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Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Admit strangers, please.

Order, please!

I'd like to welcome the Members back to this House of Assembly.

Today we have some special visitors in the Speaker's gallery. Joining us is Mr. Albert Bud Chafe who will be recognized in a Member's statement this afternoon. He is joined by his wife Mildred and his daughters Nellie and Debbie.

Welcome to you all.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today for Members' statements we will hear from the hon. Members for the Districts of Ferryland, Bonavista, Cape St. Francis, Terra Nova and Harbour Grace - Port de Grave.

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today in this hon. House to recognize and congratulate the Bay Bulls to Bauline Athletic Association on the great organization of their annual auction.

The association holds an annual auction which raises funds for recreation and infrastructure for the region. On June 1, I was honoured to be in attendance at the 11th auction. This year was another great success, with over 400 people in attendance and raising over \$65,000.

Over the past 11 years, the Bay Bulls to Bauline Athletic Association has raised over \$500,000 to help the many groups, committees, towns and communities from Bay Bulls to the Bauline region. Many members of the 50+ Club offered their help as well. During the auction, some leaders of the Girl Guides movement from the region organized a dessert auction, as they do so every year, and it is always a great success.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of this House to join me in congratulating the Bay Bulls to Bauline Athletic Association on yet another wonderful and successful auction.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for the District of Bonavista.

MR. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to stand today to acknowledge the efforts of an outstanding group of individuals who brought George's Brook-Milton, the gateway of the District of Bonavista, into incorporation as a municipality and were instrumental in the renovation of their Community Cultural House.

George's Brook-Milton is the province's newest town, incorporated May 8, 2018. The efforts of Glenn Ploughman, Morgan Ellis, Blanche Wiseman, Derek Elliott, Glen Baker, who unfortunately passed during the journey, Heather Green-Bray and Sarah Whalen began in October of 2014. This group, along with their first municipal council and the Community Legacy Foundation, forged a partnership with the historic Garrick Theatre in Bonavista to host over 20 musical performances this summer by renowned musicians, a partnership that bridges the entire Bonavista Peninsula.

These performances are occurring in the newly renovated church, strategically located in the town's centre, and now referred to as the Community Cultural House. This outstanding group has expanded in numbers and are striving to make the province's newest town, George's Brook-Milton, a proud player within the very active historic District of Bonavista.

A huge thank you is extended to all.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I rise in this hon. House to recognize one of this province's elite athletes. Ward Gosse just became a member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Sports Hall of Fame. Ward grew up in Bay Roberts but now lives in beautiful Torbay.

Ward started his softball career in 1979 and continues to play today. Some of his accomplishments include: 11 senior softball championships; a career batting average of .323; all-time RBI leader, 355; all-time home run leader in senior softball; a member of 15 provincial softball teams; a three-time national all-star pitcher, he won gold in 2012; named the second all-world team player; ISC gold medal and tournament MVP.

He was also selected by Softball Newfoundland as the best player for the quarter century between 1987 and 2012. Also, last week his hometown, Bay Roberts, inducted him into the Bay Roberts Sports Hall of Fame. He is a member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Softball Hall of Fame.

So that is his softball career. Ward also excelled in hockey. He played 17 years in senior hockey and is a member of five Herder championship teams. He won top defencemen in the West Coast league in 2003. Ward is a great athlete and a true gentleman.

I ask all Members in this House to join with me in congratulating Ward Gosse who has been named one of the newest members of the Newfoundland and Labrador Sports Hall of Fame.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Terra Nova.

MR. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to talk about a group in my district called Power to Hope. It began in 2013, a group of friends in Clarenville registered to run the Bluenose Marathon. Inspired by a close friend's battle with cancer, they registered as a team and travelled to Halifax. From there it grew, with the support of their community and by making

partnerships with Dr. H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Care Foundation and Young Adult Cancer Canada, the Power to Hope is able to assist cancer patients and families across the entire province.

The Power to Hope Christmas dinner is the main fundraiser. People come together for an evening of food, entertainment, and thanks to the generosity of businesses and individuals, both a silent and live auction.

It is the largest fundraiser outside the City of St. John's for the Cancer Care Foundation's Patient and Family Support Fund, which helps lessen the financial stresses experienced when going through cancer treatment, such as travel, meals, accommodation and the purchase of prostheses.

They have raised over \$350,000 for cancer-related causes. They have been recognized with the Outstanding Philanthropist award at the Newfoundland and Labrador Spirit of Philanthropy, and most recently the Corwin Mills Community Cares award.

I'd like for everyone to show their appreciation for a group that helps the entire province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

It gives me great pleasure to stand and recognize an outstanding volunteer, athlete, coach, mentor and friend, Mr. Albert Bud Chafe, of Harbour Grace.

The Harbour Grace Regatta is the second oldest continuing sporting event in North America and much of its continued success can be attributed to Bud and his team of volunteers who spend countless hours at Lady Lake. It is here where I first met Bud, when he was my rowing coxswain when I was in high school. Mr. Chafe has been participating in regattas across Newfoundland since the 1950s.

Bud's other sporting passion is hockey. He has been involved with the Cee Bees minor hockey association since the 1960s as a player, coach,

organizer and volunteer. It was through his leadership, where female hockey was implemented in the Cee Bees minor hockey association.

Mr. Chafe also served as a volunteer firefighter for more than 30 years, and has retired to the Top of the Ladder Club which is an active group of volunteer firefighters who help with all fundraising efforts.

Bud was named Harbour Grace Citizen of the Year in 1983 and '84. He received the Governor General's Award in 1993, and has been induction into the Harbour Grace and Sport NL Halls of Fame.

Bud and his wife, Mildred, raised eight children who have also become volunteers, giving back to their community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Statements by Ministers.

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

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

Today, I am pleased to stand here to recognize a project at the Bishop's Falls Correctional Centre that is changing lives here at home and abroad.

In 2015, with the support of the Lions Club, RCMP and Amour Transportation, the Bishop's Falls Correctional Centre Eye Glass Program began. The program consists of inmates sorting and processing donated eyeglasses. Over the last three years, inmates of the Bishop's Falls Correctional Centre have processed almost 250,000 pairs of donated glasses.

Having visited the Correctional Centre, Mr. Speaker, I've had a first-hand look at the project in action and witnessed the pride that inmates and staff take in their work, knowing that the refurbished glasses will help someone in need.

The program really has been life changing for all those involved.

In addition to providing eyeglasses free of charge to inmates at Her Majesty's Penitentiary, the West Coast Correctional Centre and the Newfoundland and Labrador Correctional Centre for Women, a 2016 project with the Lions Club saw glasses delivered to Nicaragua. More recently, the program partnered with Team Broken Earth to send glasses to Haiti, an area in desperate need of eye care. Locally, free clinics have been offered through Choices for Youth, The Gathering Place and Association for New Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the work of one individual in particular. Jackie Warford, a Classification Officer at the Bishop's Falls Correctional Centre, has been working tirelessly on this project and even joined Team Broken Earth to help distribute the glasses to those in need. I'd like to thank Ms. Warford, and Assistant Superintendent Kelly Rowsell, for their dedication to this project that gives the ability to see.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. This project is all about what it means to have 20/20 vision, both figuratively and literally.

Darin King was Justice minister in 2015 when he announced that inmates and correctional officers at the Bishop's Falls Correctional Facility had partnered with the Lions Club of Newfoundland and Labrador to establish a satellite recycling depot for eyeglasses, many of which would make their way to Haiti as part of a partnership with Team Broken Earth. That was four years ago, when the number of donated pairs of eyeglasses was 25,000.

Four years later, thanks to the dedication of amazing groups and people like Classification Officer Jackie Warford, Assistant Superintendent Kelly Rowsell, the Lions Club, the RCMP, Armour Transportation, Team Broken Earth, Choices for Youth, The Gathering Place, the Association for New Canadians, and, of course, the inmates themselves, the number of processed pairs of eyeglasses has risen ten-fold. Imagine, 250,000 refurbished instruments for seeing the world clearly, giving people the vision they need to work, live and survive in tough economies like Nicaragua's and Haiti's; and, even helping people right here in our province.

We talk about restorative justice, and nothing restores the inmate's sense of purpose and goodness more than being able to change lives in such a profound way.

I commend the minister for continuing this excellent and transformative program.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Congratulations to the inmates and staff at Bishop's Falls Correctional Centre for their dedicated work on this project over the last three years. It is truly worthwhile to get these glasses distributed to the people who need them in this province and abroad.

I would like to emphasize that the more programs we can introduce into our correctional institutions, focusing on rehabilitation and skills development, the better off inmates will be when re-entering the community.

I look forward to hearing about more initiatives like this in the future.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is truly an honour to rise today in this hon. House to congratulate graduates of our province's public and private post-secondary education institutions.

Every graduate represents an extraordinary accomplishment, as well as a stronger, more educated workforce and that is key to growing our society, culture and economy.

Every year, thousands of graduates complete world-class programs at College of the North Atlantic and private training institutions. This year is a remarkable one for Memorial University as well, which granted its 100,000th degree. Wow! The value of post-secondary education for students, families, communities and our whole province is immeasurable.

Mr. Speaker, education is the passport to a brighter future. I invite all hon. Members in this House to join me in congratulating all the 2019 post-secondary graduates.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

MR. P. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the hon. Member across for an advance copy of his statement. My colleagues and I join the minister in offering our sincerest congratulations to the many graduates of our public and private post-secondary institutions.

Through hard work and perseverance, their individual effort, along with the support of their family and friends, has culminated in this moment. They are about to embark on a new world of adventures and opportunities where they can begin to put their new skills to work.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate, however, as we saw in the Estimates Committee, that the minister has slashed funding to Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic. This is a troubling pattern for this government, and a more measured, effective and efficient approach is needed to ensure the very viability of the post-secondary system in this province.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I congratulate all 2019 graduates.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Congratulations to the many post-secondary graduates completing their studies this semester. Having been an educator at Memorial University for more than 20 years, I offer special congratulations to Memorial and its students for reaching 100,000 degrees granted.

The depth, breadth and quality of programs offered at our post-secondary institutions is quite remarkable and is made possible with support from government.

I encourage the minister to strengthen supports for our post-secondary institutions and to do more to help recent graduates so they can choose to live and work in our province for many years to come.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Natural Resources is on record last week as saying that federal Bill C-69, which some call the no-more-offshore bill, will require changes to the Atlantic Accord legislation. What changes to the Atlantic Accord legislation will be required?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, there's only one person that I know so far that is calling this no-offshore bill; that is the Leader of the Official Opposition. What we're talking about in Bill C-69 is how we develop our natural resources, Mr. Speaker. The minister and I, as well as others, other premiers across the country, our Atlantic Canadian premiers, we've been working very hard over the last three years trying to bring improvements to the current process, which was put in place in 2012. I need not remind people in this room who was actually the administrator both federally and provincially at that time.

In the old piece of legislation, CEAA 2012, it takes us three years, as an example, to get exploratory wells done in our province. What we've been advocating and fighting for is to reduce that timeline and make our province more competitive.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Perhaps I could help the hon. Premier by pointing out that C-69 would give vast discretionary powers to the federal minister of Environment.

The Atlantic Accord states that it is an accord on joint management of the offshore. In the opinion of the Premier, does C-69 represent a violation of the joint management principle established by the Accord?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I pay particular attention to the opening comments when we talked about jurisdiction to the federal minister. In fact, it was CEEA 2012 that I currently just mentioned actually did the very same thing and that was by a federal Conservative government.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to do is take the politics out of this. What we want to do is make investment to attract investment in Newfoundland and Labrador, make our province more competitive, doing so with protecting our environment. Right now once the legislation is finalized – it's not yet. It should be in the Senate either tonight or tomorrow, what we will be doing is reviewing all aspects.

Mr. Speaker, let's be very clear if there's any violation of the Atlantic Accord, we now have an arbitration clause in place as a result of the recently negotiated review of the Atlantic Accord just a few weeks ago.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: It's encouraging to hear the Premier want to take the politics out of a political offensive by the federal government. One of the stated purposes of the Accord is equality of both governments in the management of the resource and the pace and manner of development.

In the opinion of the Premier, is C-69 consistent with this stated purpose?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of sections within the Atlantic Accord that protects joint management by the federal and provincial government. I can assure the people of this province, that the principles, the intent, the purpose of the Atlantic Accord will be upheld.

We will resist – if in case there are any particular changes that would water down the Accord, that is not something that I will stand for as Premier of this province, neither will the minister, neither will anyone on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. The Atlantic Accord is fundamental to the development of our offshore in a joint management mechanism and I can assure the people of this province that is the position that we take, I take as a Premier and this government takes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: In light of that last statement, can the Premier clarify does the government intend to co-operate with the federal government in making changes to the Atlantic Accord legislation, or does it not?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, here we go again. What I've just said is that this bill, this particular bill, C-69, around natural development will be in the Senate either tonight or tomorrow. Once the bill is finalized, we will do an assessment on what the impact would be on the Atlantic Accord. I will assure the people of this province we will stand up for the Atlantic Accord, just like we did a few weeks ago.

A few weeks ago, we deepened the jurisdictional responsibilities of our province, deepened the joint management, Mr. Speaker. We'll take an overview of what the changes could include and I will tell you we will not be making changes to the Atlantic Accord unless it's to the benefit of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, those are encouraging words.

Can the Premier confirm to the people of the province that if legislative changes are proposed, that this province should make, which undermine the principles of the Atlantic Accord, that this province will not be giving consent?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, for the last three years the Minister of Natural Resources and I, we've been looking for improvements in the development of natural resources offshore. And by the way, we talk about the offshore a lot, but it also includes mining. I should make sure that people on both sides of the House here, we talk a lot about the offshore, but mining's extremely important, and also falls under the jurisdiction of Bill C-69 when it comes to environmental assessments.

So back to the offshore and the Atlantic Accord, as I just said, once the bill is completed, once the bill is finalized in Ottawa, we will take a look at it and we will be making sure and seeing where any legislative changes are required, and we'll be standing up for Newfoundland and Labrador and protecting the provisions of the Atlantic Accord.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

MR. P. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

An information note from the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour stated on January 24 that the final draft report of the ex-pat survey conducted by Goss Gilroy was submitted to the department on December 20, 2018. This was six months ago. The contract was awarded 16 months ago.

I ask the minister: Why is his department sitting on this report?

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

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to let the hon. Member know that we're not. He has a copy of the report. It was sent to

him, I don't know, a month or more ago. It's been online since then. So if there's any more follow-up to that, I can't answer your question any better than that.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

MR. P. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know where the report was sent but it wasn't received.

The department has avoided responsibility for so long that the final draft report is available on the ATIPPA website.

I ask the minister: Why does the public have to get access to the reports, which they have paid for, through an access to information request?

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

MR. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, it's very important that we have the report finalized before we release it publicly. We had to go through that to make sure it was finalized.

It's released now. It's been given to the Opposition, I would think, there. But if they need a copy, I can get them one right now; it's no problem. I can have it over to them this afternoon.

But the important thing about this report from Goss Gilroy is that it provided some clarity on some information that we are looking for. It's all about anecdotal information. And if they'd stop barbing me from the other side here, we'd be able to get the information out here. It's really important that the valuable information that was included in this report is not just of an anecdotal nature, which is what we've known in the past, which is the important thing about this report.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

MR. P. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can appreciate the drafts, because this one had approximately six or seven drafts done. The first draft stated: Some of the informants stressed the issue of unfair, inequitable hiring processes citing that these are based on, for example, who you know, nepotism and political interference.

However, mentions of nepotism and political interference do not appear in the final report.

I ask the minister: Why was this purged from the report?

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

MR. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, obviously, you have a copy of the report. I'm glad to see that. So we've established that they have a copy of the report.

The valuable information that's provided here, every one of us knows the anecdotal information that's going around the province, why people leave and why they move on. There are lots of reasons why people leave; some is economic, some is opportunity, some like better weather, and that's an important piece.

One of the things that's important is the report was dealt with – it's really hard to hear myself think let alone – I understand why they can't listen to the answers because they can't hear them because they are talking.

The biggest important piece about this is the valuable information we did receive from that, that's going to allow us to try to target approaches to bring back some expatriates that may want to come back. You have to understand the fact that once lives are built in other places, it's very difficult to get them to come back, but we're going to do everything in our power as a government to do so.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

MR. P. DINN: Mr. Speaker, I do have a copy of the report and, unfortunately, I had to go through the ATIPPA process to get it.

The first draft shared the following information from a participant. Again, I quote: The old boys club is a problem, you either need a family member in politics or someone needs to rub the elbows with someone in public service or someone on a board. If you don't know them, you are a persona non grata. We weren't going to use politics or friends to get a job in Newfoundland. People should get hired on merit.

However, this does not appear in the final report.

I ask the minister: Why was this purged from the report?

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

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

The report information spans a couple of different jurisdictions and different iterations of government. The individuals that were poled in this were some-thousand or more people that were poled in this area for surveys. It's an important thing. Not everybody left on our watch, Mr. Speaker. So it's really important to understand that part.

The information is very, very important to us. That's why we did the report and that's why we're utilizing it for the future to try to tailor our approach to ensure that we get individuals that are interested in coming back, to come back to our province.

The most important thing is the jobs plan that we've created here with Cabinet Committee on Jobs, creating opportunities to allow people who want to come back with meaningful employment, high paying jobs in a sector that's interesting to them.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

MR. P. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I go to the first draft, and it states: It is suggested that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador review its public service hiring practices to ensure equity in the approach and opportunity. And it further goes on to say: It will be important to address cronyism and nepotism.

