and the residents of CBS and Holyrood experience it. Carbon pricing is going to affect every single individual, from the groceries on the food shelves to the gas we put in our vehicles, to the fuel we heat our homes with.

I'll go back – I don't like to use it, and it is not meant to be brought up, but I can't resist to bring up the one that caught my attention and will never leave me: the crematorium. In Alberta, it showed up on a bill. People are going to funerals, going through a very tragic time in their life and they were seeing a line item – they were being charged an individual line item, the carbon tax. It changed, of course, they blended it in but that was big outcry in Alberta.

I continue to ask those questions and I continue to seek answers because this issue is more important to people in the province than probably what they realize because a lot of people are not really paying attention, and I get that. I guess our jobs as parliamentarians – we come in the House and represent their areas, and we represent our critic roles – is to try to make that issue, connect the dots, bring it together so people do understand it.

It's not that they don't have the knowledge. It's just they're not engaged. They don't realize. It's an issue that people glaze over. Like I said, even just trying to keep my own knowledge base, it's a dry issue and people just don't understand – not understand again, it's not something that they're really engaged with. It's a very important issue; it's another tax on existing taxation we have. The general public, this is going to have a bigger impact than people realize when you add everything to it.

Speaking of taxation – I'll go back and I'll say yeah, talk about 2016; I'll say 2018 budget because it's still there – we have to do something. We have to stimulate our economy. What we're doing now, we're existing. Some areas are still doing fine and a lot of areas are not. You get the new home construction. I know my area was one of the fastest growing areas in the province – Atlantic Canada for a long time.

I understand you slow down. You don't stay there; you can't do it. But we've gone from here to here. It was just this past weekend actually I had a long conversation with a homebuilding company, a fairly decent-sized operation. They're managing but there are a lot of changes. They're after having to make an awful lot of adjustments. What they expected, their profit margins, everything else has all been readjusted. They're operating in a different world just to survive, keep your staff on, make a living; no one is getting rich, keep everything going steady as she goes – everything is dropped.

In that conversation, he listed off six, maybe seven – and I knew these people quite well, and their businesses and they were always striving. They give up. They folded. They've given it up. They are gone trying to find work elsewhere with other companies and other businesses around. They're travelling.

One guy took a contract down in Marystown to build a home, just a regular home; where, two years ago, they were just naming their price and building whatever and a lot of homes they never had time to even look at. It's a real indication where our economy is gone, Mr. Speaker. You add the taxation, that's what I always say, it's the taxation but it's the climate. It's a lot about the climate we operate in too.

I suppose spending sometimes is based on psychology too. It's a nice day out and in spring of the year, in April and May month, you got a hot day and people tend to do things differently. You'll see more people out shopping. There are more people out walking. There are more people in restaurants. The same thing applies with the psychology of taxation. People feel that they may be able to afford these things and it may not have any impact on them personally. It plays into the psyche, and it does affect everyone. And people talk about it. The more people talk about it, they feel that hesitation.

There are fellows that say – and I'm sure not a Member in this House hasn't heard it said – there are lots of money in Newfoundland; people are afraid to spend it. I know I hear it a lot and I'm sure that most Members in this House hear people say it. I truly believe that is probably a fact but that comes with the climate, the black cloud as we've often said.

I do speak about the 2016 budget a lot, and I'll continue to speak about it because until you give a new budget that changes what 2016 budget did and is doing to this province, we have no choice but to keep reminding the people of this province what that budget has done. Because it's continuing to do it; we're into our third year of that budget and we're still living with it. Until it changes, Mr. Speaker, that's something that I'll continue to talk about.

Another thing I'd like to bring up now, we talk a lot about the legalization of marijuana. We've had PMRs on it. We've debated legislation here in the House. We've had lots of questions in Question Period. My colleague, the leader of the Opposition, has mentioned it numerous times. Regulations – you're bringing in something because it was supposed to come in. First, it was we're doing it June; we have to do it by July or whatever. Now it's being delayed because we're not ready. We've asked those questions; government don't have the answers because I don't think the federal government has the answers. Now they're planning on bumping that date ahead again.

All the while, in our last session, the fall session, right until the last day, our leader was asking questions on cannabis. Where are we? Are we ready? Right until Thursday, the House closed

on Thursday, and then Friday morning there were no answers; there was evasive – Friday morning, there was an announcement made subsidizing or \$40 million will be available for Canopy Growth, I guess, in incentives and tax breaks and what have you. So it's no, you're not giving \$40 million, but you're making it available to them, should they need it, to have an available supply.

I'm not sure if they're going to have that supply. First of all, we don't need it by July, but since then there are other producers willing to come into our province, not just Canopy. There may be numerous producers to meet the demand. We don't know what the demand is. No one really knows exactly what the demand is.

For a person to go out and open up a store to sell cannabis, right now, from what we hear, the amount of cannabis you'd have to sell to make any profit on it is exorbitant; you'd never be able to do it.

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

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

**MR. PETTEN:** But it comes back again: Why the rush to judgment? Why rush this?

We asked here in the House – it's not that we're opposed to it. Prime Minister Trudeau, in my opinion, got a good portion towards his election victory on that initiative alone. I hear a lot of people say that when he said he was legalizing marijuana, it was a big issue and he got a lot of support nationally for that.

That's reality. He's bringing that in, okay. Let us be ready. Make sure we're prepared. Have proper consultations. It's no different than when I just said carbon pricing, something else he's bringing in; but, as we know, that's hitting lots of road blocks, as is legalization of marijuana.

Health Canada apparently are only putting on so many variations of strength of this marijuana. The black market, as we say, will be alive and well. I know you police that with alcohol and tobacco and what have you, and there are other illegal opioids or whatever on the streets. That market will always be there, but I don't know, to me, it's a lot of confusion and every time we ask

those questions, there is no one on that side that can get up and give you a clear, concise answer. It's not giving us, it's giving the people because when you ask questions here, as we all know, it's not answering us – sure, you're answering us but you're answering the people of the province.

What is the plan? You have a \$40 million tax incentive lined up there. When the minister went on the airwaves after the announcement, he was asked, he said: Yeah, that will be available to the local producers.

We don't really know. Local producers don't know. We have local producers here that said they don't want government – they won't deal with them. It's best to do it on their own.

Now they're going to feel like they're in direct competition with a company from outside the province and you have locals here willing to do it. You got other companies willing to go out on the West Coast in the smaller areas, in the rural areas of the province to set up shop. Are they getting an incentive on that \$40 million? Maybe. We don't know. The minister is after saying he would.

What regulations? We listed it off in our PMR, and it was a pretty lengthy list of regulations. How do you deal with it? What about the roadside stops? Where is the personal amounts? What can you have at home? The list goes on. I wish I would have had it in front of me here to list off the stuff we listed in our PMR. There are an awful lot of regulatory questions we had, and no answers provided.

Now we're into May. We're looking at, it was a July deadline. Now that's being pushed ahead. Will it be pushed ahead further? Will it be like every other thing, Mr. Speaker? What is the rush? Get it right, do it right. We hear it in this House all the time, you rushed this, you rushed that. We're being very open. We're not against it. Take your time and do it right.

What you see happening is outside there is a level of uncomfotableness with the legalization of marijuana anyway within certain sectors of our society. Why not take your time and do it right? You'll be applauded if you do it right. My belief in any of this stuff, you'll be applauded if

you do it right. It's not an emergency. Get it right, and get it right the first time.

Mr. Speaker, I'm getting to my time, but I have a few other issues. I could go on with my bullets. There is no problem to kill the time here to talk.

I want to bring up an issue that I brought up last year, or probably whenever it was brought in first, maybe 2016. The fixed link. Everyone: that sounds fine. Nobody's opposed to having a fixed link connecting the Island to Labrador. I don't think anyone here or anyone – they think that's great.

Right now, we put it aside this morning, we got a study done. I've stood in this house, I spoke to media on this issue. I said dust off your 2004 report, adjust some numbers, you're pretty well getting the same thing. In essence, that's what was done. Now it cost less than three-quarters of a million. I think it was around \$250,000. It's still the same process. The cars going back and forth – which is what I criticized before. It's not a true highway. Fifteen years, well at least a couple of billion dollars, at least. We're looking at that.

When right now, Mr. Speaker, the roads in this province are not in that great a shape. You have to drive to get there. You got to have a road to get up to where they're going to have the fixed link, go up the Northern Peninsula. You got to have something to drive on. Right now, why don't they take the \$2 billion over the next 15 years and invest in our highways and our roadways, the 10,000 kilometres of roads the province has. Why don't they do that? Then consider a fixed link.

It sounds great in theory. It's a nation builder. All that's fine. You have to do the North Shore from Quebec down to –

**MR. LETTO:** Blanc-Sablon.

**MR. PETTEN:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. LETTO:** L'Anse au Clair is right next to it.

**MR. PETTEN:** Thank you very much.

The Member for Lab West corrected me on my – I had a brain freeze for a second, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

My point is, before you go – it's like the cart before the horse, do it right. Pave the roads. The roads right now, we're crying for roadwork. Everyone is crying – everyone. The roads are in desperate shape. You bring up an issue on roads and it lights up. Everyone has an issue with the roads.

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

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

**MR. PETTEN:** If you're going to do it, if you're putting a fixed link there, it sounds fine and it's great politics in that region but the reality is it doesn't make sense, not in this current climate. It's not what's needed now with our roads. As I say, and everyone has heard me in this House many, many, many times and you'll hear me again today, our roads are in desperate need of repair.

In saying that, I know the Minister of Transportation – I know this is an issue. We tend to get along most times but we have our differences of opinion. I do not feel – I'll say it again because I don't think you can say it enough. The five-year Roads Plan is great in theory but it's all words. It's all words, Mr. Speaker.

You're putting a list out there, you're not inclusive. We've asked – and I'll ask again and I'll ask again. I might ask again next week, Mr. Speaker, when we open again. Give us the full list. Just let us know where we stand. Let us know where we stand. I don't think that's unreasonable, Mr. Speaker. If I thought there was a reason why he couldn't do that, I'd say fair game. I've never been explained.

I asked the minister in Estimates. I looked across in Estimates, I said, can you tell us where Route 60 lands? Can you tell me where Witless Bay Line is? They haven't done the scoring on all roads, he said. The former minister, when he announced the Roads Plan – and I'll always remember it. I have a lot of respect for him too, but he stood up and he was really proud of how he was taking the politics out of paving. This

man was very excited about that. I think we all were. We said that's grand, now we're all going to get a bit of pavement. Guess what, Mr. Speaker? Nothing further from the truth.

We have Members opposite getting up and saying my road wasn't on the list. No, my road wasn't on the list. Do you know what they did? They went upstairs to the eighth floor, which we all know out in the street, that's the Premier's office. Guess what happened after they visited the eighth floor? It was on the list. It was said in this House, check *Hansard*, it was on the list.

Now, the Minister of Transportation was a little bit uncomfortable with that and he jumped up on a point of order to say that wasn't fact. That didn't happen.

Mr. Speaker, *Hansard* doesn't lie. This is what was said in this House. I'm only repeating what's documented in this House. That is politics in paving.

The former minister stood up after he told us about his five-year Roads Plan. He was very proud of it, but guess what he did with the roads list for that year. He sent it up to the eighth floor – again, that's where the Premier resides – for approval. But, no, we're taking the politics out of paving. We're doing it based on the scoring.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm only telling you what's been told by the Members opposite. I'm not creating this. *Hansard* will tell you. Go back and look at *Hansard*. I've seen it. So I'm only repeating what's been said across the way.

I asked simple questions: Where does my road fall on the list? Are you truly taking the politics out of paving? They've answered it. Obviously, they're not. We asked that.