However, this has been purged from the final report as well.

I ask the minister: Has this recommendation that was made over one year ago been shared with the Human Resources Secretariat? And why, again, was it purged from the final report?

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

MR. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, Bill 1 was the Independent Appointments Commission. As a government, we decided to put that in place.

We can laugh all we want about that from the other side, but it's very important. That's the plan we put in place, that's why we're doing it.

Some of the things that he didn't listen to in the previous answer to this was that it spans multiple governments here. These people didn't all leave since 2015 when we took office. They left prior to that as well. So they're talking about their time and why they left. It's really important to understand why they left, but it's even more important to what's going to be able to bring them back to this province, if we're able to get them back here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

MR. P. DINN: Mr. Speaker, I can't disagree with his comment on previous, but I can say on

April 9 here in this House, and I quote myself, which could have saved us some money: "The common reason expats leave and don't come back is that cost of living, high taxes and the lack of long-term, permanent employment." And I think the report is telling us just that.

I ask the minister: Do you think it's improper for government to purge complaints of nepotism, cronyism and political interference from Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that have moved away from home and want to return?

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

MR. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, that's exactly why we put the report out there. That's exactly why we cast that the report be done by Goss Gilroy anyway.

We wanted to get the information. We wanted to utilize that to further the intentions of how we're going to move forward with respect to bringing people back. Because it's very, very important to figure out why they left – that's one – but it's also important to figure out what's going to bring them back. Some of it is jobs, some of it is family life.

People want to live in different places for a lot of different reasons. You can cherry-pick out of the report whatever you like, but the actuality is very important that you figure out the information that's most valuable to us to make sure we can reach out to them and hopefully bring them back to this province where we want them to be.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

MR. P. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The lovely report that I got through ATIPPA talks about the main methodology in this study was an online survey conducted. In their own note they say the report represents a comprehensive effort. And the quote in the

report goes on to say: across all age and all income levels, the main reason people don't return is the lack of long-term permanent employment.

So, I go back and I say with reference to nepotism, cronyism and political interference purged from the final report. This is how government has demonstrated in so many high-profile examples over time, they've demonstrated nepotism, cronyism and political interference.

I'd like to know why this qualitative information in this report has been purged.

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

MR. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, the information that's in the report, we're very happy with the information that's come back. We're looking forward to implementing plans. Some of those have already been put in place with respect to a social media campaign that's going to try to attract expats back to this province. We want them here.

We want them to choose to raise their families here and, hopefully, that will be the case, but sometimes when you move away and you meet people, whether it be a spouse or a partner, and create a family, it's very difficult sometimes to move them back to this province. But one thing is for sure, creating opportunity is the only way that we see as an opportunity to bring them back. So that's why this government is so committed to the Cabinet Committee on Jobs and creating opportunity.

You don't have to look very far, other than our record, to see that jobs are increasing, 11 straight months of year-over-year growth in the economy.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

MR. P. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We've had a number of iterations of this report, and I guess the simple question here is, it was gone out to survey individuals, to get feedback, and we did get feedback and that feedback is excluded from the report. All we have are categories and numbers.

I, again, ask the minister responsible: If we went out with an online survey that was going to be qualitative and comprehensive, why have we not included in the report what we actually heard?

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

MR. DAVIS: We have, Mr. Speaker, it's in the report. It tells us why people left, what they left for and some of the reasons why they may come back, which is the important piece. I can say that more and more, each and every time I stand up here, but I'm going to continue to say the exact same thing.

We have the information from the report, why people left, why they wanted to leave and why they'd come back in the future. We're hoping to use that information and, hopefully, have some great success.

I encourage the hon. Member across the way to come onboard, help us with this. We want to get people from this province who are living somewhere else to come back and make this their home again. We want them here. We need them here.

We're on the wrong side of demographics, as the gentleman across the way always tells us. We agree. That's why we're doing some things, like the Immigration Action Plan. We've created that, put some services around the individuals who are there to ensure that the most opportunity for them to choose here to live with their families.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: My question is for the Minister of Service NL.

Last week, the people of the province were shocked to see a driving examiner arrested in Labrador for allegedly soliciting money during examinations.

Can the minister update the House on this situation?

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

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, what I can tell the hon. Member is that particular situation is a human resource issue and the individual is presently off with pay while we continue the investigation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Mr. Speaker, this is a serious allegation involving breach of trust.

Can the minister tell the House how this was able to occur?

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

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yes, Mr. Speaker, in fact, it is a very serious allegation and the matter is under investigation by the RCMP and the individual is presently off with pay.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

MR. O'DRISCOLL: Mr. Speaker, what specific actions has the minister taken to ensure that this does not happen again?

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

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, as I have said twice already, there is an ongoing investigation. It is a human resource issue, so I cannot comment further on this until the investigation is completed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Mr. Speaker, Suncor Energy has announced that the Terra Nova FPSO will be extended 10 years. This life-extension project will take place in 2020 and allow the capture of approximately 80 million additional barrels of oil.

Has the minister talked to Suncor about securing this significant piece of work in Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

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

We're indeed pleased to see that Terra Nova will be extending its project. It's very important to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I have had some preliminary discussions with Terra Nova as to how they're going to go about their retrofit, Mr. Speaker. We'll do everything in the utmost possible to get most of the work here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Some work, of course, cannot physically be done in Newfoundland and Labrador, indeed in all of Atlantic Canada. Therefore, they will have to go international for some of this work and it is having to do with the size of the hull and the repairs that are required to it.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Trades NL is in the media again today calling on the provincial government to do more for the industry by implementing a benefits and workforce development lens.

Given the slowdown in the construction sector, why is the minister sitting idly by and allowing all of this refit work to be done elsewhere?

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

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, I do take offence to the words idly by. I am indeed not sitting idly by. We have done some incredible work in the offshore oil and gas industry in this province, ensuring local benefits, ensuring that there is work continuing.

I need not point out to the Member opposite the fact that there is ongoing work happening right now in Argientia with the West White Rose Project; about 96 per cent of the workers that are there are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COADY: I can point out that Equinor, for example, we have a framework agreement with Equinor that'll bring 5,000 metric tons of fabrication work to the province and 11,000 person-years of employment.

We're working very diligently, very hard, to ensure maximum benefits to this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have thousands of qualified tradespersons in this province now unemployed while work is going outside of this province and outside of this country. That's not acceptable.

Perhaps the minister can tell the people of the province what specific progress has been made in maximizing local construction, fabrication and procurement in the Terra Nova refit?

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

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

We're anticipating shutdown in 2020 and the Member opposite knows that. We're only just beginning to have discussions with Suncor, the Terra Nova owners, to make sure that they understand we are looking for maximum benefits to this province. They understand the requirements under the Atlantic Accord of full, fair and first must accrue to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

We can't forget how important it is to the people of this province that we all have the maximum benefits. We've been very, very diligent in making sure the offshore oil and gas industry understands this. That's why we've put in place, for example, a requirement within the new OilCo to develop the supply and service industry.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MS. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The loss of the Lewisporte freight run to the Northern Labrador communities has been devastating to local businesses and communities.

So I ask the minister: What work has been done to identify costs to local businesses and to the communities before making this change to the service?

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

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

I thank the hon. Member for the question. Back, I think it was late April or early May, we actually held consultations on the North Coast and introduced some new rates. What you're going to actually see is an overall approximately 40 per cent reduction in freight and passenger rates going north. This will be the first time we've seen a roll-on, roll-off service actually on that run, something that's been promised for many, many years, so we're very pleased with that.

Just today, we have senior officials from the department and from the company, our partner in this service, actually in Labrador doing some more consultations, looking at the docking facilities, and we anticipate that we will start accepting non-perishable freight next Monday, with our first run to the North Coast on July 1.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MS. EVANS: I would just like to mention that right now the community of Makkovik can't actually accept a new boat because the dock infrastructure is not adequate and work will have to be done to bring it up to grade. I just want to mention that before I go on to my next question.

The reason why I asked the first question about what work was done to identify costs to local businesses and communities before change in this service is I want to point out that the minister stated in Estimates that cold storage available in Goose Bay for goods was more than adequate. I think he said more than adequate; however, we've come to learn that Torngat fisheries co-operative has now to take out a \$3.5 million loan, Mr. Speaker, to build cold-storage capacity in Goose Bay.

This business has been in there for 30 years, so I ask the minister: Does he feel that putting a \$3.5-million burden on Indigenous fisheries co-operative is the right thing to do, Mr. Speaker?

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

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

I, again, thank the hon. Member for the question. Mr. Speaker, in the consultations, as we move forward to this new ferry, one of the things that we took a lot consideration that took a lot of time to do was work with Torngat fisheries. One of the challenges they would have had in previous years was container availability. In the new contract, we've ensured that the adequate numbers of containers are guaranteed so that companies like Torngat can actually get the product in and out as they want to, Mr. Speaker. This is something that wasn't in place before.

So we will continue to work with companies like Torngat. We have a great working relationship in Transportation and Works and I know in the Department of Fisheries and Land Resources as well with this company, Mr. Speaker. They're a great Newfoundland and Labrador company and we look forward to working with them in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North for a quick question, please.

MR. LESTER: Mr. Speaker, the province recently agreed to ban single-use plastic bags but very little detail was provided.

Can the minister tell us when the bag ban will actually take effect?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment for a quick response, please.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to answer my first question in the capacity as Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment. The hon. Member is right, there were amendments made to the *Environmental Protection Act*. Currently, right now, within the department, we are working through policy and regulations and we hope to fully implement the ban within the coming months.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

MS. COFFIN: Mr. Speaker, this government wants to change the federal bill, C-69 to give the C-NLOPB control over environmental impact assessments of offshore oil projects.

I ask the minister: How is it not a conflict for the management body that promotes the industry to also be the agent assessing possible negative environmental impacts?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, first and foremost, it is not this government that's actually promoting Bill C-69 and the amendments. What we're actually promoting is to make our province more competitive in protecting the environment. The current process that we operate under, as I mentioned a few minutes ago, that being CEAA 2012, under the current concept what you're seeing is nearly three years to get an exploratory well approved within our province. That is really not making us competitive with other jurisdictions.

We have worked hard with the minister, I and others, trying to make sure that this province is in a better position, all in compliance with the Atlantic Accord, which is unique to Newfoundland and Labrador, making sure that we are competitive but doing so in an environmentally, sustainable fashion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

MS. COFFIN: Mr. Speaker, last fall the C-NLOPB kept a respectful distance when Husky had the second largest oil spill in the history of our offshore. Sea birds are dying out, but the C-NLOPB won't take Environment Canada's advice to allow monitors on platforms.

I ask the Premier: Why should we feel confident that the C-NLOPB can conduct independent, thorough, environmental assessments given its poor record in protecting the offshore environment?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to answer this question.

First of all, I want to correct the Member opposite. It's not C-NLOPB's responsibility to promote the industry. That is not one of their requirements. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, they are the regulatory body and, therefore, are not engaged in the promotion of the industry.

To her question, Mr. Speaker; C-NLOPB has over 30-years experience in environmental assessments offshore Newfoundland and Labrador. It wasn't only in 2012 when that was removed from them by the former administration. They have the expertise and the knowledge.

What we're asking for – and to clarify again, she asked for us to control it. What we have asked is simply for the joint management provisions of the Atlantic Accord to be respected.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COFFIN: Mr. Speaker, Husky Energy is going to have to pay a total penalty of \$3.8 million for a large pipeline spill into the North Saskatchewan River in 2016.

I ask the Minister of Natural Resources: How much will Husky be fined for their November oil spill in our offshore?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you very much for the question.

This is a very important topic. I'll say, first of all, to the people of the province, that environmental protection is paramount in our offshore, as is safety. We have to continue to ensure both every single hour of every single day, Mr. Speaker.

I will say that the investigation into the November oil spill is ongoing by the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board, and whatever fines or requirements under their review will be known as that investigation continues.

I will say this, Husky has had to pay for all of the oil spill cleanup and all of the monitoring and regulation up until this point as well.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

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

Government wants to cut the number of environmental assessments offshore and make exploration exempt, but seismic exploration is raising big concerns that is a factor in the decline of many marine species.

I ask the Premier: Will he direct the C-NLOPB to commission a study, a truly independent study of the effects of seismic testing on the marine life it is supposed to be protecting?

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

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

Again, allow me to correct the record. We're not asking for exploration to be exempt. We're asking exploration to go through the right process of going to C-NLOPB. It's a 30- to 60-day well. It is now taking up to 36 months, Mr. Speaker, to get permits in order to drill that. What we're asking is for a different process.

They're currently under a regional environmental assessment, and we're undergoing a regional environmental assessment so that all these, what I'm going to call, less impactful geological requirements of exploration wells or seismic would go then under the regional environmental assessment to the C-NLOPB.

Mr. Speaker, one further point. There have been multiple studies in the effects of seismic and they are being adhered to.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The time for Oral Questions has ended.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MR. LOVELESS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by my colleague, the Member for Mount Scio, that the following private Member's resolution be debated this Wednesday:

WHEREAS *The Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes* and the Education Action Plan both recommended developing a phased-in implementation plan for junior kindergarten; and

WHEREAS Ontario, the Northwest Territories and Nova Scotia have implemented or are in the process of implementing province-wide junior kindergarten; and

WHEREAS play-based learning promotes children's natural sense of curiosity and discovery through hands-on exploration of the world around them;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House supports the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in taking necessary steps towards establishing a junior kindergarten program.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Pursuant to Standing Order 63(3) the Private Member's resolution entered by the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune shall be the one to be debated this Wednesday.

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 Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I stand on a petition on behalf of the workers on the West Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador about the hospital in Corner Brook, which I'm great to hear that it's going to be announced in the next few weeks.

Mr. Speaker, I'll just read the petition:

WHEREAS the successful proponents for the new hospital in Corner Brook are scheduled to be announced this spring with construction anticipated to bring in the fall and, as this is estimated to be a four-year construction period, and as there are experienced local tradespeople and labourers in the area;

THEREFORE we, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly as follows: to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to encourage companies that are awarded the

contracts for the new hospital to hire local tradespeople and labourers, at no extra cost to the taxpayers, so that they can work in their own area, support the local economy and be able to return home to their families every evening.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are from all over the province: Grand Falls, Colliers, Holyrood and Conception Harbour. So these petitions are just not for the West Coast, as some people tried to portray. It's given to the unions, whoever, Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador. A lot of our West Coast will get the jobs, Mr. Speaker, because it will be cheaper, much cheaper to have people local so they don't have to pay their room and board to bring people in.

I'm very encouraged by the minister saying that there's 90 per cent in Corner Brook now in long-term care. I'm not sure that's accurate. I guess John Allan might have gave you those numbers because it's not accurate. Because, Mr. Speaker, I spoke to a lot of the people the weekend, a lot on the weekend. I just say to the minister, you should check that out, where he's getting that information, but I am encouraged that they're going to try to get the local hospital for 90 per cent of the workers.

I say to the minister, let's see if we can get that done without any protests. Let's work together with the unions, with the local people, with the companies, so we can get the 90 per cent or higher. Let's try to even work for higher at the local hospital because they are experienced, they are great at what they do. Mr. Speaker, it would be great to have Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, as we see here today – Newfoundland and Labrador, Trades NL today wanted all local – some benefit agreements put in place.

We see a poll on VOCM that 84 per cent feel that we're not getting enough local employment for the area. So let's all work together, as I have done last year. I worked out a deal with one of the unions, Mr. Speaker, and also with the company, but it fell through that Monday for some reason.

So I have no problem with stepping up and helping out to ensure that local workers are being hired. Let's try to aim higher than the 90

per cent, but I'm encouraged by the minister that he will work to try to get 90 per cent.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works for a response, please.

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

I thank the hon. Member for the petition, and quite timely, Mr. Speaker, because my first meeting of this week was actually this morning with Trades NL. We had a great discussion about, when it comes to public procurement in this process and when we're building public infrastructure, how we involve Newfoundland and Labrador workers and Newfoundland and Labrador companies.

Mr. Speaker, just last year in Corner Brook we hosted a business-to-business forum where we brought in businesses that have sub-trades that would be people that would be proponents and work with the companies building the new acute-care hospital. We had, I think, almost 100 companies from this province actually represented that day. That is one of the ways of ensuring that if the subcontractors are Newfoundland and Labrador companies that means Newfoundland and Labrador workers, Mr. Speaker.

It's also important we work with the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Association, which we plan on doing. One of the steps coming out of the meeting this morning with Trades NL is our next step will be to form an advisory group or a stakeholders group, which will include Trades NL and other groups such as the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Association as we go forward, to get that input, to see what Newfoundland and Labrador benefits agreement looks like.

Mr. Speaker, they've come away from the CBA and now they're talking about NLBAs, and the reasoning behind that is when we look at communities in this province, we look at a community that stretches from the tip of Labrador to the East Coast of the very far east of this province as well, Mr. Speaker. We had a

great meeting this morning and looking forward to moving it forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: 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 infertility is not an inconvenience; it is a disease of the reproductive system that impairs the body's ability to perform the basic function of reproduction; and

WHEREAS infertility affects men and women equally; and

WHEREAS treating infertility is excessively expensive and cost prohibitive; and

WHEREAS infertility impairs the ability of individuals and couples to conceive children and begin to build a family;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to implement the program that assists individuals and couples allowing them to access affordable in vitro fertilization services.