I got up today on a ministerial response, and every time I get an opportunity to stand on the budget, every now and then on questions. When I run into the minister, when we run into each other, I ask the question. I've sent emails. I've talked to his officials.

I believe if I could look, or any Member in this House could look and say that road is getting paved next year or that road is getting paved in two years' time. A bit of work needs to be done

to maintain it now but that will be done in two years or three years' time. That would alleviate a lot of people's concerns and people would say: Okay, fair enough, at least it's getting done. We're getting some temporary work done. We know there's an end in sight.

Right now, everyone is left guessing. This government owes it to the people of the province to come clean and tell them where their roads score.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

All I see is opportunity here. Those are not my words. Those are the words of an entrepreneur on the Great Northern Peninsula. Somebody who moved from Nova Scotia to settle in a small community in Main Brook. He said: It's a blank slate for the entrepreneurial-minded person right here in Newfoundland and Labrador

I took some time to listen to the Member opposite from CBS and I have to say, it's quite rich, some of his statements, and some of the things certainly didn't make any sense whatsoever. On one hand he talked about how the housing market is going, it's so robust to the point that the contractor is turning down work. Then to point out now that they're still doing work but they can't pick and choose any more. So the work was not getting done at those points.

**MR. PETTEN:** (Inaudible.)

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** I'm getting to the point because I listened very intently. I'm striking a bit around when I'm talking about the economy and economic development here in Newfoundland and Labrador. You look at that we have a \$77 million roads budget for Newfoundland and Labrador. He's talking about spending \$2 billion, basically, on roads. We do

not have the capacity to do that much roadwork, just like any contractor cannot build all of those homes at this exponential rate.

You can have all the money in the world, Mr. Speaker – Norway has \$1.4 trillion in its legacy fund. They had the foresight, when they had all the money, to actually put some away for a rainy day: \$1.4 trillion – not billion, trillion.

When the former administration, when the Tories were in power they did not save any money. They spent and spent and spent. They gave the gift to everybody: higher electricity rates for Muskrat Falls. What I will say is that when you don't understand the basics of economics, you lead everyone down a path where everybody ends up paying more tax, and it's thanks to the Tories that the taxes were increased.

Norway, with all of that money in the bank, if you've ever been to Norway and you've driven over their roads, they have bad roads too because you cannot spend all of this money. Due to capacity issues, you could cause deflation in your economy. It has an impact on jobs.

We understand the importance of providing predictability, consistency and doing multi-year planning. This is the first time that there was ever a five-year Road Plan, a five-year infrastructure plan. It leads to more competition; it leads to more predictability. You can hire your workers; you can get things done quickly. There's \$620 million for investment in infrastructure, which is part of a \$2.5 billion five-year infrastructure plan that's going to create 5,300 jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Member can get up, from CBS, and speak time and time again about the politics in paving, but I've been sitting in this House for almost seven years and I can tell you how political that side has been when it comes to paving. Because my residents, the constituents that I represent, with 650 kilometres of road network of this 10,000, if I were to look at the amount of roadwork that they had done during my term in office representing as an MHA, they've done next to nothing in that area – absolutely next to nothing.

Just prior to elections they would launch a tender and they would say they were going to do work, the work would never get done but just ploys. Lots of that happened; whereas, we are doing early tendering. It makes sense, it's predictable, there's a consistency and it's having the greatest impact on people so that you can grow your economy.

The Member opposite said – and he's the critic for the Environment. He was talking about reading the reports on climate change, which is one of the biggest challenges facing the global economy, not just Newfoundland and Labrador, not just Canada –

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

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** – it requires a solution. He was reading the report and he was saying –

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I remind all Members I will not tolerate interruptions. We have a little over an hour to go and I ask everyone to respect the person identified.

Thank you very much.

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

The Environment critic had talked about how this is a dry issue. This is very, very dry. When you're talking about something as important of how you deal with climate challenge, how you look at finding a solution that fits Newfoundland and Labrador, that has a balance for business, that looks at the economic development and looks at mitigating factors, they approved a project called the Muskrat Falls Project that was supposed to be \$5 billion. It's now over \$12 billion and will lead to the doubling of electricity rates.

We've had to take significant action to mitigate rates, to find ways to reduce costs. They like to forget about that. They like to think that they never sanctioned Muskrat Falls. Time and time again, I've given a speech about the PC math

because the numbers just don't add up when they do the numbers. They're always so much more than what they are. They like to spend, spend, spend.

I'm striking some chords over there, Mr. Speaker, and I understand why. They have their track record, we have our track record and I'm much prouder of our track record than their track record, I can tell you that.

Now, I had the opportunity to speak to 400-plus grade nine students about technology in Newfoundland and Labrador and all of the opportunities that it brings. That's really exciting to look at the bright minds, our leaders of today, as the new Lieutenant-Governor talked about, Judy Foote, about how important it is to be engaging youth and that they step up and that they lead.

Last week, I had the ability to announce funding in a company called Empowered Homes. Their Mysa system allows for thermostats and allows for the programming so that you can have an app on your phone. While we're sitting here in the House of Assembly, we could monitor the temperatures in our own homes, or we could preprogram. This can save up to 20 per cent of your energy costs. This can be a big business, and they're only doing 5 per cent of their business in Newfoundland and Labrador. They're doing 50/50 in terms of Canada and the United States. There are a lot of great companies and the entrepreneurial climate is very strong.

If you talk about Bonavista and the Bonavista Peninsula, the Member for Bonavista got up before me and he touted all the good things that were going on, that his Chamber of Commerce is very entrepreneurial, that they're creating start-up space. When I went to Bonavista in early 2016, I think the Chamber had just under 80 members and now they have over 130 members. There are like 60 businesses that have started up over the last three years. It's significant what is going on in small business, the climate, tourism.

These are the types of things that are happening that are building a stronger economy. It's not just for small business and the tourism, as the Member for Bonavista talked about, it's everything. It's a whole mix of dealing with

forestry, dealing with manufacturing and dealing with farming.