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

Mr. Speaker, this issue has come up to me on numerous occasions in my own district. I'm sure other Members of the House have probably dealt with it as well. It's a pretty sad situation actually. A lot of families try to start a family and for reasons they can't conceive, they go through this process.

Now, we have a fertility clinic in the province which helps them when the woman gets impregnated. The problem is the procedure to get this done, they have to go out of province; it's a huge cost and the province doesn't assist in the bill. It's solely the burden of the family.

That's a sad state of affairs when some people can't afford to have a child for those reasons. It's something that we've brought up. This is not the first time this petition has come to the House of Assembly. We understand the limitations on the province. There's probably not enough people availing of that service to have our own full-fledged clinic here, yet we have the clinic to deal with them after the fact – pre and post but not that procedure.

This is a big burden. It's an obstacle placed on a lot of young families, people wanting children. That's such a wonderful thing to happen in anyone's lives to have their child and cost being an issue is affecting a lot of these people and is a very stressful. And one other thing, you can get this done at a cost and if it fails, you can go back again and get it done again and it's an added cost. Can you imagine how much that adds up and how much stress it puts on a family that want the simple thing in life of having a child?

It's something, I think, that is money well spent. I don't think you'll get any opposition to it. It will cost money, but at the end result – what is the result? A happy family and I don't think we should be able to put a price on that.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services for a response, please.

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

Infertility is indeed a challenge and a stress for some families. Just to put on the record, the Department of Health funds the fertility clinic that the gentleman opposite referenced to the

tune of \$675,000 every year. Over the last two years, there have been 90 cases through that clinic, Mr. Speaker.

Assisted reproductive technologies the Member opposite references, again, fall into a category where we do not have the critical mass to maintain or gain skills in doing that. So like paediatric cardiac surgery, we would send these people out of the province simply for that. So I wouldn't like the Members opposite or the public watching to think that there is no support for people who have fertility issues.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further petitions?

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 many students within our province depend on school busing for transportation to and from school each day; and

WHEREAS there are many parents of school-age children throughout our province who live inside the English School District's 1.6 kilometre zone, therefore do not qualify for busing; and

WHEREAS policy cannot override the safety of our children;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to eliminate the 1.6-kilometre policy for all elementary schools in the province, and in junior and senior highs where safety is a primary concern.

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

Mr. Speaker, this has been presented a multitude of times over the last number of years, and particularly what we've heard, and I know my colleagues here and I know colleagues on the other side have heard the same thing when we were campaigning, about what particular issues were important. We heard about all kinds of things relevant to taxation and health care and all that. But relevant to a number of families, particularly those who have school-age children or grandparents was around safety and busing.

They realize the general population has identified the number of cars has increased dramatically. Speed has been increased dramatically. The RNC and the RCMP will tell you that, that speeding is up. People will tell you drivers are distracted because of our social media and because of the devices that people use, so all of these are factors that add to potential safety issues for our children.

We've since talked to people around what would be the best way of doing it. I know I've had some disputes with the school district about what the actual cost would be to implement a program such as this. We had it costing less than a third of what the school district would say it would be.

Since then, my learning since this question has been put out to the general public, conversations with administrators who have called me in and said, let me explain, Mr. Brazil, here's what I could do if I was given the opportunity to have input. I've talked to providers of the services, bus owners, who've sat down and said here's what we can do, here's how this would work, we have seats that are available, the routing is off. Decisions are being made at a school district level without consultation with the general population within that area, particularly the school administration and the providers of those services.

So we're saying, and the parents are saying, administrators are saying and the providers are saying if there was a dialogue and a discussion, the cost of providing safe transportation to and from school would be minimal and would guarantee safety, not adding the other disruptions that we have for parents who have to give up their job because they have two or three or one child that has to get to school, and the

anxiety and the apprehension, or grandparents or providers or guardians having to try to find a way to provide that type of service, and God forbid, when we have shutdowns because of snow and that, the impact that has on families.

We'll have an opportunity to talk to this, but we do encourage government to seriously look at coming up with a solution that works for all the children in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development for a response, please.

MR. WARR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly appreciate the hon. Member bringing his petition to the House. He brought up costs and the costs are considerable, and the costs are based on data received from the school districts on current routes, schedules and usage. We've taken the action to address the concerns. We talked about the current policies comparable to policies throughout the Atlantic provinces and certainly throughout the country, and we'll continue to do that.

While we're on costs, I've had the opportunity to address this with the hon. Member, and during the election platform they came with a costing of \$3.5 million based on their reports, that's the costing that they reported during the election, and I'd certainly like to see those figures. So if the hon. Member could share that \$3.5-million figure with me, where you came up with that, I'd be happy to have a look at it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further petitions?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I call Order of the Day.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day, Sir.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. A. PARSONS: At this time, I would call Motion 5, Interim Supply.

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. the Government House Leader – I'm jumping ahead of myself, Mr. Speaker.

I have received a message from the Lieutenant-Governor, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: All rise, please.

I have a message here dated 6 of June, 2019.

As Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, I transmit a request to appropriate sums required for the Public Service of the Province for the year ending 31 March 2020, by way of Interim Supply, and in accordance with the provisions of sections 54 and 90 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, I recommend this request to the House of Assembly.

Sgd.:

Lieutenant-Governor

Please be seated.

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. the Government House Leader, that the message and a bill be referred to a Committee of Supply.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the message, together with a bill, be referred to the Committee of Supply and that I do now leave the Chair.

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.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Reid): Order, please!

We are considering the related resolution and Bill 2.

Resolution

"That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2020 the sum of \$2,089,149,900."

CHAIR: Shall the resolution carry?

The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's a pleasure to speak in the House today on Interim Supply. Anyone who knows me, Mr. Chair, as many Members in this House do, know that I very much enjoy campaigning, going door to door doing the constituency work that's involved in being an MHA, but I'm also a parliamentarian, and I enjoy what happens in this Legislature and the business of the Legislature and how we conduct ourselves here. So it is a pleasure to stand and discuss the important legislation that makes the lives of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians better.

Mr. Chair, I recognize that we've had a historic election in Newfoundland and Labrador and that we're now in a minority government. Some outside these walls view this as a hindrance or as

a challenge, but I view it as an opportunity. I see it from an optimistic point of view and I see it as an opportunity. I understand there are going to be challenges in such a setup, Mr. Chair, but I believe that these challenges will make for stronger legislation, stronger collaboration and a stronger government.

I also recognize, Mr. Chair, that with this historic election, it should lead to greater attention from the public on the proceedings of this House. I realize that for those who may be watching in the gallery or watching on television, Mr. Chair, that some of those procedures may be foreign or sometimes strange.

Mr. Chair, I want to take a moment to explain the purpose of Interim Supply, the bill that we're debating today. It allows for the financial administration of ongoing government operations during the interim period while *Budget 2019* is being debated and approved by the Legislature. The bill is based on a proportion of the total amount of the provincial budget to be voted, which this year is set at approximately \$7.58 billion.

In March, we passed an interim supply act, which provides funding until the end of June 2019. That bill provided approval and Interim Supply for a sum of approximately \$2.86 billion.

Mr. Chair, we expect the budget debate will last for several weeks. There are 75 hours of debate, including Interim Supply; therefore, in order to ensure that people in the province get paid and services continue to be funded, we're providing funding certainty in the event that the debate goes beyond June of 2019, which is the reason for Interim Supply.

Interim Supply bill is to seek approval for approximately \$2.09 billion in spending. The bill will allow us plenty of time to continue debate on *Budget 2019*. The balance of approximately \$2.6 billion, after the first and second Interim Supply amount to be voted, will be approved with the passing of main supply in the coming weeks.

In addition to the funding and timing of this Interim Supply bill, it makes provisions for the proper functioning of government finances

including transfers of funds from the Department of Finance to other departments for expenditures or compensation for benefits and other associated adjustments; transfers from the Consolidated Fund Service account to other departments for speciality retirement and other payments, should they be necessary; transfers of funds to and from various heads of expenditure to facilitate expenditures for financial assistance as may be approved from time to time by Treasury Board.

Mr. Chair, we received questions about calling the election in 2019, and some people didn't quite understand, I guess, the difference between American politics and Canadian politics. It does take up to 75 hours to pass the budget in this Legislature, which should bring us to sometime late June or even into July.

So, Mr. Chair, the funding in Interim Supply ensures that services continue to be funded and our valued public service employees, along with our former employees who are now pensioners, continue to be paid.

Interim Supply provides necessary funding to government departments so that the ongoing work of core public service can continue without disruption. This is truly about ensuring the proper functioning of government while we do the work of *Budget 2019*. The new initiatives that are promised in *Budget 2019*, Mr. Chair, will be approved upon approval of *Budget 2019* itself.

I think everybody here recognizes that a vote against Interim Supply is a vote against the continuation of funding for services, a vote against the continuation of payroll for employees and pensioners. So I have faith, Mr. Chair, that this House will not vote against Interim Supply, will not vote against the continuation of services or the payment of our public service or our retirees.

So with that, Mr. Chair, I'll allow debate to proceed.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's always a pleasure, of course, to stand in the House and speak on anything, for that matter. It doesn't matter what we're talking on, but a budget issue is always good because you can have more broad leeway in the conversation that we're into. The budget right now is top of mind for a lot of people because it does affect everyone and everyone's lives and what we do.

One of the aspects of the budget that I heard when I campaigned in my district was the first weekend and people started realizing: What happened? What do you mean the tax is not coming off insurance? What do you mean the budget is not passed? I don't understand. So it came as a bit of a lesson to the general public. Sometimes they don't really know sometimes what we do in here. But it became a point if you explained to them that the budget was introduced, but it has to be debated and passed and what have you.

Any changes announced in the budget are simply what they are, announcements, until they're actually voted on. After which they become part of our budget document and it's in force throughout the province.

One of my commentaries became common at a lot of doors, and people mentioned to me. I said this budget should have been their red book, if this is what they were campaigning on, in essence. When the election was done if government had changed, our party would have introduced our own budget anyway. Which, in hindsight, when we look at the Parliament we got now with a minority government and all sides are trying to negotiate some kind of changes or improvements to the budget from whatever perspective we look at, maybe that would've been the right approach. Maybe we should have looked at it that way and then we could've had a more collaborative approach right now since the election, because we're back and forth in somewhat of a negotiation anyway that's been reported over the last week or more.

Maybe that's where we should've been. We should've sat down and done Interim Supply which we're doing now, had some more time and introduced a budget that kind of meets all needs of all Members in this House in the fall sitting. But, of course, that's not where we are and the budget was introduced last week as it

was already originally introduced in April, which brings us to where we are now and we're funding Interim Supply to buy us more time to get the budget document in place and passed, obviously. If the budget doesn't pass, we've got a bigger problem out there then with a new election, which I don't think anybody wants, by the way. But it is a reality we face and it's what you live with in a minority government.

Some aspects of this budget, there are good things. I don't think, as a whole, this is a horrendous budget, but I want to remind people the same things that came in in 2016 that almost cost the current administration power, is still in the budget. All those tax and fee increases, those 300 taxes and fees, they're still there. So they never changed them. In 2019 we're hearing what was there in 2016 and it's still there. The levy will go next year, the insurance tax on auto is being eliminated but it's still there for home and commercial. HST increase is still there. All the other fees associated with everything from drivers' licences, you name it, it's crippling the economy. The gas tax is still there – it's no longer a gas tax, now it's a carbon tax, but it's still 4 cents on gas, 5.5 on diesel. It's still there, and the list goes on. That's what people care about.

My colleague for Conception Bay East - Bell Island brought up today, our Opposition House Leader here, the 1.6 busing. We heard that, I know I heard it, door after door after door, 'cause I got a lot of young families. I have the second largest municipality in the province outside the city, obviously one of the fastest-growing areas in the province, and my colleague for Topsail - Paradise shares the same problems in a new growing area, and Paradise especially and parts of CBS, these young families, they want busing. They have young children; they're being affected by this policy. If my district was more older-based with a lot more seniors it probably wouldn't be such a big issue, but in my district that's the issues.

I say this – and I know my colleague, the Minister of Education, has heard me say this many, many times – my voice is the people's voice. The people who we represent in our district, those are the people that matter. It's not my issue. My children don't require a school bus anymore. I have no skin in the game personally;

it's an issue that I think is very important to the people that I represent. I've heard it and I continue to hear it, and I'll continue to advocate for it. Every opportunity I get to stand in this House, regardless of the budget or whatever opportunity, whatever relevance or leeway the Speaker or this Chair is going to give me in this House, I'm not going to miss the opportunity to remind people of my opposition and my passion against the 1.6-busing policy.

I will not give up on it and I think everyone here in this House by now should realize that every opportunity that's available, I will bring it up. I do encourage the minister – I mean, again, I might repeat this, we have a good relationship – to seriously consider, outside of what's happening in other provinces, what other places – I get you do cross-jurisdictional scans. I get all that; I really do.

This issue in this province, in those districts that are affected by it, it's a very personal issue. It's your children. Again it's your most valuable resource we have. A child walking the road has to come first. Forget what happens in other provinces. I don't think the cost is where you say it is or officials say it is, I really don't and I think it should be analyzed better, broken down, look at whatever districts are required. Not every place needs this extra busing. There are some areas this is a non-issue. Some areas it might only be one bus, maybe two buses here and there.

When you put a blanket approach and you say we need this many buses for every district, that's not accurate. I think that needs to be done, a more forensic look, dig down and figure out the exact cost because I believe if we compare apples to apples and we sat down and said this is the actual cost, I think the conversation will change. Right now we're looking at \$8 million or \$10 million cost and everyone goes, whoa, but that's not where it's to. I respectfully ask you to get your –

AN HON. MEMBER: That's what I asked for.

MR. PETTEN: Right – and get to that point, Mr. Chair. The minister rightfully points out he asked for that in the petition section, but I just want to remind and reaffirm that's why we've struggled with the comeback we've gotten from

the department the last couple of years. Those numbers don't jive with our numbers and we want to see a better breakdown of numbers then we can talk, have a serious conversation.

I still believe that, at the end of the day, it's going to be hard for any official in any department, especially the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, to go against our rationale that this policy needs to be adjusted and it's not going to break us. It's not going to bankrupt the province. At the end of the day, we're going to have children going to be safe, which is ultimately what we all should aspire to do.

Mr. Chair, back to some of the budget items and (inaudible) budget items. The budget was brought in on the Tuesday; we were gone to the polls on a Wednesday. I heard it after every door I went to, I heard some form or another – and when I look at every door, every door that had any negative remarks it was: They never gave you much time; pretty rushed. What's going on? No one had time to get ready. I don't think that's fair.

Those were some of the statements – not my statements; these were what people told me. I'm sure Members opposite, because I see a couple of people smiling, heard the same thing I would say. It felt like it was rushed, and I always said incumbency protects you to a degree, that in a rushed election like that with a short time, the incumbent always got the advantage. Incumbents usually have an advantage in any election. It's not always a guarantee of winning but you're always prepared or you should be prepared. I'll be the first to say, I was ready. I was as ready probably as anyone in this House was ready, but I can't speak for the other, I don't know, 70 or 80 extra over and above incumbents here – I believe about 120.

So maybe if there were 80 new people or 70, whatever the numbers are, they were not ready. I knew it, I seen it. We never had all our nominations done, but if you want to do things fair and square and across the board, and to be honest, to be open and let everyone have a fair, honest analysis of what they have to pick for our democracy, why not give them more time?

When it comes to the budget, why not debate the budget and let it pass. Then go to the polls on your budget, then throw it out there: This is our budget – not a document that we were led to believe in the pageantry of a budget announcement here. The minister stood one day for two, 2½ hours and introduced the budget with all the bells and whistles, but, at the end of the day, that was just an introduction to the red book. It wasn't the budget document.

Now, it's been introduced last week. Okay, now it's a budget document, but it was a blueprint, or in the red book it was their blueprint. That's where people get – that has frustrated people, Mr. Chair.

I've stood in this House and I've repeatedly said it over and over again, the electorate are pretty knowledgeable people. You cannot fool the electorate. I've said over and over again as well that when election time comes, the electorate will tell you what their feelings are. This government came very, very close to losing power. I'm telling you, by the closest of margins when you look at the numbers.

We're a minority now, it could have easily been flipped around this House. Why? Because you never listened to the people. Ultimately, this is where you lose focus. No matter what stripe is in government: blue, red, whatever, orange, if you lose sight of the people that you represent, you're in big trouble. I've said it, we've said. There was a small group over here, seven people, and we got up repeatedly, repeatedly, we kept saying the same thing.

Back in 2016, there was a filibuster in this House and we got up over and over again, and *Hansard* will dictate the same commentary: You better respect the people, people will not forget this. Do you know what? They never forgot it, but as it turned out, good on the government opposite, they pulled it off. Even though, like I say, it's a minority, but don't lost sight of the fact that people's voices matter.

People are concerned. People care about insulin pumps. People care about 1.6 busing. People care about the levy. People care that they pay an extra carbon tax. These things matter to people, Mr. Chair, they matter. Yet, I'm still seeing – there's probably a willingness to agree now, to

negotiate, or to be more receptive to what we have to say, but I don't know if we're there yet. I don't know if we're there yet.

We want to work on a collaborative approach, but here's the budget we presented in April, no changes. That's the collaborative approach. By the way, we're not changing anything but we want to be collaborative. We can't afford to bring in that crowd's options, because we want to be collaborative. Think about that. That was said. I'm only repeating what was said publicly. That's exactly what was said.