I'm very proud of my district, as all Members would be of their district that they represent and the people they represent. We all work very hard here in this House of Assembly to advance the economy and the social well-being of Newfoundland and Labrador, and build a stronger tomorrow. That's why we're all here.

When we look at investments that have been made, opportunities that we have, the Member for CBS kind of ridiculed a great nation-building project connecting the Island, which is isolated, of Newfoundland to mainland Canada to Labrador, to our province, and connecting us to a market of over 300 million consumers, an opportunity for tourism, for trade and for transport.

Seeing Quebec investing \$232 million on Route 138 will see a natural shift of traffic from the west flowing north. People will have a curiosity. They'll want to explore the Big Land. They're going to want to come to Newfoundland and come down the Great Northern Peninsula where the Vikings were 1,000 years ago. It's really old world and the new world met. It's an interesting story of how the world came full circle; that it happened on the Northern Peninsula at L'Anse aux Meadows.

Their numbers are up. There was a 30 per cent increase last year; a 60 per cent increase at the Port au Choix National Historic Site, which focuses on the indigenous cultures of the region. It's really exciting to see that and see that cluster.

I have to say, though, when the Member opposite from CBS talks about cannabis industry, we've been working very closely: the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, Health and Community Services, Children, Seniors and Social Development. There's an interdepartmental committee that's been working very closely on the regulatory matters. This is a big shift, the federal government's policy decision of making cannabis for recreational purposes legal in the country.

We've taken swift action. We are the only province in Canada that did not have a licenced producer and a licenced production facility. We had risk of not having supply, not being able to create an industry here, not be able to create jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador associated with this because if action wasn't taken than all products, basically, would be imported.

Right now, we're seeing where there's a lot of interest. We're very pleased we had struck a deal with one of the world-leading companies that's going to create 145 jobs, operate for 20 years and numerous other benefits. They're going to be spending tens of millions of dollars into the economy, and there is a return to the Treasury.

There has been many bad deals done by the former administration that never saw the light of day. I've mentioned a little bit of that but I want to say there are local opportunities for anybody. We had said publicly that we would use this as a framework for other deals that would happen in Newfoundland and Labrador. We're quite excited by the interest we're seeing and how people that want to set up manufacturing and production facilities are looking at Newfoundland and Labrador. How the partnerships are being built from a research and development side of things. There are good things happening in the economy.

I wish the Member for CBS listened to the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune when she was talking about how great it is that this Bishop's Falls potential for a gold mine near her district, which would be around the Member for Exploits. These are positive things. There are positive mining developments that are happening across Newfoundland and Labrador; prospectivity is up.

When you see a company like Fortis and their net earnings reach over a billion dollars, there are things that's happening here in our economy with businesses, locally grown talent. Innovative companies that's flourishing here. We have a great tech sector. Where we launched our Technology Sector Work Plan was at Verafin. They are a Crown jewel in the Member for Windsor Lake's district; 300 employees there. That's quite significant. They're mentoring and supporting smaller companies so that they can scale up.

Our Genesis Centre, our ability to work with Futurpreneur, with Common Ground, with Invest Atlantic through our venture capital funds. There are a variety of tools of which we can help. Sometimes it's financing in terms of working capital or equity, or sometimes it's providing the opportunity to export.

If you look at our export potential, it's tremendous. Being such a small province, big jurisdiction, low density. We have, and in many cases, been punching above our weight when it comes to companies that look at the export market.

With CETA on the horizon, and you look at the Atlantic Fisheries Fund with \$100 million for Newfoundland and Labrador. Again, another phantom fund. Another deal that was announced by the former administration that could never get done, could never get signed, never advanced.

They talk about things they said they did. They'd make you believe they did it but they didn't actually do it. They didn't do it. They just talked about it.

They made a lot of announcements and promised a lot of money, with cheques they basically couldn't cash because they had spent a tremendous amount of money. Leaving the province with the worst deficit in the history of Newfoundland and Labrador. If our Premier and the Finance Minister had not taken decisive action with our Cabinet colleagues and our caucus, we would have had a \$2.7 billion deficit. That was a \$2.2 billion deficit and we got it curbed to \$1.1 billion and now it's just over \$600 million that's being projected this year.

It's taking a lot of effort by everybody and a lot of hard work to roll out the Aquaculture Sector Work Plan, agriculture plan, shift policies of making Crown lands available for farming and farming activity. When you look at the opportunity to focus on forestry, there's a significant fibre basket in Labrador, in Central Newfoundland, on the Great Northern Peninsula. There are opportunities to get more value out of our forest sector. We all want to see that.

The Member for Bonavista talked about having the finger-joiner plant that's expanded beyond just doing the lumber. They are creating good

jobs. These are the types of opportunities we need to continue to look at and explore and make sure that our productivity and competitiveness is as high as it can be, because we're living in that global world.

The Minister of Natural Resources was in Houston promoting our oil and gas sector, talking about our competitiveness and productivity, making really good policies, working with the industry, listening to them, making sure that we can advance 2030, our plan, in a very co-operative and collaborative way that's going to create high-value jobs for our economy.

We're rolling out our Cultural Action Plan, stakeholder engagement sessions are continuing. There's a lot happening next week. I invite people and encourage people to participate because culture, when we talk about our cultural industries, the last time the statistics showed our cultural industries, 5,000 people are employed. It's \$452 million to the economy. That's quite significant.

I've said time and time again in this House of Assembly, the investment in film and the growth that's happening. We need to talk about these good things, these sustainable industries that's happening. The diversity that's taking place.

There are a lot of great volunteers out there running community-based organizations, social enterprise that's having a huge impact on our economy, day in and day out. If we look at our volunteer groups, like our Lions clubs, our service organizations. If we look at the work that our volunteer firefighters do.

I have 18 fire departments in my district. That's quite a large geography when you have just under 60 communities that you represent. They are to be commended for stepping up and working 365 days a year. They are doing that, not for any reward, they give so, so unselfishly.

We've had community people who work very hard to make sure that community centres are continuing to operate, that there are outreach programs, that there are supports. Rural Newfoundland and Labrador is experiencing, what I see as, a rural revitalization. I can see it on the Bonavista Peninsula. I can see it around

the Twillingate and Lewisporte area. I can see it in the Terra Nova District. You can see it on the Port au Port Peninsula. There is opportunity for growth.

If we focus on the cultural connections, if we look at where our natural resources are, we can grow. We will grow because our government is focused on making the right investments for *Budget 2018*. We will continue that pathway for budget 2019, budget 2020 and continue to get back to surplus by budget '22-23.

I want to go back and close where I started because I had an entrepreneur quoted in a local paper that said: All I see is opportunity here. This person sees it; this person sees that if you're entrepreneurial, you can do things.

Sometimes things happen in Newfoundland and Labrador that you never thought would be possible. When I talk to my federal-provincial-territorial counterparts and we talk about how we were able to achieve this, how we were able to get the right partnerships in place because we're doing the hard work. We're out there on the ground connected to people. We're listening to people. We're listening to communities. We're being creative. We're finding solutions, but that doesn't come without the hard work. You have to do the hard work.

I'm very positive about the future because I believe too that all I see is opportunity in Newfoundland and Labrador, so vote for *Budget 2018*.

Thank you.

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

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

The hon. the Member for the District of St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

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

I'm very pleased to stand this afternoon in the Concurrence debate related to the Resource sector committee, the Standing Committee of the House of Assembly that deals with the issues under Resource and is the Committee that –

these Standing Committees are the Committees that take part in the Estimates meetings where we meet with government at budget time to discuss with them the projected Estimates for the coming year and to discuss with them what's happened in the past year.

There are three of these committees, one of which is the general Government sector, one of which is the Resource sector and the third of which is the Social sector. The one that we're discussing today is the Resource sector.

For people who are watching – and there are people watching – I will let them know that under the Resource sector, we cover the budget of the Advanced Education, Skills and Labour Department, we cover the estimated budget for the Fisheries and Land Resources Department, also the Natural Resources Department and, as well, Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation. Of course, the minister for that department just took his time to speak in the Concurrence debate.

It's interesting that in the Resource sector, we have three areas – well, two areas in particular that deal with the development of natural resources and one is Fisheries and Land Resources. The other is the department called Natural Resources and that's the one that deals with mining and with the development of oil and gas.

Then we also have Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation which is business oriented because whether we're talking about business in culture or tourism, whatever, it's business oriented. But with those three that are part of the development of the natural resources, meaning the resources in the ground or the resources in the ocean or business resources, we have in the mix Advanced Education, Skills and Labour. That department actually deals with our human resources.

While there are a lot of concerns that I could be raising here today with regard to the fishery, not a lot of things came up in the Estimates around that. I, personally, was not part of the one around Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation, while there are issues that we could discuss in all of those areas, as I said in budget,

in the Estimates there wasn't a lot. There were no problems per se.

I think we do have some questions, obviously, about where things are going, but the area I want to really concentrate on today deals mainly with Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, from the perspective of the human resource. Whether we're talking about post-secondary education or training or whether we're talking about income support, whether we're talking about labour standards, all of it has to do with the people of the province.

I want to concentrate on that because we can get so caught up, for example, with the natural resources. We can get so caught up in the mining industry, for example, from the perspective of the companies and getting the ore out and what the income is from that, et cetera. We can get so caught up with the business side and the revenues that we gain, that we can forget or ignore the human side of the industry.

That's what I want to talk about today, because we've had some things going on that are disturbing when it comes to the people of the province and the people who work in the industries. We've had some interchanges in Question Period with government, in particular during Question Period, that indicates an attitude to me that's very disturbing. So I want to get at this this afternoon.

One of the issues for me is that in natural resources, and we all know this, we are dealing with major corporations. So whether we're talking about the oil industry, the petroleum industry, energy or whether we're talking about mining, we're talking about huge corporations that now in our province are our multinational corporations. They are corporations that work throughout the world.

We have corporations, Canadian corporations, that work in other parts of the world too. But the phenomenon that we're dealing with here now in Newfoundland and Labrador in the mining industry, for example, the two of major mines, which is the mine in Labrador West, IOC, and the mine in Voisey's Bay, the corporations now who own those mines are not only multinational corporations but their base is in another country.

The disturbing thing is that the countries from which they come, the countries in which they are based are not countries that have the same labour standards that we have in Canada; they're not companies that have the same safety standards that we have in Canada, or workers' rights that we have in Canada.

In both cases, with those mines, those two in particular, they originally started with companies that were Canadian-based companies. Those Canadian-based companies may have operations outside of Canada but they are Canadian-based companies, like IOC.

What we are coming up against are things that are happening which are not good for the people of our province, things that are happening which are not good for the workers and, therefore, they are not good for the families. We had the first example of that back in 2010 and 2011 when we had an extended strike related to the Voisey's Bay mine. It really did come down to the new company, Vale, having different values than the values that we're used to.

I want to speak to that today because it relates to my concerns with what is also happening right now in two other places in the province. Back in 2011, because that extended strike went on, it went on for so long – I think it was 15 or 16 months – the government put in place a commission to study what that extended strike was all about. The commission, which was known as the Industrial Inquiry into the strike at Voisey's Bay, Labrador, that commission, which was headed up by Judge Roil, came up with some very interesting recommendations but also observations.

This is what I want to talk about: the observations of the commission of inquiry. Because the commission of inquiry recognized – and this is what I want to get at – that what we were up against now in the province were international corporations that did not have the same values as we have here in Canada. You were getting a real imbalance between the workers and these massive organizations, these massive companies.

The commission of inquiry didn't back down on that. The position was that the transnational corporations were looking for profit from our

resources, looking for profits from our skilled workers and from their hard work – and that’s fine, profits are fine, but they were wanting to get every single dollar, every single cent they could get without really looking at what the needs of the workers were.