My response when I heard it said publicly; I said, well, that's pretty good. You want to work with us, you want to be collaborative. We're all in this together. We're all here, everyone is happy and it's one big happy family, but we're not changing anything. No, no., but we're going to tell everyone we're going to work together and be collaborative.

There are 15 districts in this caucus. There are two, possibly three more in the Third Party, and there are two independents. Those people matter. Those districts matter. Those concerns matter.

This side of the House never voted for the status quo, Mr. Chair. They voted for change. They voted for issues that are important on this side of the House. They didn't like what they saw over there. Why shouldn't some of the issues from this side of the House be taken into consideration when you're bringing in a budget? If you're doing a collaborative approach –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PETTEN: – why not take all of our concerns into account? Instead of having a Blue Book or a red book to come out in a budget, let's have a new budget document that takes all of our considerations into account. Is that what collaboration is about? At least that's what I think it's about. I think no one in this House can dispute that that's what collaboration is meant to be.

We had a private Member's resolution last Wednesday, and we collaborated. We actually came to the floor and there was collaboration, because government had their issues, the Third

Party had issues. We introduced the motion. At the end of the day, we all collectively came to an agreement: send it back to Standing Orders with some changes. And that was a good exercise. It's the first time I've seen it since I've been elected, that we actually collaborated and we made a difference. We can actually agree for the betterment.

A budget document is no different. We never once asked for the budget to increase spending. That was the accusation made. We can reallocate some monies within that budget to make some of our asks realistic. We also realize every one of our asks are not realistically going to be probably given this year. We're not looking for the world. We're looking, though, to be treated fairly.

Again, Mr. Chair, it's not about me, or the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island. It's not about us. It's not about the Member for Harbour Main. It's about the people we represent. I'll continue to say that as well, because that's never lost on me.

When you go to the doors and you knock on the doors and you ask for their support again, they remember. They knew if you up for them. They know if you cared about their concerns. That's what matters to people, and I can't say that enough.

In politics – and I've been a political junky all my life and I've followed politics at all levels – that's where people lose their way, because it becomes about them. The minute it becomes about you, you've lost your way and people will punish you for it. If you always keep focused and realize what you're here for, what we're all elected to do – we come in here, we're Members for different areas for a reason, because those people put us here.

They have stuff they'd like to see in that budget. Why not? Why not, Mr. Chair? Why can't we do that? But, no, we're going to be collaborative, but we're not making any changes. That's what we get back.

Again, the public hears that. People in my district heard that. I'm sure people all across the way heard that. What's so wrong with collaborating with us? Your actions have to

match your words, Mr. Chair. Saying words is fine and dandy.

I'll go back in my final seconds and remind the sitting government today, people are listening, people are wise, and people are not fooled anymore. We have a very smart electorate that pay attention. They read the news. Believe it or not, some of them actually watch this. I learned that during the election, too. There are people who actually tune in to the House of Assembly channel on a daily basis, which I think is nice, because at least they get a better flavour of what's happening outside of QP.

So, in saying that, Mr. Chair, I thank you for your time, and I do hope government takes some consideration and look at things in a more broader scope, because we're all represented here evenly across both sides of the House and we should be given that consideration.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's nice to be back in the Legislature, back into the 49th sitting of the annual General Assembly. I look forward now to 10 minutes, which is going to fly by way too fast, to talk about why I'm proud to support the budget.

First, I'd be remiss if I didn't say congratulations to all hon. Members of this House on all sides. Whether you've got a small, mighty team or a large team, running a campaign can be a daunting task, raising money and getting volunteers together. You go out and you do your best. You put your name on a ballot because, I believe, you think that you can make a difference in representing your little corner of the world, Mr. Chair.

I've just been through three elections, '13, '15 and now '19, and a hotly-contested nomination in '14. So maybe I can call it four times, and it's always very, very, very humbling. I've gone in with a pretty strong mandate every time, and it's very humbling when people invest of their time

on your campaign, but most especially when the electorate puts their faith in you, Mr. Chair. There are hardly any words to describe what that feels like and that never gets old on election night. I'd be remiss if I didn't, like some of my colleagues, thank my family. Without my husband and my daughter, I don't think I could have had the outcome that I did. There are a lot of family sacrifices that come with public life, Mr. Chair. There's a lot of time on the road.

If you represent a district like I do and you go home on the weekend, that means that I got on a plane here Friday morning after a meeting and I flew into my district, and I worked until about 8 o'clock in my constituency office and then I drove three hours north. Coming back yesterday, that means I get in my vehicle and I drive 275 k back to the airport and I'm on a plane for 2½ hours, and I land and I go to work like I did last night. Having said all that, it is a tremendous privilege to serve the public, Mr. Chair.

The budget this year was called *Working Towards A Brighter Future*. I have to say, since we started this sitting and we're only into our second week I look around – I'm only in public life not quite six years but the changes that I've seen in this Legislature in less than six years is unbelievable. It fits with one of my quotes: The only thing constant is change. And that's true of this hon. House; the only thing constant has been change.

I joined a team of maybe six of us in Opposition when I came in 2013. I was the only female on that team for quite some time. Then we went on and we worked very hard and we won seven by-elections. I never aspired to be where I am, unlike my colleague for Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde who I think in his yearbook he wanted to be an MHA. I never aspired to be here, Mr. Chair, but coming from the Coast of Labrador and I guess always being a little bit vocal and advocating for things when the opportunity opened up, when now MP Jones moved on, a bunch of people reached out and said you should put your name on a ballot.

There were a lot of things we did not have in the District of Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair. We got some things, Mr. Chair, while I was in Opposition. Then we formed government and things were not good. My former – I'm looking

at the Conception Bay East - Bell Island. He was good to me; he was the minister of Transportation and we got some crushed stone and things like that. We were working collaboratively back then, but recognition is not always given to that.

We formed government and we thought we had a billion-dollar deficit; we had a \$2.7-billion deficit. Things were really difficult. In Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair, Mr. Chair, the investment it was unbelievable, a brighter future. We formed government in 2015, and from '15 to '19 Labrador has never seen investment in its history like it did under this Liberal government; \$175 million or \$171 million federal-provincial in the Trans-Labrador Highway.

When I started representing this hon. House in 2013, I left my community and I was driving on gravel road for the first couple of hundred kilometres on my way to the airport. When I did hit pavement it was 40-year-old, very dilapidated pavement. Now, as of just last season, we had 122 kilometres of new pavement. It never gets old for me. When I land at the airport and I'm driving home – and it's something that most of the rest of the province took for granted. Who's excited because when they're travelling through their district they're driving on pavement? Well, I can tell you it was refreshing for me.

We were very, very challenged with our broadband communications. I stood in the Opposition for two years and I was on my feet every single day presenting petitions about how challenged we were around telecommunications. We had hotels that couldn't log online, very basic things, unless it was somewhere after midnight and before 5 a.m., to see what tour buses and groups were looking to book into their establishment. In January of '18, the largest broadband announcement in all of Atlantic Canada was made in my district, \$12.6 million, and that was another project that the province was happy to partner with the federal government on.

There was very little cell coverage in my district. Just last November, November 18, the Premier came up and we were very happy to announce a partnership, my colleague from TCII was there, and the president of NunatuKavut and the chair

of Nunacor, and we went into Red Bay, a beautiful little community in my district, World Heritage UNESCO Site, home of the Basque whalers, and we announced cellular for six communities, Red Bay and five other communities a little further north, and we're hoping that's going to come in June. Amazing progress and we're not talking years and years, from 2015 up to 2019.

A new ferry went on, the *Qajaq W* went on this winter, bit of a rough start, very heavy Arctic ice, and there were questions in this hon. House, and why is the boat not capable of following an icebreaker and things like that. I had the privilege to get all dressed up and get on one of these little helicopters, go out and spend some time on one of the icebreakers and I got to see first-hand what the ice conditions were like in the Strait of Belle Isle. I never saw anything like it in my life, when the Coast Guard was bringing up solid and having to go back and go forward.

What's happening now, Mr. Chair, now that the ice is gone, that ferry is running pretty much on schedule every single day and we're getting lovely emails and feedback. No vehicles are being left behind because we have the increased capacity from 240 to 300 passengers. We have increased our commercial traffic, and we have increased our passenger capacity.

So, I've had the opportunity to make the first run myself and everybody that I talked to was talking about the new ship, how quiet the vessel is, and it's all been very positive, Mr. Chair. We've waited a long time for that.

In many regards, Labrador is now only opening up to the rest of the world, Mr. Chair. Tourists want to come. Our numbers are at record levels and, as we build our infrastructure, as the road gets completed to Goose Bay, people are going to come in through on the Northern Peninsula and leave down through Lab West on the Quebec side at the other end and not have to circle back.

I told the story many times about an old guy that I ran into in my community in Charlottetown. He was down changing a tire on the gravel road in his fancy motorhome. I said you didn't mind taking that thing down here. He said we've wanted to see your part of the world all our

lives. I'm 83. He said the wife is over 80, and we're out of time. So they came. Just imagine what's going to come. That's just an indication.

I'm looking at the Member for Cape St. Francis who visited my district last year and he thoroughly enjoyed it. So, Mr. Chair, there's more of that. There are so many things I could talk about, what we have done as a government for communities of mine like water and sewer, like fire and emergency services, like putting fire trucks into communities, like putting community buildings in, working in partnership with people like NunatuKavut Community Council, like working with the Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company Limited who is an absolute model for success I believe that this whole province can look at.

Mr. Chair, there are so many things. I could spend all afternoon talking about the good things that a Liberal government have done for Labrador, have done for the people that I represent in the beautiful District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair and it is for all of these reasons, as we continue to finish the Trans-Labrador Highway, that's a high priority, and to continue to invest in communities, I am more than happy to support *Budget 2019* because we want to continue to build on the success that we've seen in recent years.

Thank you again for the opportunity.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's an honour to represent the people of the District of Harbour Main in the House of Assembly. I want to thank the people for electing me. I feel privileged and proud to serve on their behalf. I'm also proud to be a part of this caucus with so many talented and dedicated representatives from all across this great province. Our caucus, under the distinguished leadership of the Member for Windsor Lake, will work hard to ensure that each of their districts realizes its full potential and also holds this government accountable.

The District of Harbour Main represents a portion of Conception Bay South, Conception Bay Centre and a portion of Conception Bay North – all picturesque, scenic, historic and undeniably beautiful places to live. Because of our proximity to St. John's, many of our residents commute on a daily basis for work purposes and post-secondary education. Our proximity to many of our major industrial sites like Come by Chance, Long Harbour, Bull Arm and Argentia provides employment to our hard-working tradespeople whose skills, training, background and wealth of experience is recognized by all provincially, nationally and worldwide.

The potential in our region is vast and unlimited but, unfortunately, at the present time, it's untapped and underutilized, so there are indeed important issues that need to be addressed. First of all, let's talk about jobs, not only in my district but in the whole province. We are seeing skilled, qualified Newfoundlanders and Labradorians not getting the jobs they are qualified to hold, being overlooked and displaced in favour of outside workers; Newfoundlanders and Labradorians not getting the first option or opportunities; Newfoundlanders and Labradorians watching as outsiders take the coveted positions they deserve.

Mr. Chair, I heard these concerns repeatedly, these frustrations at the doorstep during the election campaign and I continue to hear these concerns, as I meet my constituents and the workers throughout the towns and communities in which I reside.

Also of particular importance are issues that I've heard relating to our seniors. The sad reality in our province today is we have a changing demographic. More and more, our population proportionately has a growing number of seniors and decreasing number of births, so our health care policy must reflect that change in our society. We need a broad and all-encompassing outlook on the health of our citizens. So isn't it true, Mr. Chair, our quality of life is very much determined by the quality of our health? Quality health care means reducing wait times for surgeries, for example, making emergency rooms more efficient. Mr. Chair, I heard those

concerns from our senior citizens at the door and continue to hear them day to day.

Access to quality health care for seniors is suffering and, Mr. Chair, our seniors are struggling. That was made loud and clear as I campaigned in the District of Harbour Main. We must always look for ways to support our seniors and not only support and care for them, they must be made a priority. Sadly, I've heard from the people in the District of Harbour Main that that is not the case now, nor had it been under the current administration.

So not only seniors though, Mr. Chair, many of the constituents of Harbour Main told me that they are struggling to make ends meet. They are overtaxed. Excessive taxation was a common complaint that I've heard. They're taxed to death. They want to eliminate the levy immediately – not prior to the legislated date, immediately. It is a regressive tax. Even the government's own Independent Tax Review Committee acknowledged that.

Nor can the people afford to live with the sales tax on homeowner's insurance, along with the sales tax on car insurance. We know that the money people save on insurance tax and the levy will be reinvested ultimately in the economy and this will generate economic activity, jobs and revenue.

Mr. Chair, I've also heard loudly and clearly from the people in the District of Harbour Main that we need to remove the age cap to ensure Medicare covers the cost of insulin pumps for all persons with Type 1 diabetes, not just current users of insulin pumps – a real concern for people that I've met in the District of Harbour Main. This investment in access to care will produce long-term benefits for people and savings for the province in the long run.

Of course, as has been mentioned already by my colleagues, another very pressing issue in the District of Harbour Main is the 1.6-kilometre school busing policy. We cannot put a price on the safety of our children. Why, Mr. Chair, is this policy still in place in view of the real and present risk that it presents to our children? Many of our schools, particularly in rural districts like my District of Harbour Main, have schools in areas that require children to walk on

dangerous highways simply because they live within the 1.6-kilometre regulation.

Mr. Chair, finally looking at *Budget 2019*, what's behind the numbers? We all heard from our Finance critic, the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port, in his response to the budget. He described the real decline what actually is happening in our communities and our cities and towns in Newfoundland and Labrador. And it's not just numbers and statistics; it is young people leaving, families leaving, ultimately a future slipping away. The loss of people in our province is a critical problem. By 2036 if we do nothing, according to the Population Project at Memorial University, our population could fall to under 470,000 people, from 525,355. This will not be enough of a workforce to sustain the services at current levels.

Mr. Chair, we are a province so rich, so rich in opportunity, so rich in resources, so rich in our people, but most of all, rich in our most valuable resource: our young people. As a university teacher for the past number of years, I witnessed first-hand in the classroom the talented, qualified, exceptional young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who have to leave this province to seek job opportunities elsewhere. Young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are concerned – they're worried about jobs, about the economy, about the high unemployment rate, about the crippling debt. We need to ensure that our young people can find opportunities at home. We need to foster an entrepreneurial environment so that our youth can stay here and prosper.

In addition to my duty as MHA for the people of Harbour Main, it is also an honour to have been appointed Justice and Public Safety critic, as well as critic for the Status of Women – important portfolios which I shall carefully examine, question, scrutinize and critique in accordance with the responsibilities and expectations that goes along with such a responsibility as being critic in the Official Opposition.

Mr. Chair, we must find ways to create an environment whereby our young people want to stay. We must nourish an environment and support and foster an environment that is positive in that regard.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll just stand and have a few words on the Interim Supply and let people know that Interim Supply is just in case the budget don't get passed by the end of June, that all the duties of the employees, payments that the government would have to make and payments to the employees, will continue on. This is just a measure in case the full budget is not approved, so we're debating what they call Interim Supply to make sure that there is no services cut and every employee will receive their benefit.

Before I go on, I just want to thank the people of Humber - Bay of Islands for their support. When people know in the last year, year and a half, the situation that I was in and decided to run as an independent and win with almost 70 per cent, it's a true testimony to the people that they know the work that you do, what a person does, so to all the residents in Humber - Bay of Islands, all the people who supported me, I thank you very much.

I'll just get into, briefly, the three concerns that I heard in the district. One is the hospital, and I'm glad to hear from the Premier that an announcement is going to be made in the next couple of weeks. Number two is try to get as many local workers as we can on the hospital, and I'm encouraged by the minister that he's aiming at 90 per cent or higher. And the third thing that I'll speak of very briefly today, but I've got a lot more to say later, is the way I've been treated in a year, year and a half.

When you get a Mrs. Mighton, 92 years old, standing at the door and say, I'm some vexed at them women and that Ball man. When you get Fred and Nancy Carbury, good friends who never got political, when I knocked on their door and seen them out in the garden, and they said don't give up – don't give up, we can't let injustice be served in this province. So I will go on further about that later because that's a personal thing that they insisted. And I have to

say, Dale Kirby was out with me for four days door-knocking, and I'm glad he was, because it was good at least for him to see people out in the district talking about how we all got to be treated fairly in this House of Assembly, and I'm glad Dale came out and I'm glad he saw face to face what people really thought and said.

I won't get into it because it's a sideline for me, but I will continue on and I will follow up and I just give you an example: text messages from Mark Browne. There was a certain individual on the phone when Mark Browne called me about the text messages, and I hope that when this is made public, I hope that individual is going to have the courage to stand up, because there was another witness on the phone. When the Premier stood up publicly and said there's no foundation to this, we're going to find out what foundation there was, but, anyway that's just some of the incidents that happened.

We all talk about we have to have a respectful workplace here. Just imagine, I just say to anybody, respectful workplace, just imagine if one of your colleagues sent another colleague a text and it said: For eff's sake, you can't believe a word he says. Is the cyberbullying?

How about they turned around and say: Well, I feel like smacking him up the side of the head – the budget was announced March 27, the allegations started April 8 after – but when I get those millions, he's getting some smack then. Is that cyberbullying?

That's what I had to face by the way, just to let everybody know. Anyway, on the District of Bay of Islands, I'm just glad the hospital is going to continue on and I'm glad that we're going to get 90 per cent local workers also.