This inquiry, in making its recommendations – really, Roil wanted to create an equal, level playing field so that the workers in our province could negotiate agreements with these foreign transnational corporations on fair terms. The government and the minister responsible for AESL talk about the bargaining process, the collective agreement process. I have a lot of experience with that, as he very well might as well, but we know – and this is what happened in the strike with Vale back in 2010-2011. It was an 18-month strike, by the way; I remember the actual months. What actually happened was that we had a situation where collective bargaining had completely fallen down – completely.

The recommendations from the inquiry recognized that and recognized that there have to be times when it becomes obvious that the collective bargaining is not going to get anywhere, where everything is at a standstill that if both sides agree, then there should be binding arbitration.

Now, binding arbitration is not something that the labour movement looks for. It’s not something that we look for. It’s not something the government looks for, but the commission of inquiry in 2011 recognized because of the nature of the transnational corporations – and that was the point they made – the nature of the transnational corporations and their attitude towards collective bargaining, that we were up against something brand new in this province. The recommendation that was made by the commission of inquiry to allow for binding arbitration to be when a complete standstill has been reached, that was something that would be necessary.

It’s a recommendation that the labour movement agreed with at the time, and still agrees with – not that they want binding arbitration in place as a general rule, but when it becomes obvious that collective bargaining is no longer going to work, when negotiators have been brought in, when conciliation officers have been brought in, and

still nothing happens, then there is a point at which binding arbitration should come in place.

The situation we’re in right now is we have another strike on of the same length, actually, going on in Gander between the workers there and D-J Composites. This is been something that’s – we’ve been going back and forth here in Question Period between the Leader of the Third Party, the Member for St. John’s Centre, and between the Minister of ASESL, going around in circles there because the minister keeps insisting that binding arbitration really shouldn’t be happening at all. It’s the collective bargaining that should win out and you have to keep at it.

Well, they’re not keeping at it because the company won’t do it. That’s why the strike is going on. So they’re into their 18th month now, I think, there. The minister just refuses to recognize the need for the binding arbitration. He says: Well, the labour board could be doing it. They haven’t demanded it. What the Roil commission said was it should be in legislation, that the recognition of the need for binding arbitration when a group of workers is up against a transnational corporation that will not bend, that binding arbitration should be there in legislation and then there’s something that government can use with the labour board to say take action here.

I found it disturbing today when the minister, in response to the Member for St. John’s Centre, said and I’m going to read this because the way in which it works is you go into a collective bargaining and collective agreement and through a collective – that’s what it says: collective, which means both sides sit down and try to have what they consider to be a fair, negotiated settlement for both workers and employers, because not only workers, employers make a significant contribution to this province as well. We can’t lose sight of that. So that’s the whole idea of a collective bargaining. We give everybody the opportunity to have their say.

The fact that the minister would think that the workers in Gander or the workers in Labrador, in Voisey’s Bay, are on an equal footing with the transnational corporations they’re dealing with is ludicrous. They aren’t on an equal footing. They have no power. Their only power is the strike and then what happens is you have

the companies circumventing all the collective bargaining process, refusing to sit down at the table. The workers now, even their one tool which gives them some power doesn't work anymore.

In Gander, it doesn't work because the company is finding new ways of bringing in workers to circumvent the workers who are on the line. Sometimes we call these replacement workers, or in the labour movement, scab labour. In Gander, they're doing it in such a way that they're not replacing the positions. They're saying these are new workers doing different jobs than those who are out on the picket line. That's the kind of thing that's happening.

Let's look at what's happening right now in Labrador at IOC. The workers are out for six weeks and now we're hearing from them – this was raised today in the House of Assembly – that they are having to deal with scabs working in the mine now in Labrador West.

When this was brought up today with the minister, the whole issue of anti-scab legislation, the minister pooh-poohed it. The minister didn't take it seriously; yet, it was taken seriously by the Commission of Inquiry in 2011 – taken very seriously by it.

It's rather interesting that the Commission of Inquiry in 2011 did deal with the issue of scab labour. It noted that the use of scab labour enabled Vale to go forward without the economic pressure which the traditional notion of strike presupposes. Now that's very interesting, because a strike means that you don't have the workers working. So if you don't have the workers working, you don't have production. If you don't have production, you're losing money and you're going to finally sit down at the table and do something about it.

If you have the ability to bring in scab labour, to bring in replacement workers, production continues. And because production continues, the workers who are on strike have no power. They may be on strike but the company is going ahead and working.

According to the inquiry's report, it continued and said: it is obviously a concern for a regulator if the forces that are designed to push one or the

other parties to a settlement position cease to exist if the use of replacement workers is seen by regulators to undermine the ability of employees and their unions to both engage in meaningful collective bargaining and impose economic sanction against their employer, then the pressure for rebalancing will be very substantial.

Now, unfortunately – and I don't know why, and I can't read his mind. We are now seven years past when this inquiry's report came out. Unfortunately, John Roil did not recommend legislation with regard to anti-scab workers; however, he was very strong in talking about how scab labour gives all the power to the employer.

So to hear the minister talk today about being just as concerned about the employers – employers who have profits of billions of dollars, billions – we have to be just as concerned about them as the workers, I say phooey, no way. If we're really concerned about natural resources, we better be concerned about the human resources. We better be concerned about the workers and how long they're going to be out on the picket line and how their families are going to suffer.

We're not concerned about Gander. We weren't concerned about the workers in Voisey's Bay and I'm willing to bet we're not concerned about what's going to happen to the workers in Lab West. This disturbs me immensely, Mr. Speaker. These companies are making the money from the backs of our workers and this government is not protecting them.

Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

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

I'm glad to have the opportunity to speak to the Concurrence debate on the Resource Committee.

Mr. Speaker, there are four categories that have been outlined: Advanced Education and Skills; Fisheries and Land Resources; Natural

Resources; and Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

I did spend a fair bit of time speaking to Fisheries yesterday, I think it was or the day before. I know the Minister of Fisheries is disappointed because he enjoyed my speech so much the last time, I'm sure he wants to hear more, but before I do, I just want to take a moment because it is still the budget debate so I know we have latitude. We can talk about anything.

I just want to take a moment because yesterday we debated a private Member's motion and I only got a couple of minutes to speak to it. I appreciate the time I did get because I wasn't really entitled to that. I just had leave to do so, but I do want to just have a couple of more words about it.

I'm not going to repeat all the history and everything that's been all over the media and all the Question Periods in the House of Assembly because we all know the issues and we all know what's gone on. As I did say yesterday, I believe it is a systemic issue. It is a partisan, political issue, a lot of it. Not the issue of perhaps how a Member would treat a Member in their own party or a minister would interact with a Member in their own party, but certainly when we talk about how parties treat each other; how Members treat each other in the House of Assembly and otherwise who are not in the same party.

I believe this is really tied to the whole party system. It starts with the parties and then it manifests itself, quite often, here in the House of Assembly when we see this type of activity. So I just wanted to say that, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to say that for the record and for the information of Members and to put it in *Hansard*, today I did write a letter. I wrote three letters actually. Well, it's one letter. Three copies I suppose, if you want to call it, but I did write a letter to the president of the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador and I copied the leader. I wrote a letter to the president of the PC Party of Newfoundland and Labrador and I copied the leader. I wrote a letter to the NDP, to the president and I copied the leader.

What I said in that letter, and what I have suggested to those parties, is that we need to, all parties, I believe, need to take leadership, not just in their Members. We have a piece of legislation –

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

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

**MR. LANE:** We had a PMR that was unanimously passed in the House. We all agreed with it, we all passed it and that particular PMR is calling on, I guess, an anti-bullying or anti-harassment, if you will, policy for Members in the House of Assembly and for it to apply to CAs and EAs and political staff as well. That's what was done yesterday and we all agree with that.

I have challenged the leaders of the three parties to adopt a similar protocol to put in the constitution of their parties, their constitution and their bylaws, an expectation that those parties should have, an expectation for their Members to apply the same type of protocol, not amongst themselves –

**MS. MICHAEL:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

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

Order, please!

**MS. MICHAEL:** Mr. Speaker, the Member is speaking about our party. I don't know if he's ever read our constitution, but –

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

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

**MS. MICHAEL:** – the issues of harassment and intimidation are an essential part of who we are as a party. It's something we state at the beginning of every meeting that we have. It's something we take very seriously. I hope that when he wrote the president of our party that he read our constitution first.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I take your point. I do not see this as a point of order.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I ask the Member to continue.

I ask all other Members in the House to please recognize the fact that we're almost there.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Let's listen to this fine gentleman for Mount Pearl - Southlands. He's got a lot of important things to say.

Thank you very much.

**MR. LANE:** Thank you for that, Mr. Speaker.

I did take the time to go through the constitutions of the parties, actually. I could see nothing in the constitutions of either of the parties. If the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi wants to point it out to me later, she can. I did speak to the leader of their party and she indicated they do talk about it at their meetings and it is something that they adopt as a party and so on. I applaud them for doing that, but that's not what I'm talking about. I'm not talking about, per se, how in parties they would treat each other and have protocols at their conventions, at their meetings and so on.

I'm talking about the type of activity that occurs and has occurred and continues to occur. It happens a lot in social media, for sure, whether it be overtly or whether it be anonymous people, who are attacking Members in this House.

Everybody should be concerned about that, all parties. It's not a party issue, it's really not. I don't mean it as a party issue, it's not taking shots at parties, but every Member in this House, at one point or another, has been targeted.

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

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

**MR. LANE:** Everybody has been targeted in this House by people, anonymous trolls and so on, in social media, some people more overtly. We all know how the system works and we know that there will be people in the public – because they're angry over certain things, and we can't control that – who are going to take

shots. We expect that, but we also know that some of the activity – and I would suggest a good bit of the activity – that happens is resulting from, perhaps, people associated to us.

While it's fine to say a Member in this House should not be bullying another Member in this House; in the House or outside the House. We should also be saying, I believe, and the party should show leadership to say, Members of our party, whether they be people on our district associations, whether they be people on the board or the executive of the party, whether they be candidates in an election, or former candidates, or former Members of a certain party, that the party should stand up, take some leadership, put it in their constitution, put it in their bylaws that, as a Member of this party, we have an expectation that you will not be attacking other Members of the House, whether they are in your party or not.

That is what I have asked. I have written the leaders of the three parties. I hope that they're going to take me up on that challenge and do it because I think it benefits everybody in this House of all parties. I encourage them to do so.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to get back to the budget.

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

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

**MR. LANE:** Mr. Speaker, I wanted to talk about, I guess, the Resource Committee. I'm going to talk about the Tourism one for a while.

Obviously, we all realize that we have great opportunities here in our province for tourism. We all recognize that. We continue to see an increase in tourism. I think that I agree with the minister and that person who said that Newfoundland and Labrador is sort of a blank slate and there are a lot of opportunities for entrepreneurs, particularly in the tourism, certainly in his part of the province, certainly in the Bonavista area and all throughout province because we do have tremendous opportunity. It's like this gem that a lot of people have not discovered.

We've done a good job, and the past administration did a good job as well, with their advertising and so on, getting tourists here. I'm glad to see that's being continued with those great ads and so on, in attracting people. That is a positive thing.

I do want to say to the minister though, there are three observations I made, Mr. Speaker, going throughout the province. I've talked about this before. I'm not sure if he was even a minister before but I'll talk about it again anyway. There were three things that I noticed, one, if we're going to invite people to come to this province and take advantage of the great tourism opportunities we have, then the roads, in particular the roads getting to those locations, they have to be fit to drive on.