Mr. Chair, I was speaking to the Minister of Transportation and Works about a lot of the roadwork that needs to be done on Route 450. The minister has agreed that we will sit down and he will come out and have a look at it. Part of it is due to the flooding that we had. There was some major work that had to be done in the John's Beach area and the Frenchman's Cove area. Because the weather came early last year in late October, early November, they couldn't complete the work, so that work is started again this year.

It's no good now to just go do the pavement because a lot of that is going to be tore up anyway so the minister has agreed, and I thank the Minister of Transportation, for that commitment to come out and have a look and see what he can do to help out with Route 450 in the south shore of the Bay of Islands.

Capital works is also another big issue in the district. I just want to just let everybody know that there will be an announcement soon according to the minister – according to Gudie Hutchings, some of the announcements made for the West Coast. I don't think any of us from the West Coast can attend because of House of Assembly is open, but there will be some announcements made with some of the funding that was approved. I'm assuming then, for all the province, that all the Members will be made (inaudible).

We hear in this House, we're talk about collaboration, and it surprises me – it actually surprises me. I always thought we always collaborated. Sure we get up and we have our different points of view but if people in the general public were here – and I know when I was the minister, how many times we had meetings with people in the Opposition. Sometimes we disagree and we get up on our feet and we do disagree on issues and points and that's part it, but the majority of times people always work together in this House.

Do you see how many times there are people on this side over talking to the government Members and government Members over talking to the Opposition? Not only because the Liberals are in power, but when the PC government was in power, I worked well with Kevin O'Brien. I worked very well. Darin King, I worked very well with Darin King. So this idea that there's no collaboration in this House, that we're always fighting and bickering, that's just not true. We always work well together – always.

I asked the Member for Cape St. Francis: How many times was he in my office? I remember what we did on Bell Island, the big water treatment that you needed done, the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island, and the same thing happened to me when we needed funding down our way. It's the same thing. There's always collaboration. Sometimes when we

disagree on points that don't mean that we're not working together. We are working together.

So I feel very strong that the government will maintain its power for a while and I'm sure there's going to be a lot of to and fro. There are going to be a lot of differences, but I know from the people of Humber - Bay of Islands who bring their concerns to me and I'll bring them to the House of Assembly, they have no worry that I will be speaking up and I will be working with the government to better the District of Humber - Bay of Islands, and I will continue to do that as I've done for many years.

Mr. Chair, there's one thing that I find very strange in this House is that when you go speak to a government Member and you feel that you're not being listened to, you speak up and all of a sudden there's a bit of friction, that's not always the case. A lot of times you have to speak up to let people know that you're raising these issues. And a good one for me, a great one for me, and not from me but I wish it was just resolved, are the workers in the hospital in Corner Brook.

If I had a commitment today that the workers in the hospital will be hired on somewhere across the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador to go through the local trades people – I know the iron workers up in the Member's district, the iron workers, what they are saying give us – we always got a local preference. We'll do what we can to help out. That's not a lot to ask. It's not a lot to ask.

And there may be discussions in it about the cost and you may have to travel. If you have to travel away and you don't have to pay for that travel, you don't have to pay the accommodations when you're away, what would that equal to if you stayed home? So that's an easy \$5 to \$10 taken off the bill if you got local people staying home. That's the way that we worked it out last year with the iron workers and the company.

The iron workers, to give them credit, they were going to put in an extra \$100,000. So these are the big differences that I find on how we can collaborate and work together and I look forward to that.

I know in the capital works area, Mr. Chair, there are still areas in Lark Harbour with no water and sewer, absolutely none. Now, partly it's due to back in the '90s, when they were offered funds, they wouldn't take funding. They had a plebiscite and said no, we don't want water and sewer. So partly, it is their own doing, but now we can see a lot of funds going into the Town of Lark Harbour and they're very pleased.

I was down to a seniors' party this week and they couldn't be happier that the tender was let because the community hall, at times, runs out of water. We all know the value of a community hall in a town. There are weddings there. That's where you have your firemen's ball. That's where you have a lot of functions. The seniors, a lot of the town councillors, a lot of the youth that's where they all go. So they're very pleased with that.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention all the volunteers in the Humber - Bay of Islands, all the first responders, a lot of community groups, recreation groups that work so hard for the town. I know that we work with government themselves to help out. And I shouldn't say this but I was just dealing with the minister for a JCP. I can't make the announcement but I think the Town of Humber Arm South will be very pleased that they'll be getting a JCP to help with the community garden and things around.

That's the type of collaboration, that's the type of things that's going to benefit the community and bring the youth involved. So we're looking forward to that announcement and, hopefully, the funding will be approved soon.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I look forward to rising again.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters - Pleasantville.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm very happy to rise in this House of Assembly again today to speak about *Budget 2019: Working towards a brighter future*. I'd like to thank the hon. Member for Humber - Bay of Islands for trumping the announcement here today, but that's good. We're happy to work together with all Members in the House of

Assembly to try to get good projects out of the door for people in our community.

First of all, Mr. Chair, this is the first time I've had the opportunity to get up and speak during debate since the election happened. So I just want to say a huge thank you to the people of Virginia Waters - Pleasantville for entrusting me with this fantastic honour again. I will try to do my very best not to disappoint.

I also owe a few thank-yous to the volunteers, many of whom are friends and family. When they started as volunteers, they definitely became friends of mine throughout the campaign. They gave so tirelessly of their time and talent. As we all know, none of us in this House would be here if it was not for the fantastic individuals that gave so freely of their time, so thank you very much to people who helped me in my district and to the people who helped my colleagues and the Opposition and my colleagues from across the other side of the House.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say thank you to two individuals that were candidates in Virginia Waters - Pleasantville again this year. I'd just like to say a big thank you to them for the hard-fought campaign and clean campaign that they ran as well. I wish them the best of luck in all their future endeavours and I know we haven't heard the last of those two strong women in our future as well.

Like many of us in this House, I wear a couple of hats, but the most important hat I wear, as always, is the MHA for the historic District of Virginia Waters - Pleasantville. And I always say historic because it has existed since 2015, and I was very excited that it was created. I've had the pleasure of representing – and some may argue in this House – the best district and people in this province. I know that will spark debate, but I always say that's for sure the best people in this province.

Being an MHA is all about people, and many of us have said that many times in this House. Being out in the community, working with your schools and organizations to help them in some small way make our communities a better place to live and work and raise a family is very, very important to each and every one of us.

I could not agree more with the Member for Bonavista, as well as the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, that children need sports infrastructure near their school grounds. That was a very good point made by my colleagues, and I'm excited that I was able to, and pleased to, work with some community groups in my district such as the St. Paul's track and field complex group. This group have been working for a track and field complex for more than 15 years, and I'm so excited that we will be making an announcement in a very short while about that.

Also, a new playground for East Point Elementary to the tune of \$80,000 – this investment is not only for the students, but also for the entire community, something we can all be proud of. East Point Elementary does fantastic work, like many of our schools, but they have a unique aspect. There's so much more diversity in this school. More than 17 different countries are represented in that school family.

While I'm talking about schools, I'd be remiss if I didn't recognize and say a huge thank you to the students that voted for me in this past election under Student Vote NL. I was so impressed that I had all my schools in my district participate: Mary Queen of Peace Elementary, East Point Elementary, Vanier Elementary, as well as St. Paul's Junior High. I think this program –

MR. LANE: (Inaudible.)

MR. DAVIS: Sorry?

MR. LANE: Who did they vote for?

MR. DAVIS: Oh, en masse, en masse.

I think this program is a perfect way to encourage young people to get involved in the political process and take an interest. I was so humbled to receive such a strong mandate from these students, and I promised that I'm not going to let them down as well. And the hon. Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands was razzing me about that, but I think he would've got a good number from his schools out that way too.

I encourage every resident of Virginia Waters - Pleasantville that may have an issue to please reach out to my office any time and I will do everything I possibly can to support you to get some resolution to those issues that you may be facing.

Mr. Chair, I think it's an opportunity for me to highlight a couple of the budget items that are specifically related to my department that I'm so pleased that the Premier asked me to serve as the minister for as well. Within the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, whether it's through skills training, student financial assistance, labour relations or various social or economic supports, the objective in this department is the same: It's to help people.

We are guided by the philosophy that we should do everything we possibly can to meet the commitments to enable people to live independent and fulfilling lives. We want to ensure not only the best services and programs are offered to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians but to help them achieve employment and independence.

On that note, we've had some Members across the way talk about employment and opportunities. I mean, just some of the things that are pretty interesting that we've had the opportunity of being a part of in this government is infrastructure plans that are \$2.5 billion investment, 5,300 persons-years of employment annually; health care infrastructure, whether it be the long-term care facilities in the West Coast, more than 4,600 person-years of employment; Bay du Nord, 22.3 million person-hours of employment over the life of the project; whether it's Voisey's Bay and Vale underground mines, 16,000 person-years of employment during the five years. These are good initiatives that were started on this side of the House. Tacora Resources or Scully mines, 260 positions just to name a few.

We've had 11 consecutive months of year-over-year gains in employment, which is positive. Is it perfect? Absolutely not, we still have to do more. We still have to continue to focus on that, but everything we can possibly do as a government and as a group of MHAs we should always try to develop the infrastructure we can

have everywhere in this province to support employment opportunities.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. DAVIS: I'll talk to the hon. Member for Mount Pearl North after if he has some ideas, because I think he has a great idea over there he must want to tell me.

We are committed to supporting accessible and affordable post-secondary education which is reflected to our continued investment in Memorial University. These investments include \$87 million to the College of the North Atlantic's 17 campuses; \$78.2 million to maintain tuition levels for Newfoundland and Labrador students, including \$4 million to Memorial University and \$1.1 million to the College of the North Atlantic. This is real dollars that is really making a difference in our community.

Should we do more? We're trying our best, in the financial situation we're in, to always do better; \$12.2 million for the province's public post-secondary institutions for infrastructure projects; \$1.8 million to complete the \$18.5-million Heavy Equipment Centre of Excellence in Stephenville. These are all great investments for regions all over our province.

I'm also happy to acknowledge the continuing investment in new programming at the College of the North Atlantic. Some examples are: \$858,000 on a pilot, new geological technician certificate program at the Grand Falls-Windsor campus. I'm sure the Member for Grand Falls would appreciate that one. There's also establishing non-destructive testing training program with the College of the North Atlantic campus in Gander; trade designation for air maintenance engineering program for the College of the North Atlantic campus in Gander, making Newfoundland and Labrador only the second province in Canada to provide this designation; \$1.6 million over four years to support the new three-year respiratory therapy program here at the College of the North Atlantic St. John's campus this fall.

Mr. Chair, March 7, 2019, the government released the terms of reference for the independent review of the post-secondary

education system in our province, and we announced the appointment of an independent Committee of Experts to carry on this review. And where they're started, I'm anxiously awaiting to see the results and the recommendations, and that's expected in 2020. It has been 14 years since a review has happened into post-secondary institutions in our province, so it's quite timely and we're quite happy about that.

There have been many challenges in our economy in demographics and challenges to post-secondary institutions. I'd love to go into some more detail. I hope to get the opportunity to stand up again in this House to get up and highlight some of the great initiatives that we're making within our province, and hopefully things that we can collaborate on with our colleagues across the House of Assembly as well.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

Did the Member rise to speak?

MR. JOYCE: No, but I will.

If I'm taking up anybody's time, Mr. Chair –

AN HON. MEMBER: Lots of time.

MR. JOYCE: Lots of time? Okay. I was actually standing and applauding the minister because I know the relationship that we have with the minister and the work that we had the last little while. Some people are over there again applauding me for recognizing the minister and the work that he's doing, but that's what we all do. We all work together and we all collaborate.

Mr. Chair, there are a few things that happened in Humber - Bay of Islands that I'd like to bring up that I'm very pleased with over a number of years, and a lot of the work is done through the volunteer work but also, even when the PCs were in government, there was a lot of work done that's a continuation now with the Liberal government.

Mr. Chair, I use the ballfield in Gilliams as a prime example of volunteerism and how a small bit of money from government can go a long way. I remember when Scott Blanchard and that group went and won the softball field in the North Shore. There was a commitment made at the time and I was the one who made the commitment that I would work with them to get the softball field up in the old softball field in Meadows. Actually, the minister at the time was Kevin O'Brien. We got the funding there and we went up and they starting digging the holes. They started digging the drill holes and came down and there was 16 feet of mud, so I had to go and tell Scott, look, we can't put this here; we have to move it. So he said: We have an idea; let's put it in Gilliams. So that's where the idea started with Scott Blanchard and Linda and the whole recreation.

Last year, Mr. Chair, was the first time that they had a provincial softball tournament on the North Shore in memory, because of the work of the volunteers on the North Shore and some funding from it. Why is that so important to have a softball field? Because when you see the amount of youth, the numbers of the youth that go to that field in the daytime and nighttime, you'll understand that now they're off the streets.

I always remember a quote and I use – the same thing as Jamie Brake, up in Meadows, and his recreation and the whole town of Meadows that worked together to get the arena, outdoor rink, how much that's used. Now they received funding to put up an outdoor roof on it. It is not closed in, but it's going to be an outdoor roof on it to allow longer periods of time, less cleaning, less maintenance.

What the work of Jamie and Scott and others have done to keep the youth active and keep the youth in their area, it reminds me of a quote from 1994 World Cup Soccer. This was just after the Rodney King riots in East LA. After the riots, we all know what happened in East LA because of that. Then it was the World Cup Soccer in East LA. What struck me most was the soccer coach, a little, old, humble soccer coach and all the media ascended on this soccer field in East LA. They looked at the coach and they said: Are making a difference of what happened here in LA? This humble man – and I'll never

forget it – and this is all about the recreation people in Newfoundland and Labrador, and especially the two in our way. He said: I can't guarantee but two things I will guarantee. One, when the kids are on my field, they're off the streets. When they're on my field, they're under my influence, not the influence of the streets.

And that's so important for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians when you think about all the volunteers who put so much time into the recreation, how much work you're doing for the youth, to develop the youth in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I also got to speak about the first responders on the North Shore and South Shore, and of course Corner Brook. Corner Brook has a lot of great first responders. I don't think the Humber - Bay of Islands is any different from the first responders across the province.

I know I dealt with Duane Antle for a while and there's no more of a professional person than Duane Antle to promote the volunteer firefighters across the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. There have been a lot of improvements made in fire protection and first responders. There's one thing, Mr. Chair, that I'm very proud of, as being a part of. For the firefighters across the province, the professional firefighters, not only volunteers, to bring in presumptive cancer. That was huge for a lot of the volunteers and professionals. It's something that they worked at for years. It was completed under the Liberal government at the time and I happened to be a part of it.

I'm so grateful for all the volunteers, the first responders who go out now and maybe have a fire, maybe have some very toxic chemicals, you wouldn't know how much effect it will have on you until 15 or 20 years down the road. To be able to be covered to protect your family, that's the kind of improvements that Duane Antle and the firefighters association have been pushing.

I know a lot of volunteers in the Humber - Bay of Islands area, and even the Corner Brook Fire Department applauded that decision and I'm sure all across the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, for all first responders, I say thank you because I'm talking about the people of Humber - Bay of Islands but I'm sure that any

first responder in any of the districts here will put their life on the line for anybody that they're trying to save. So to all first responders, thank you very much for all your work and dedication.

There's another group in the Humber - Bay of Islands that I deal with a lot: the town councils. Some new Members may not have had the amount of time yet to work with all the town councils, but the work that they put in, a lot of times, very seldom do they ever get paid, but a lot of work that they put in to the town councils, sometimes it goes unappreciated. When you're on the front line for a municipality in any district in the province or any community in the province, sometimes you here some complaints made and people don't feel you're doing enough for them. But they have to be recognized, the town councillors, the mayors of all the towns in rural Newfoundland.

And also, Mr. Chair, all the town managers, clerks in the town offices – have you ever noticed that most of the clerks in the town offices, they make a big difference to the town? They're not just doing the book work for the town; they're not just following the town. Many times those people help out with the fire department, they're dealing with the recreation group, they're with the drama group or they're with the historical societies. They're the ones, the backbones. So to all the town managers, the town clerks for all rural Newfoundland and Labrador, I say congratulations.

There's something else I have to bring up, Mr. Chair, when I happened to be the minister and I spoke out to the municipality at their AGM. Mr. Brian Peckford, who I know is in Lewisporte, but Brian Peckford brought it up at the time for the professional administrators that they wanted something in the *Municipalities Act* to help protect them and give them a bit more teeth and a bit more protection.

I was so, so proud to speak at their convention at that time and commit that there'd be something in the *Municipalities Act* and they would have input into the *Municipalities Act*. And we can't forget the professional administrators in the province. They go through a lot. They do a lot of work in their town, so we must ensure that they're protected in the *Municipalities Act*.

I know the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate is very much behind that, and I know he was a big proponent of that at that time. I just have to recognize that, because that's where Brian is from, from his district. And I know the Member then was very much involved and supporting that, because he worked with the Town of Lewisporte and he understood how much the need was for protection in there. So I just want to recognize that of the Member and of Mr. Brian Peckford with that.

So there are always more things that we could do in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I also want to thank a lot of the local volunteers in the district. I just mentioned the recreation groups, mentioned the first responders, the fire departments, a lot of church groups, a lot of historical society groups that are involved and a lot of seniors' groups that take an active role in their town.

I was to a seniors' event in Lark Harbour on Saturday night and you wouldn't believe how much work they do in their towns. To the seniors' groups, keep up the good work; you're the ones with the experience that we need to learn from and help out the younger ones in our area.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

MR. FORSEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's an honour for me to rise in this House of Assembly and to represent the District of Exploits. I'd also like to thank the members and volunteers of my campaign that I had the pleasure to work with during the campaign. It was a different experience for some of them, probably a totally different experience for me at this point. But we had a great campaign. We walked door to door. We talked to a lot of people, Mr. Chair. As I listened to the speeches here today speaking of employment, speaking of work, yeah, there are different areas with different things happening but in our district we do have some employment.

We have, of course, the Superior Glove down in Point Leamington, which is a viable operation. They ship all across the world. They

manufacture and ship to their supplier in Acton and then ship that out into the rest of the world. We have a few industries like that. We have a few manufacturers. We have the, of course, the Superior Glove and then we have the plant down in Bishop's Falls. That's the plant that did all the manufacturing down there for the Hi-Point Industries. They ship out stuff across the world as well.

To a big extent, Mr. Chair, people are still looking for industry to happen in our area. We have forest resources, we have mining and we have lands. With the forestry, I think people are looking for more opportunities in that. I know they lost a couple of opportunities in the past and it's probably given them a sore spot in our district that they'd like to see more done in that aspect of it. Of course, I would like to also see more work in that area. So we have to expand on the industries, attract more industries and make it viable for those industries to come in.

Again, Mr. Chair, there was also other things. Tourism was another one that was mentioned as I went door to door. We've got beautiful little communities. Right on the end of our district, we have Fortune Harbour. We have another little community – my hometown actually – of Leading Ticks, a beautiful little community, scenic. We've got a fish plant down there. Icebergs pass right through the same doors as they do all across the Northeast Coast.

To get down there, we need viable roads, infrastructure of course. If the roads are done, I believe we can drag in people. We can have some bed and breakfasts, more bed and breakfasts, and more things in the tourism industry.

In my hometown now of where I reside in Bishop's Falls we have the beautiful Exploits River. Tourism, of course, you know what tourism can do in that area, Mr. Chair. We have people flock to that area every year for probably six weeks of the summer and they love to catch salmon. They watch the salmon going up the river and it's a very enjoyable experience. Probably we could tap into some of that resource on a bigger scale. So there are lot of things that we can look at in regard to bringing employment into my district.

On the other part of that, Mr. Chair, I can't sit down without talking about our health care and, of course, that leads back again to the Botwood Hospital, the Dr. Hugh Twomey Health Care Centre. The 24-hour service there cut down to 8 to 8 is just not satisfactory – it's really not – to people in the Exploits District, especially in the Botwood area that are closer to that hospital and, again, Leading Tickles, Fortune Harbour and the outlying area that really rely on that service.

I've heard stories that they even get there probably 10 to eight and they won't be seen. They are sent on to Grand Falls-Windsor, up at the Central Newfoundland hospital up there, which is not satisfactory, Mr. Chair. They need the service that they can avail of, be comfortable and be contented with knowing that if they can get as far as the Botwood Hospital, at least they can be assessed and be treated.

I know again, Mr. Chair, I won't drop it because there was a promise made in this election that the service would be replaced at that health care unit. And we want to see it done. I know the residents of that area also want to see it done.

But, Mr. Chair, getting back to the employment, seniors was another issue that we had. Our community, our district is becoming an elderly population. We have a lot of seniors on the outlying area and they'd like to avail more of the seniors' homes. Some are ready to go in, some can't get in. They're lonely in their homes and they'd like to get into those seniors' homes, but they just can't do that.

Mr. Chair, again, the Dr. Hugh Twomey Health Care Centre, yes, we have 20 beds coming and it is supposed to be starting this summer as far as I know, but I'd like to see more done on the 24-hour service.

Roads again – actually I've talked to people over the weekend when I went back to my district. It was great to get back in my district to see the people who voted for me during the election. The House was open so I didn't get a chance to get back to see them, but I'm looking forward to get back in the district, work more with the people of the Exploits District, to get out around and thank a lot of the people that voted for me in the district. That will give me a lot of time then to see more needs and see more things that's on

their plate, see what else they need. I know they have quite a list.

Mr. Chair, it gives me great pleasure to stand here and talk about my district because I think the Exploits District is a wonderful place to live, but we need to do more on employment. We need to do more health-wise, industry. My district is no different from any other district in the outlying area of this province. I know it's not and we're all looking for the same thing.

So, collaboration, working together, as we mentioned before, and making sure that those things are done, those things are completed, working together and putting something together so that everyone in our province, everyone can stay here, everyone can avail of our own workforce, stay and raise families, and keep this province alive.

We know how close we are to losing populations and the elderly are getting older. As they pass along and the young ones are leaving, it's going to make it tougher and tougher to be here. So we are at a crucial point in our government, in our Legislature. We have to, I think, make things happen in our districts, especially in employment, we got to bring in industry, we got to bring in developers so that we can have people here and make this province a place that we want to live.

So, with that, Mr. Chair, I thank you and I look forward to speaking again in the coming days.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. J. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll probably pick up on what my colleague from Exploits was speaking to and it has to do with, certainly, the budget but I often wonder sometimes – with my limited experience here – if we actually do a cost-benefit analysis of the measures that we're bringing forward when we're looking at a budget, are we looking at the bottom line sometimes. And you'll hear me say this more than once, something I believed in,

still believe in, and will continue to believe in, that we either invest now or we're going to pay a lot more later.

I want to start off by talking a little bit about a conversation that I had with Dr. Suzanne Brake, who is the Seniors' Advocate. One of the things when I took on this job, I said I must go around and make myself aware of the issues of those who are in that position, what they have to say.

Certainly I look at this as an opportunity, speaking to Dr. Suzanne Brake, as a way of looking at investing in seniors in the independence of seniors. A few of the things that she said to me and that she would like to see: a review of the long-term care policies, operations and facilities. That's part of doing a cost-benefit analysis. What are the needs that we have, what are the resources that we need to put into it because if we want to talk about bang for the buck, it's going to come down to what are the needs, how do we make sure that those needs are taken care of, and that we're doing it efficiently, but most importantly that we're looking after those people who most need it.

You've heard me speak to this already; she suggested to restore dental care coverage for seniors. It's a matter of health. It's pay now in making sure that dental care is taken care of and even those of us, for example, who have dental coverage, that dental coverage even with the plans that we have, it doesn't always cover that full amount. But if will imagine a person who doesn't have that and it's a choice between going in pain, going with poor dental health, poor dental hygiene and the long-term consequences on that person's health, the ability to live independently and the cost to the health care system as we go down the road.

Another thing we talked about was if we want to make life more affordable for seniors and to alleviate some of their stresses, maybe we could start looking at covering the cost of government-mandated requirements such as a medical examine for drivers over 75. So we impose a medical examine on the people who may not be able to afford that, and that's fair enough, but if you're telling people to do it, then maybe government needs to look at how do we take that cost away from our seniors and make life more

affordable for them so that they can that ability to drive around.

For my own mother, driving is key. It's a key of independence. You don't have to depend on people. You can get around and you can interact with your friends. It's so much a part of people's independence and their health and their interaction with others. So that's a simple thing. It wouldn't cost much in the budget, but it's something that would mean an awful lot to the seniors who have a limited income, yet have to pay the government-mandated requirements.

Certainly a big fear I heard going door to door is that Muskrat Falls is petrifying an awful lot of our seniors. They really do not know – maybe it's the media hype, but they're truly afraid of what this will mean to their ability to afford even the simple things like heat, light, food.

For a lot of our seniors, especially those who never owned a home before but are depending on rent, have rented most of their lives or have a very small income, rental subsidies, affordable rental subsidies that put the power, the ability to choose where to live in the hands of the individual and not in the hands of the landlords.

Certainly more accessible design for our seniors so that they can live independently, and one of the other things we noticed there's an awful lot of not-for-profit groups out there in our province that work with seniors. Boards that may be in charge of housing or other activities, but they don't have the resources to hire individuals. Something there along the line that would allow these small, not-for-profit agencies the human resource support that would allow them to carry on the work.

However, I will talk about another report and I don't know if any of you are aware but the RBC put out a report *Family Matters: the cost of having children on women's careers*. I will tie these two together, but in this report it noted that women between the ages of 25 to 38 saw earnings drop by 4 per cent in the five years after having a child and, in effect, women ages between 25 and 34 saw their income cut by half compared to women with no children.

It obviously concluded it comes at a significant cost to women's careers. This is especially true

if you look at the ability of women to take advantage of the 18-month maternity leave. A great opportunity, however, first of all that year's maternity leave is spread out over 18 months, so there is a reduction. So here are the little things that will affect families and women's ability to participate in the economy. But here with this government in the contracts that it negotiated with our various public sector unions, for the women who do choose to take the extra six months of maternity leave, they are required, then, to pay their health premiums plus those of the employer.

Now, let's think about this for a minute. We're looking to encourage people to have children, to raise a family, yet at the same time we're taking that benefit and we're reducing it over 18 months, and we're also saying now you must, if you want to maintain your health, you've got to pay your premiums plus the employer's at a time when your take-home pay is cut significantly.

Think about that. What does that mean to a family? If the person chooses then no, well I'm going to stick to a year, it's too late. You make your choice at the beginning, you stick with it; if you choose, then, to go back after a year because you realize I can't afford it, you don't get the rest of the money back. You're stuck with reduced benefits. So it seems in many ways, even here within this government, for all the talk about investing, we do an awful lot more to disinvest, to add disincentives to having families.

We notice in the same RBC report that younger women, 25 to 29, lose an additional 14 per cent earnings due to taking leave at a time when there's the opportunity for career advancement, so there is an outside impact on the earnings of young women. No wonder affordable daycare is important. Think of it as a long-term investment. Now fathers, on the other hand in the report, see their incomes rise, so the career costs are largely on women.

The same study also noted that women and men are working less to care for their older family members, their parents and older aunts and uncles within the family. They are the sandwich generation. I've seen it in teaching. I'm sure my colleague for Bonavista will attest to the same, and colleagues, that you see it there, where

teachers are rushing home to look after their family. That, I would say, is commonplace with a lot of young families now today.

So to go back to my original point, if you want to help families, if you want to encourage people to settle down, to raise a family here, make Newfoundland truly welcoming, then how do we make it so that the families have the supports they need in place so that they can look after the children and their aging parents? How do we show or encourage them that they don't need to move out of this province? If we want to keep people here, we want Newfoundland to be a great place to live then, in successive budgets, we've got to start looking at these services we provide not as services, not as costs, but as investments in the future if we truly want to see young families stay here and make Newfoundland their home, and Labrador too.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I applaud my colleague from St. John's Centre there. He was my teacher in high school as well, so when he speaks, if I don't listen, I get clunk in the side of the head too.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. TIBBS: Yes. Like I say, he taught me lots back then and I like listening to him today as well.

I'd like to resonate when he talks about the dental care for the seniors. He said something, I think, last week, he talked about how seniors are walking around nowadays and they are very embarrassed about their teeth. They don't smile, it holds them back with social anxieties, it holds them back from going to events, from going to job opportunities, or just seeing family, getting out and about in the community. It's a travesty for these people because that's no reason to stay home. People are in pain, sepsis can set in and it can lead, down the road, to much greater health problems as they get a little bit older.

One of the biggest things that I heard going through my district, Mr. Chair, was the shortage of doctors in Newfoundland and Labrador. The answer, I don't have it right now for myself, but I think it's something that we really need to look into. I know one doctor has left in Grand Falls-Windsor and we could be left with up to 1,700 patients without a family doctor, and that's totally unacceptable.

We've heard many things from grooming doctors here in Newfoundland and Labrador coming up through high school, college, that want to stay here and trying to get them here. I mean, we have great doctors from outside of Newfoundland and Labrador and outside of Canada, don't get me wrong, but to hold those doctors here, we have to find a better way because it's totally unacceptable. And to leave 1,700 people without a family doctor, that's a big gap that we're trying to close.

I'll talk about the hospice again for one more second. Once again, I applaud the government for making the monetary commitment to it. But, like I say, we need a time table here. We have a board of members out there that are waiting for this. The power is going through the building as well and they need some answers here soon about what's going to happen, Mr. Chair, in the future. Of course, some people are waiting for it on a week-by-week basis. People are dying and they need results as well.

Mr. Chair, also I'd like to talk about the data centres. It's a commitment made in both books. I know it's made in our Blue Book that data centres can bring hundreds and millions of dollars to build a data centre. As far as I know, it could be another \$100 million worth of equipment inside of a data centre. The jobs can be renowned.

I know Cyxtera was one of the companies; they represent Google. They came to the Grand Falls-Windsor council, they said that Newfoundland and Labrador, Grand Falls-Windsor, in particular, has a great climate, the water is there and they wanted to build some data centres in Grand Falls-Windsor.

The council from Grand Falls-Windsor, Barry Manuel and Mike Browne, these guys worked very diligently to try to get that resource to

Grand Falls-Windsor. From what I'm being told, Mr. Chair, there was very little help from the government at that time. They couldn't be guaranteed any power rates, but that's something that we will be looking forward to in the future. It's not something that's let go. I think it's something that needs to be looked at. It can be a great resource for the province and we can collect a lot of money there.

I'd like to also talk about the daycares here in Newfoundland and Labrador. In July 2017, the government implemented a new policy under section 13(5) of the *Child Care Regulations*. So basically, anyone in the child care setting who has nine years and 11 months service as a certified educator or less will either have to go back to school or take a layoff. The policy now states that you need 10 years of certified service as of July 31, 2017.

So, on the ground, Mr. Chair, what that basically states is that Little Stepping Stones, out my way, is a daycare that had to close their doors at the end of this month. The girls there had 14 years of service, but according to those deadlines, they did not meet that deadline there. They were three months shy, even though they had 14 years of service in the early childhood education.

There are two girls now that have to lose their jobs. Brenda Wootton who owns the daycare, she went publicly and looked for two more people to fill the position. She had three résumés of people who could meet these requirements and all three résumés were from outside Canada.

They're finding it impossible right now, as the wait-list to get into this diploma program could be anywhere from three to five years. That's very debilitating for us and as far as I know, Mr. Chair, there are going to be more daycares that are going to be closing down here very soon.

I know we're into the summer months now, but snow clearing. Snow clearing is going to be a big issue as we get into the winter months. The drive from Grand Falls-Windsor to Gander, the drive from Grand Falls-Windsor to Deer Lake, many people make it. There are lots of people who work outside the province. We live in a very small world today when it comes to travel.

Many people go abroad. They go to Western Canada. I've done it for 16 years. So I've travelled that highway pretty much every month for 16 years now at 4 o'clock in the morning. I've travelled through eight, 10 inches of snow to get there, and I've seen cars off the road. I've seen trucks off the road and seen ambulances off the road, and that doesn't seem to be good enough for us as well.

I'm hearing self-sustainability; if we can get a plan for some more self-sustainability – and I'm sure my colleague's going to talk more about that as he gets up. I think if we could grow some of our own fruits and vegetables, or put some more money into growing our own fruits and vegetables here on the Island, I think that could be beneficial as well.

We all know that living on an island, of course, it can be debilitating. We're waiting for ferries to come over. It can sit on one dock, if we get iced in it can stay there for up to three or four days at a time. Three or four days at a time on the other side, all the way to St. John's to get processed, and then back out across the Island again. Everybody here knows that if you have a piece of fruit or some vegetables sitting in your fridge, we don't get two weeks out of it. We'll get a couple of days out of it and that'll be it. So that can be hard to deal with as well.

We're also dealing with, Mr. Chair, from what I understand, there are over 200 communities still with a boil advisory for their water in Newfoundland and Labrador. So I think we need to sink our teeth into that, find out why, find out if there's anything else that we can do. I think we are getting better at it, but I think it's something that we should be looking at as well.

Water, doctors, these things are the basic necessities of human life and we shouldn't have to – some people feel like they might be living in a Third World country. I know people in Grand Falls-Windsor with the doctor shortages, they're very scared. They're very scared for their children as well. And, of course, that backs up the hospitals.

I know if you have a doctor to go to, obviously, you're going to go to them first, if you have access to a doctor. If I call and I make a doctor's appointment, I know I got – okay, two days.

Okay, I can lay off for two days. But if I don't have a doctor to call, where am I going? I'm going to the emergency room. Then you get a backlog in the emergency room. Now we have an eight- and 10-hour wait in there. It's no reflection, of course, on the people that work in the health care industry. They're doing the best they can, and they do a fantastic job. I know in Grand Falls-Windsor they do a fantastic job. So kudos to them.

The taxes here that my colleague talked about earlier, about the taxes and the levies that weren't taken back or weren't taken off that were added back in 2016, that's a big reason why people aren't moving home. Like I said, I worked in Western Canada for 16 years and you always hear tell of people, I can't wait to move back to Newfoundland and Labrador, can't wait to move back to Newfoundland and Labrador. That prevented so many people from moving back here, it's not even funny.

This is not a report, this is not a study. This is me drilling out on an oil rig, talking to people. When are you moving back home? I'm not. Well, why not? I can't afford to. That's just horrible for people to say, but that's the reality we're living in right now. How many other people do you hear, well, I got to go to Alberta? Well, why do you got to go to Alberta? Because I can't afford to live here. I know it's not easy to be living where we are sometimes, but we definitely have to look at taking that tax money that they're taking on the people from Newfoundland and Labrador and once again reinvesting it back into the people so we can use it.