I'm not going to go on a big rant about the condition of roads. Roads have always been an issue in this province. They probably always will be because there'll never be enough money to have them perfect all the time, but I would say to the Minister of Transportation, in terms of our five-year plan and your rating system and so on, I would hope, I think it is, but I would hope, that part of the evaluation, if you will, associated to your roadwork would be tourism potential.

If we have a big tourism draw, then the road getting there should be given some priority. It only makes sense. You can't have people getting there –

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

**MR. LANE:** You can't have people going to a tourist site if they can't get to it and the road's not fit to drive on. That was one observation.

The second observation I'll make is signage. I do see some issues with signage. I really think – and I don't know if there's a signage strategy or so on in place or there's going to be one, but I do think that signage is an issue. Not so much if you're from here, I would say, but if you're not from here – even if you're from here, actually, and you go to certain parts of the province, you may see a sign saying such and such this way and you turn off. You go down the road but then when you get down one road, there might be two or three turns, you might have to make a left here and another right down here and the

signage doesn't follow right to the tourist destinations, necessarily.

I tried looking at it, if I was someone who wasn't from here and I really didn't know where the place was, it would be kind of confusing because it was, like I said, a sign on a main road saying turn right and once you turn right there may have been, like I said, you might have had to turn off two or three different roads to get to the spot. The signage wasn't clear of how to exactly get there. I noticed that in a lot of locations.

I just say to the minister, that's just an observation and it's not to be critical. It's just to point out, I think, an area where we need some improvement in terms of the signage.

I know even the airport, even the St. John's Airport – if you weren't necessarily from here, the signage even to the airport is not great. There's a little bit of confusion even when you're going up Portugal Cove Road, you got the Major's Path and then you got Chinook Lane, Craig Dobbin's Way and then you get to the airport, there's a tendency that you want to make a right turn down Craig Dobbin's Way before you even get to the airport because the signage is not really clear. I'm from here and I've been there a million times, but these are just little observations.

I think that it's something we should be mindful of. If we're going to promote tourism, I think we need to be mindful of the fact that if we want people to come here, we want them to take in –

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

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

**MR. LANE:** – the various tourism opportunities, then having good signage I think is important.

The third observation I made, Mr. Speaker, in terms of tourism was, along my travels, there were some locations that you go to where there might be a sign or something saying a tourist attraction here. There may be some nice area to pull in and take a look at a scenic place or whatever. I came across locations, when you got

down there, where the condition was not kept up for the site.

I know that a lot of it might be because over the years there were certain sites set up all around the Island that might have been done on grants, make-work projects and so and then were never kept up. It was never kept up after the fact. There might have been some projects that were put in municipalities that because of their shrinking populations, they couldn't afford to keep up with it.

I did come across a number of places where when you get there, the infrastructure would be crumbling. The picnic tables on this beautiful area – there was once place down around Twillingate area; I can't remember the name of the little place, something bay anyway. You went down there and it was a gorgeous view –

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

**MR. LANE:** It might have been, I'm not sure.

It was a gorgeous view but when you got down there, the picnic tables that were there were falling apart. They were like literally falling apart. There was a swing set or something there – no swings; tipped over.

I guess my point is I think it would be helpful to have an inventory – if you don't already have one – of what is around and make a decision either we're going to have it and maintain it, or we're just simply going to say we can't afford to maintain four things here, we can only afford to maintain one, let's do a good job with that and let's clean up the other ones and not promote it all. Because you don't want people driving 10 or 20 kilometres down a road and when they get there, there's nothing down there only an eyesore.

So that was just some observations I made. Again, it's not being critical; trying to be constructive in the criticism on that, but I think it's something that should be considered.

Mr. Speaker, my time is starting to diminish here, so I'm going to –

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

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

**MR. LANE:** The Minister of Fisheries says he wants some.

Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to speak very quickly on Natural Resources. I did speak last time about my concerns around the division of Nalcor and those concerns, but I will just finish off, again, on the Muskrat Falls inquiry, which is proceeding. As I have said many times, I just want to repeat for the record and I say to the Premier and I say to the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Justice and so on, I really and sincerely hope that – I understand we want to find out what went on. I understand we want to learn from what went on so we don't repeat any mistakes that were made, but I think accountability is also very important.

I just say that I think it's important that we ensure that there is somebody – whoever that might be – that you put the resources in place, from a legal point of view, civil litigation, from an investigative point of view in terms the authorities, from a human resources point of view and make sure that if things were done – and again, this is a big if, because all the things we've heard so far are anonymous, fudging of numbers and all this; anonymous engineers and we've all heard of this stuff.

We need to make sure that as we go through process, if indeed there are things that could lead to civil litigation, things that could lead to perhaps contracts being null and void, perhaps the need for an investigation by the authorities, if it's demonstrated that there was complete negligence, mismanagement, whatever the case might be, that deserves pink slips, if that's what it should show, then we need to make sure that accountability prevails.

A lot of people I have spoken to, that's one of the concerns they have about the inquiry. That's why a lot of people say it's a waste of money because people have this impression in the public that we're going to go through the motions and even if people ought to have been held accountable, they won't. They'll just sort of walk away and they'll say yeah, don't do it next time.

That's what the average person feels is going to happen here. I think it's important that we reassure the public that we're not going on a witch hunt. We're not looking for people to blame or throw under the bus, but if the forensic audit and the evidence shows that something was done that shouldn't have been done, then accountability will prevail in that process.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take my seat and thank you for the time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that the report of the Resource Committee be concurred in.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

This motion is carried.

On motion, Report of the Resource Estimates Committee, carried.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Fogo Island - Cape Freels, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act, Bill 11, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded by the hon. the Deputy Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act, Bill 11, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act," carried. (Bill 11)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act. (Bill 11).

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

When shall the said bill be read a second time?

**MS. COADY:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 11 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

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

Considering the hour, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the House do now adjourn.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that this House do now adjourn.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

This House stands adjourned until 1:30 o'clock, tomorrow, the 14th day of May, in the year of Our Lord, 2018.

Thank you very much.

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