I know if somebody has \$400 at the end of the week of taxes that they could have saved, they're not going to put that back in their pocket at that point. They're going to try to spend it on a movie theatre. If a person goes to a movie theatre, they're going to spend it on dinner. The waitress at the restaurant, she's going to take that money and she's going to spend it on a bathroom renovation. That guy making the renovation, he makes money because he's doing the renovation. So it just goes on and on, and money is meant to be circulated. We're not meant to hold on to money. If we only got \$20 at the end of the week in our pocket, then that's exactly what we're going to hold on to.

Anyway, I'd like to thank the members of Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans again for giving me the opportunity to represent them, and I'm going to do the best that I can.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's certainly a pleasure to stand in this House once again to speak to Interim Supply. Mr. Chair, of course, as has been said, basically, we're just making allowances to pay the bills until the budget is passed, and I have a feeling the budget is going to pass. I just got that feeling it will pass but we'll see what happens, but I got a feeling.

Mr. Chair, I'm going to take this opportunity to speak to an aspect of life here in Newfoundland and Labrador that is on a lot of people's minds, and it was alluded to by one of my colleagues very briefly when he talked about power rates. We all know the situation we're into when it comes to the Muskrat Falls Project. I'm sure we've all been following the Muskrat Falls Inquiry. Some of us to greater degrees than others. I certainly have a vested interest in what's going on there, given the fact that I voted for the project; albeit in good faith on what I thought to be good information. Of course, we all know what's happened since that time and how the project has totally come off the rails, and we know where we are with the costs. Of course, now we're finding out through the Muskrat Falls Inquiry that numbers were lowballed and risk reports hidden from government, from the public and so on.

I go across the way to the Minister of Natural Resources almost on a daily basis when we're here. I'll go over to her and I'll – I won't say names, but I'll go over and I'll pitch a name or two and I'll say, is that person still working for Nalcor? And she'll say yeah, he's still there. I'll say, I can't believe he's still there. Then I'll say, well, what about this person? Is this person still working for Nalcor? Yeah, that person's still

there. I'm like, wow, I can't believe this person is still there.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. LANE: Yeah, and the people who briefed the caucus at the time about the need for the power, and they were so firm, you got nothing to worry about. We talked about the North Spur: oh, no, nothing to worry about, that's all included in the DG3 numbers. What about methylmercury? Oh, we got a plan for methylmercury and that's all included in the D – as someone said to me one time, the GD DG3 numbers. But, of course, now we're finding out the truth of the matter. How some of these people are still employed at Nalcor blows my mind. Why there has not been pink slips handed out blows my mind. Maybe the minister will be able to explain to us why that is the case, because I can't figure out why it's the case.

Anyway, be that as it may, we know where we're going to be and we know what the bills are going to be, so it comes to the question now of rate mitigation. That was something that received a lot of discussion, certainly prior to the election and leading up to the election and even during the election. I haven't heard a whole lot about it since that time.

I would like to see, Mr. Chair, for the Minister of Natural Resources, perhaps, it would be timely now for us to receive some sort of a briefing offered to all Members of this House from all parties, a briefing as to exactly where we are with the rate mitigation. We've certainly seen some suggestions made by the Public Utilities Board, and we've heard the minister talk about things such as extending the mortgage of the project, if you will; selling excess power, I think, was another thing that's been talked about.

Of course, another one which is in the media now, which is very concerning, it was a fear that certainly I had for a long time, and that relates to our transmission assets. Now we're hearing in the media a lot of speculation that Newfoundland Power is interested in taking over a lot of our assets.

The minister in the news story I read said not yet, I think it said. No decision made yet. I

would say to the minister, I would say to the government that there better not be any decision made on that particular issue without full public consultation and public input and for all parties to have significant discussion and understand exactly what is being proposed and what the implications could be and so on. That would be a decision, I would suggest to government, that they ought not to make without the approval of all Members of this House and the general public, because that will be an issue that we will have a major problem in this minority situation, as far as I'm concerned.

I'm willing to work with you. I think we all said we're willing to collaborate. We're all willing to work together but if we're going to be talking about selling off our assets to Newfoundland Power, then for me that is a red flag and that's something that I'm certainly not going to just let happen without ensuring that we have proper consultation and so on. I'm sure that other Members here, I would assume, would feel the same way.

Again, going back to that, though, I would like to see, as I said, a briefing, a consultation now with all us about what the plans are going to be. Because, like I said, we've heard some ideas but I'm not so sure that at this point in time there's a solid plan in place that's going to mitigate those electricity rates.

We heard the Premier and the minister say at one point in time that the taxpayer is not going to have to pay for Muskrat Falls and the ratepayer is also not going to have to pay for Muskrat Falls. Well, somebody got to pay for it. You can't just wave a magic wand and this is going to go away; it just can't happen.

We need a solid plan, we need to know what that plan is and perhaps we can actually collaborate. Maybe there are some ideas. Maybe there are actually a few things that government side never thought of that Members across the way could add their voice, their experience, their expertise in certain areas and perhaps we can come up with a good plan. The bottom line is that we're only a year or so away and something significant has to happen between now and then because if not, once the light switch goes on, once that dam is up and running, once that happens, somebody has to pay those bills. Right now I'm not

confident that it's not going to be the ratepayers of Newfoundland and Labrador; I'm really not.

I'm sure with some of the plans that you have in place, perhaps it may mitigate to a degree, but I'm not so sure that it's just going to balance it out and that the numbers will be a wash, not at this point in time. So I certainly encourage the minister, I encourage the government, to work with us all now so that we can get together, get our heads together, understand what the plans are, what the proposals are, and what this is actually going to look like, and give the citizens of our province some comfort that once Muskrat Falls comes on stream, that they're going to be able to pay their electricity bills, because that is going to be a huge issue.

I listened to my colleague from St. John's Centre talk about a lot of the more vulnerable people in our society, seniors and other people, they're finding it tough enough now. Imagine throwing on a huge electricity bill increase in their electricity to the struggle they already have. A lot of them are already just barely above water. There are an awful lot of people that are barely above water, and what that would be like; instead of throwing them a life preserver, we're going to throw them an anvil if something is not done.

I say to the minister once again, this is something very, very significant, it's something that needs to be dealt with, people need the assurance that we're going to get to a place, when Muskrat Falls comes online, that people are going to be able to afford to pay their electricity bills. If there was ever a time for us to collaborate – I hear that word collaboration thrown out so many times – if there was ever a time and an issue to collaborate on, it is power rate mitigation.

I heard Members talk about things that they heard at the doors. I don't know about anybody else, that was the number one thing that I heard, that and the taxation, in my district. Taxation and power rates were one and two for me. I know, depending on where you live, you get different issues, and I had some other local issues as well, but taxation and power rate mitigation were the two big issues. People are still worried, they're still concerned and we need

to get a plan to the people as to how we're going to deal with this very, very serious issue.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

MR. LESTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak on behalf of the people of Mount Pearl North. They're an industrious and innovative district. Right now, we're in the current process of marketing the district via the Mount Pearl council as a prime destination for business establishment.

Mr. Chair, I would like to say that we really need to take more of an approach as a province to also market as a business establishment. Business occurs when there's opportunity for entrepreneurs to create business activity that will generally create profit, or anticipated to create profit.

In order to do that, we have to look at, number one, the access to a local advantage, being it a resource, low taxation or able-bodied workforce. Actually, able-bodied workforce is less of an advantage than taxation or physical resources. Basically, when you look at human resources, they're a movable commodity. We can attract people to come to our province if we provide them with opportunity.

Winston Churchill can be quoted as saying: You cannot tax your way to prosperity. That truly applies to our economy at this point. We have to make it attractive for people to come and set up businesses; attractive for people to come back; attractive for people to call Newfoundland and Labrador as their new home. In order to do that, we have to look at *Budget 2016*.

While we cannot say it enough that we were in dire financial straits at that point, but there are two ways to approach a problem. You can approach it with short-term cash grab such as taxes, which basically kills the economy or slows the economy down, or we can look at that as a challenge. We should have looked at it as a challenge to plan a course for the future, but people cannot plan under the threat and heavy

burden of having to take more of their disposable income for services that they're getting – not extra services. Taxes do not cover up extra services, they cover up existing services.

The same thing when you talk about royalties. Yes, it's great to take in royalties from our resources, be it our oil, our mining, our forestry, our fishery, whatever it may be; royalties do not create a good economy. Royalties only provide a cash flow into government coffers. That does not necessarily translate into job creation. It does not necessarily translate into new businesses coming into our province.

As a matter of fact, let's go back and, again, something that's been talked about quite readily, and that is the deal that we gave Canopy Growth. While other provinces across our noble country responded to the same requirement of need of supply of legislated legalization of cannabis, our province did not go to an RFP. They basically hand-picked one company – hand-picked them. Not only did we hand-pick them, we also gave them an incentive to set up. When we look at New Brunswick with basically the same deal, more or less the same population, they only had to contribute \$1.3 million worth of tax incentives for the same company that we're dealing with to set up their operation and they are providing only 10 less jobs. Meanwhile, we have committed \$40 million of future revenue in order to attract the same company.

By the look of all these new companies wanting to get into the cannabis industry, there is no need for incentive. That is wasted taxpayers' revenue. That is \$40 million that we're going to have to look somewhere else, hopefully not in the pockets of our citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador, to replace. That's \$40 million that we could have invested in attracting other new businesses, new businesses that may need that competitive edge to establish here.

Mr. Chair, when I was knocking on doors, I share much of the same concerns as my other colleagues, one regarding the seniors' dental program. That was cut out in 2016. That demoralizes, dehumanizes many of our people on compromised or fixed incomes.

How can we say that's a money-saving cut? It is not a money-saving cut. People who cannot afford dental care and need to avail of these services are not getting the dental care done.

They're showing up at our emergency rooms, showing up with septic infections and something that probably could have been fixed for \$400 or \$500 is now taking a week in hospital and \$1,000 a day. I can tell you right now that's not a wise investment to cut a program that was helping people live a decent quality of life; giving people the ability to feel confident to go out and look for that job; giving people confidence to go out and interact with society that would elevate their own level of perception of themselves.

I believe that one of the biggest diseases that are affecting our seniors and people on fixed incomes is loneliness. Loneliness is the magnifier of so many underlying issues. Loneliness is the magnifier of depression and mental illness. Loneliness allows the body to slip into a state where the body starts to magnify other diseases, other complications. It also takes that individual out of the view of society.

So things that may be happening to us on a gradual basis, we don't recognize that. Whereas if we're out talking to our friends and our family members they're going to say: Hey, are you feeling okay? How about we go here? How about we do this? That is one thing that I would love to see put back into our provincial budget.

When we talk about Interim Supply, we're talking about the absolute essential funding requirements of government to get to budget approval. But let's talk about what's happening to our industries, our not-for-profits in the meantime. They can't avail of this Interim Supply funding. Their funding ran out at the end of fiscal year. I know of many not-for-profits right now who provide valuable services to both industry and community, that their employees are facing layoff. Their employees have already been laid off because their funding has expired.

What's going to happen? Are we going to go into a new budget approval and that budget approval is going to be retroactive? So are we going to give those people a retroactive paycheque or are we just going to say, b'ys, I hope you're still here in the province, come back

to your job, funding's been approved now? I don't think that's the situation that we should find ourselves in.

Our economy is continuing to shrink. I talk to business people on an everyday basis. I talk to people who are losing their homes. I've talked to my former colleague who was privileged enough to represent my district, and asked him, I said, look, this is what I'm facing. And according to him, he did not face those same challenges. Yes, they were there, but not at the magnitude that I'm facing today.

These are not people who are losing their homes because of frivolous spending. These are people who find themselves out of work after working for a company for 25 and 30 years and now all of a sudden they don't have their medical program anymore, and now they've mortgaged their house again just to pay for the medication they require to treat an illness or treat a disease that they have no control over. Why is that we're seeing seniors now evicted, homeless – homeless, not because of their irresponsibility but because they're victims to the economy that has been shrinking and slowing down.

As we go from Interim Supply into the budget debate we really have to look at, okay, yes, we can't overspend, because not only is it unsustainable, but it's selfish. We're leveraging our existence today on not only our children, but our children's children. How we can still look forward or go forward, whatever we want to put on it, and say that we're going to borrow more money? Let's borrow more money. Yeah, we can make the interest payment. Who's going to pay that money back? Who's going to pay it back?

I know I can hear some people say we didn't put us in this situation, but guess what? Yes, we did, because every one of us voted. Every one of us voted time and time again. Our fiscal issues have not been in the past decade, our fiscal issues have started basically when we came into Confederation. The entitlement that some have felt in their province, yes, we all deserve services, but do we deserve the level of service that we get on the basis that we're going to leverage our future, our future generations? So that's something that we have to look at.

Our health care system, for example, we have to concentrate more on front-end investment, more on keeping people healthy, more on people having unlimited access to the medications and treatment that will mitigate their disease and subsequently cost us less in the health care system. I've talked to individuals from one end of the health care system to the other and they say there's not enough money in health care, it needs to be realigned and re-spent.

Once again, I thank the district for giving me the opportunity to be their representative, and I look forward to getting into the budget debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

MR. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It gives me great honour to represent the people of Placentia West - Bellevue and their confidence in me in voting me in in the last election. One thing I am is very thankful to have this opportunity, as it's my opportunity to actually live out a lifelong dream of helping the province and doing the ultimate in volunteer work. It's certainly not a one-man job; it's something that we collaborate as a district to bring forth our issues as a district to the House of Assembly. As Craig Dobbin once said, if I am the richest man in Newfoundland, it's only because I've surrounded myself with the best people in the province. So we can all learn a little bit from that.

To my volunteers on my campaign, they ran a really respectful campaign, holding integrity to be the most important part, and that way we held our heads high whether we won or lost in our race. Fortunately, it came out on the right side. Most of all, I guess, I have to thank the constituents because not only have they collaborated with me and brought me their ideas and stuff like that, but showing their confidence in me and showing that they wanted a change and they knew that there was a viable change that was afforded to them.

One of the nicest things that I got to experience during the campaign was the underage constituents that weren't of voting age. It

seemed that a lot of the functions that I went to, these were the people that wanted to come up and get a picture and they were very engaged in the whole process even though they weren't going to be voting. I was quite pleased with that to be quite honest, because it showed that our younger generation is actually getting up and are going to have something to say in a few years themselves. So that's from my campaign, and I'd like to thank everybody that was involved in my campaign.

Some of the issues that have come to my attention are not only issues from my district but they are also issues on a provincial level. When we sit here and we talk about collaboration then, obviously, collaboration means working together. Working together to me means that the document that was presented prior to the writ being dropped was just if we see that there are some changes need to be made, then collaboration, in my opinion, would be the fact that we would work together and some changes can be made to that budget document.

One of the greatest things in my district is seniors and 50-plus clubs. These are the people that are out there running their respective towns and regions, and I was lucky enough to get invited to a district dinner for a 50-plus club where I wasn't sure if I was supposed to take it or not because I'm only 49 years old. I figured I'd be sneaking in under age, and nobody wants to get in trouble for that stuff. It's obviously my honour to be 49 years old and being in the sitting of the 49th General Assembly. So this is quite the undertaking, and I'm very pleased to be here.

The one thing about our seniors and our 50-plus clubs, and you hear it from all of them, is that their economic drivers are leaving their small towns, and this is really leaving them in an unstable economy as well. The economic drivers are usually between 25 and 40 years old that are building the houses, they're buying the new cars or going out to restaurants. They're having a bottle of wine on Friday nights with their friends or whatever, but this is what drives these smaller communities into having a clear, economic future. So one of my plans in my campaign was to see if we can keep some of these economic drivers in these towns so that we can get these towns to prosper as well.

One of the biggest things I noticed along the way on the health care side was the doctor and the nurse practitioner retention. It's obviously a little difficult to need a service and not be able to avail of it because there's not a professional in place who can hear your case, kind of thing. So I think that government, today, needs to really focus on the retention of nurse practitioners and the doctors. Those professionals, obviously, bring a lot of mental ease to smaller communities as well.

I think the biggest thing we need to talk about, really, when it comes to anything to do with the budget, before we put any cart before the horse type of thing, if we're going to attract people to this province, I think what we need to focus on is the fact that we don't have a reliable Internet service in our province, province-wide. Nobody wants to come here and start working on our infrastructure down in Bull Arm and can't get on their phone or they can't do their business en route to another business call and stuff like that. Just for business in Newfoundland alone, the Internet is vital to attracting those people to our province.

If we want to be economically viable in the world market, than I think the Internet is something that we have to stop doing these small studies on. We know that we're going into 2020, it's time for us to catch up with the rest of the world and actually have the same services that everybody else gets to enjoy in the rest of our country.

Another thing about the Internet service is we have a lot of volunteer emergency services around the province and these people need to be in contact with each other, whether it's on a call or getting ready to go on a call or anything like that.

For instance, in Boat Harbour there's a volunteer fire department that takes care of, basically, from the top of Swift Current right to the Jean de Baie dump. They're out on the highway to help anybody who's in distress or anything. Like I said, without the Internet it's making it very difficult for them to communicate and even for people to make that 911 call that they need help. They could be somewhere on the highway where they don't have any service, so now they're waiting on the reliability of somebody passing

by them. If we're in a snowstorm then, obviously, there's nobody going to be coming by any time soon.

I think the Internet is something that we really need to focus on because, as the Premier said this morning, he wants to put the province in a better position to do business. If he truly means that, than I think the Internet is a really good place to start.

In my district alone, Mr. Chair, we have a lot of infrastructure that's currently not being utilized. Long Harbour is in my district, Bull Arm. We have a state-of-the-art fish plant in Arnold's Cove that's world renowned; another one in Southern Harbour. We got Come by Chance, there's Cow Head, Marystown, Marystown Shipyard, and now we're doing a new big infrastructure project with Grieg.

So, like I said, I respect the fact that some of my colleagues have talked about rate mitigation, but I got a feeling that if we get our infrastructure going and we get it up to capacity, then once we get our economy going, than I think rate mitigation will be probably the last thing on our minds because our economy is already going and people will be able to afford those. Plus, we'll be bringing in more taxes that we can afford the services to the most vulnerable in our society.

To have this amount of infrastructure and be getting these extensions with White Rose, it kind of – I come from a generation, I guess, that we always looked at all these giveaways. Time is enough. The oil has been out there for billions of years. We're only getting one shot at it. Let's make it for the people of the province as opposed to outside companies that want to come in and profit from our resource. It's our resource, we deserve it. We deserve the money from it. So, hopefully, the government of the day sees that the giveaways are enough.

I see my time is coming short there, Mr. Chair.

Last, but not least, I would certainly like to thank my wife and kids for actually giving me this opportunity. It's something that I've dreamed of my whole life, and I know that my grandmother is watching as well.

So I'd like to thank the people of Placentia West - Bellevue for their confidence in me, and I look forward to rising in the House and representing them again in the near future.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

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

It's indeed a privilege to get up here today and represent the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis and the beautiful people in the District of Cape St. Francis.

I'm sure the former speaker who just spoke ahead of me, I'm sure your grandmother is very proud today, as most of our families are when you get this opportunity to stand in the House of Assembly and represent our districts. I know family is so important. It's important to all Members, but to be given this privilege, it's a privilege and it's a privilege I'll always get up and talk about when I have the opportunity to speak here in the House of Assembly.

Today, Mr. Chair, I'm going to be all over the place, I'd say. Anyway, I want to talk a little bit about - some people look at MHAs and they say what are you doing and what are you fellows doing, stuff like that, and a scattered time you have a few chores to do on the weekends. I say scattered, and I mean that laughingly. Because if anybody knows that an MHA's job - I was looking at the summer and trying to figure out what weekend you can have to go do something, and it's a job to find one, because there are always activities on the go.

This weekend I had a couple of activities that I'm going to talk a little bit about that were in my district. We did a fundraiser on Friday night. Sometimes when you do fundraisers you're not sure - the causes are always good. We all have great causes. It was a young guy that we're trying to raise a few dollars for to help with a van so he can have an accessible van. And they called me about a month ago and they asked me if I'd do the bar. I do the bar a lot in Flatrock,

and I enjoy doing it. You meet a lot of people. At 3 in the morning they're completely different from what they were at 9 in the evening, so you get a whole lot of different perspective on things. But it's a great time.

This weekend, most of the things were donated. It was amazing to watch people come and donate a dozen beer for the bar or a bottle of rum for the bar or whatever. There was that much food there it was unbelievable. And I have to stop eating, too; that's another thing I have to do when I go to all these events. But the cause was so good and to watch the people - and it's not only in my community, it's all over Newfoundland and Labrador.

We have great people in this province. We have unbelievable people in this province. When there's a need, we come together. That's from Cape St. Francis to the top of Torngat that people in this province do come together. We had four bands this week; I just wrote them down. There was Coaker's Hat. There was Far East - Far East was a young band; they were all a bunch of young people. First time I ever heard them play. I knew a couple of them could sing. I tell you, were they ever good? They were fantastic and I'd say in the future we're going to hear from them.

There's a family down in Flatrock that I think if you asked them to come to your shed on Friday nights, they'd show up. They go anywhere, anywhere at all. All you have to do is ask and call The Martin Family. What they do for the community of Flatrock is second to none. They're at every seniors' function. They're at every function that you can possibly need, that they show up.

And then - I've heard her name lots of times - Jackie Sullivan showed up and played a few tunes. And I have to say, she was fantastic. But these people all donated their time. Everybody that was there on Saturday night donated their time. At the end of the night, we made about \$14,000, which I thought was fantastic. We were hoping \$4,000 or \$5,000 and stuff like that. We had a 50/50 draw. We had some other things that people - there was one lady just showed up with a print and she sold her tickets in the corner and that was it. They didn't even know she was coming to do it. And it's part of who we are.

We look at reasons today why people move away. We're talking in Question Period why people move away and why they won't come back. I'll give you a reason it's the best place to live in the world is why we should be all here in Newfoundland. It is the number one reason why people want to come back because of our people. That's the biggest resource we have. Whether it's our oil, it's our minerals, our fish, our biggest resource we got in this province are the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I just wanted to touch base with that. I got to mention some clubs too because the Torbay Lions Club were there with a donation. I'll put a little thing out to Mary Brown's also. Mary Brown's did a thing on Friday that anybody that went in and bought a meal, they donated \$1 towards to the cause and they came down with a cheque for \$1,500, which was fantastic. I know we're speaking on the budget and Interim Supply got nothing to do about it, but I think we have got to get up in the House of Assembly and recognize people and who we are as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. It's so important.

I had the opportunity also the weekend to do a cleanup in the community. I was amazed that there was so many young people out cleaning up. It was a great event that was set up by the Town of Flatrock again. They had some bikes that they donated to the children, and the number of people who showed up were amazing.

Now, in every part of my district each town has a cleanup, and that's important too. I really can't understand sometimes why people do what they do. We live in a beautiful province and to see people throw stuff out the windows of their cars, chicken boxes and Tim Hortons's cups and stuff like that, that drives me absolutely crazy. I don't know why you can't put it in your backseat or put it somewhere and bring it home with you.

We're in the right place when we see children out cleaning up like that, because I think they're the ones that will teach the adults to do it properly and that's important.

Mr. Chair, I want to talk about the election a little bit now. I have too much time gone already. Anyway, I want to talk about the little things that I heard. One community in particular

I'm going to talk about is Pouch Cove. When I first got elected almost 11 years ago right now, the biggest issue we had in Pouch Cove – and some of you seen it on CBC – was the water condition. We have a water supply down there. The problem was it was Three Island Pond and the pond is a shallow pond. This time of year when sometimes you get the rain and the snow melts and everything else where it's so shallow, all the leaves and everything comes in and the water becomes dirty. There's nothing wrong with the water. The water is dark brown basically if you look in the toilet bowls or look in the bathtubs and stuff like that.

Last year – and I'm going to applaud the government across the way – they helped and the federal government. We've been working on it now for 11 years and finally this year I was knocking on doors in Pouch Cove and every door I knocked on – one guy even said: Kev, even the dog can drink the water now. They were just so happy. We talked about boil orders earlier here today. I know the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans talked about boil orders and it's a big problem in our province. But to understand and see that – I'll tell the new people that are here nothing happens overnight. Nothing happens overnight but if you work hard and you stay focused on what you're trying to do, it will take a bit of time, but you'll get it done.

I have to applaud – there was a water committee in Pouch Cove and they did unbelievable work. We had pilot projects done, the Town of Pouch Cove, unbelievable amount of work, but the results are fantastic. The people in Pouch Cove now got great water and they're very, very appreciative of the hard work. Sometimes it does take a long period of time. We went and we had to get a consultant's report done, and then they explained what the cause was, and then, our government at the time, we got a million dollars to do a pilot project. We had to get three different companies come in and find solutions for this problem, so that had to be all paid for. So that took almost two years to get done but we got it done.

I was down, like I said, and walked through the plant and watched how it all comes in. First it's hit by sand, and then it goes through this other kind of system, then it's hit by, I think it's an

ultra-red light that clears the water, and the water is as clear here as this. Pouch Cove, the last number of years, or since ever, you could never, ever drink it, and now they can. I thank the government, and I'll thank the federal government, and I'll thank my colleagues that worked with me in the past because that was a big, big thing for our area.

Mr. Chair, I want to also just talk about communities, and I know the new Minister of Municipal Affairs is here and she's got a lot on her plate, but we're very fortunate in this province to have the volunteers that we have in our communities. Every community I'm sure, all over the province, we cannot do anything without the people that step up and volunteer in our communities, so it's important that we, through government and especially the Department of Municipal Affairs, supports our council. They'll have needs, there are all kinds of needs, and most people don't expect everything to get fixed overnight, but they expect it to be fixed.

So it's important that as new MHAs, that we work with our councils, and that we step up and make sure, listen, this is the plan that I got for this council. I mean I'm looking in my area over the last number of years, right now Torbay is just ready to open up a new community centre. It took a long while to get it, but they're going to have a community centre. In Flatrock, some roads got done this year and people are very appreciative. It all takes time, takes a lot of work, but we do have to work with the Department of Municipal Affairs, and I hope that the minister continues to do the great work that's done in our communities.

We need to step up, as a government, and make sure that we support our municipal leaders. I always say, whenever I'm finished at this racket, I'm going back to the other racket that I was at before. I don't want to be the mayor but I'd like to be a council member in my community because the best you can do for your people is to serve your people, and that's the level (inaudible).

So as long as we got people that are out there and they know that they got government support and they know that when they go they're not

listened to on a deaf ear, they have support from people.

Again, in closing, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

MR. PARROTT: Mr. Chair, thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. It's my first address in the House, really. I guess the first thing I'd like to do is thank the people who put me here. It was a very humbling experience to actually campaign to be a Member of government and I'm honoured to have the opportunity to work for the people in my district and to work for all the Members who sit here in this House.

I originally grew up in Wabush, Labrador. I left there in 1990. I joined the military. I spent 14 years in the regular force and then I spent seven years working with the military as a civilian. I got a lot of lessons and learned a lot of different things through that, which have helped me come to where I am today.

Over the last 10 days, I've listened to lots of people discuss this budget and how it's being put forward. I've really sat back and analyzed where we are, where we're going and how we're going to get there. I guess, for me, I've listened and seen the approach and I don't necessarily agree that it's all sunshine and lollipops. In my district alone, I've had a shipyard close down. I've had a fish plant close down; two golf courses close down. We have a ski hill that receives very little funding.

On the outskirts of my district, we have the Bull Arm Fabrication site that's been sitting idle for three years. There's an EOI that was put out three years ago that still hasn't been filled and it's time to get moving with that. As that infrastructure sits stagnant, it's going mouldy. Things are going to cost a lot of money to get started up again and we're going to have less interest in utilizing that site as it becomes more expensive to reopen.

We've got the refinery out there that has a serious amount of concern with regard to new

taxes put in place with carbon and we've got an environmental disaster about to happen with Newfoundland Hardwoods down there. We have five or six tanks there that hasn't been touched in years that are government assets that somebody needs to have a serious look at. We've seen a reduction in ferry services in certain areas in my district, not to mention the roads and the conditions of some of the bridges that are specifically in my district.

I listened to the Premier last week talk about the mandate that he has, but I'd like to remind him that there is no mandate. The last election they won 31 seats versus 20 in the rest of the House. This election is 20-20. The popular vote was 43 per cent for that side and if you take the Members that are all across this side, it was 53 per cent. So the mandate that was given to us is from the public of Newfoundland for all of us to come together, collaboratively, and work.

I guess Ronald Reagan said it best a long time ago: "There is no limit to the amount of good you can do if you don't care who gets the credit." It's really time for us to stop looking for credit when we're trying to do something for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I sit here over the last week and I pay attention to how all of this plays out. The one thing that really sticks out to me is – I got to get the district right so I don't get a point of order – the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay. I got to commend you, Sir. For every single person who's gotten up on this side of the House, and your side of the House and spoke, you've hung on every single word, and I thank you for that and I respect you for that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PARROTT: As a group, we're here for a reason and we were all put here by the same group of people.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. PARROTT: That's enough there now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. PARROTT: And there it goes.

As I was saying, as a group, we were voted in to represent the entire province and the entire province wants all the same things. They want jobs, they want health care, they want an economical place to live and they want a future for their children. And the best way for us to do that is, collaboratively, come together and figure out the best way forward.

I hear people talk about previous administrations and I'll remind the Finance Minister that you guys are the previous administration now, so we need to stop that talk. We need to find a path forward and we need to figure out what that is and how we can do it together.

So my point is we have a mandate and we can certainly, together, find a way to push that mandate forward. When the Leader of the Opposition wrote the letter to the Premier and they came back and they said you're looking to spend more money, we all know that's not the fact. The fact of the matter was there was eight items and we were looking for a way to collaboratively represent all the people who voted in the last election. We were looking for a way to switch things by line item, to find out how we could serve all of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We were looking for a way to step away from a budget that wasn't passed, that was based on a Cabinet that had 31 Members, that had a mandate to pass that budget, but they no longer have that mandate. So now we need to find a way to work together, to push forward the mandate that we were all given as individual Members who represent individual districts, and find the right path forward.

When I was in the military I got injured very badly – I won't get into it, but I was in the hospital after a very serious surgery and I had a Catholic minister come in to me. It was a funny story because he came in and asked if he could pray with me. And the first thing I told him was I'm not Catholic. He said: It's okay; we can still pray. So we talked, we didn't pray.

He came back that evening and he had a book and he was out of his religious cloth and he sat down and we talked and he said: Lloyd, what is it you're concerned about? I said: I was a pretty active guy and I done a bunch of different stuff

and my life is going to change. He said: Listen, Mount Everest is a place where everyone has gone, blind people, people with no legs, people with one arm gone. Climbing a mountain will never determine who you are; it's how you walk through the valleys in life.

People in Newfoundland and Labrador right now are in a valley that we need to come together and walk through together. If we don't find a way to do that, we're going down a hole that we may never find our way back out of. The only way to do that is as a group, everybody here in this House working together.

We can talk about tourism and we forget that people don't want to drive over potholes. We can talk about Marble Mountain and we forget about the fact that White Hills is the seed. People learn to ski at White Hills, yet we give them no money and we focus on Marble Mountain.

There are a lot of different approaches that we need to take but those approaches need to be regionalized. Part of what my colleague behind me said about jobs here in Newfoundland and Labrador, we need to create jobs. We need to find a way to employ the people who live here. Economies are run by jobs, not by royalties. Royalties are not going to dig us out of this hole. Having people work, feel good about themselves, be able to provide for their families that's what's going to put us forward.

I don't disagree with the Members across the way that they look for ways to do that, but there's always a better way. We recruit doctors to the Island from another country and we forget that their spouses are also professionals. We send them to small communities and we forget that a surgeon is married to a lawyer. So two years after they're there, they want to leave because there's no work for their spouse.

Our approach has always been backwards when it comes to rural Newfoundland and, unbelievably, people are going to be really upset when I tell them but Newfoundland doesn't end at the overpass and the strategies that work in St. John's don't always work outside the overpass.

Another good example with that is the new policy on autism. I applaud the new policy on

autism, but I will tell you in rural Newfoundland you're not going to find the workers to make that policy work. You are going to struggle each and every day, and those kids are going to be disadvantaged. That is true for level one home care. When you got a person who's at their home, it's fine to say that it will work in here, there are lots of people to do those jobs; but when you go out to Greenspond or North Harbour or any of these communities, you're not going to find the people to do this work. We need to start looking at the bigger picture because we are the bigger picture, the people in this room.

We've got an opportunity coming up with Bay du Nord that the Minister of Natural Resources said earlier, 5,000 metric tons is peanuts in the grand scheme of things; 5,000 metric tons represents the helideck, two lifeboat stations, a flair boom and a very, very minimal amount in mechanical outfitting. We need to find a way to get more work than that.

We can't build the hull here, we know that, but the hull can be shipped here. The mechanical outfitting can be done here and a lot of the fabrication can be done here, but there are more pieces to the puzzle than 5,000 metric tons. It just doesn't make sense. We have a very skilled workforce here. We have the appetite to do it, and we can do it.

Anyhow, I'd be remiss if I didn't tell you that I had a lot of support from my family when I took on this venture. My wife of 19 years, who I love, supported me through a lot of stuff and I don't think she saw this coming. I'm really happy to be here and I'm glad she supported me, and my two kids. My little girl, maybe not so keen on it, but my son thinks I'm a rock star all of a sudden.

I thank you for your time today, and I look forward to working for you guys in the coming years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

MR. PARDY: Mr. Chair, thank you.

It's a good day for the hon. gentleman from Baie Verte - Green Bay. I, too, would like to

recognize his co-operation, his listening and attention to everything that's presented in the realm of education. Good job, my friend.

I've got five bullet items I'd like to focus on. The first one would be an issue that was raised within the district that I'd like to start with. The other ones would be improving health through education, teacher allocation, teaching health and the holdback concept, to conclude.

A gentleman emailed two Members on this side, a very articulate gentleman living in the District of Bonavista. He underwent a surgical procedure. As a result of that surgical procedure he had to have his driver's licence suspended, which he would clearly state that a driver's licence is not a right but it is a privilege and he fully understood; but, medically, he had to have it suspended.

He went through successful surgery on his cranium, successful that he got the clearance medically from the specialist, from his GP, and then came the road test which he successfully passed. He was eager to get his licence back, but then he asked, why would he have been informed that it would take between two weeks and two months to get his licence? Maybe there was a good reason.

He was asking us, and the two Members from this side. Neither one of us through the email could relate, if he checked off those two boxes why he wouldn't have his licence. Then he thought, maybe he was in the queue and there were some complicated ones before him that they just couldn't give him clearance because there were other complicated ones. So he suggested a triage of filtering that those most obvious ones who get their licence back to be most respectful would be granted back.

Improving health through education; it was nice to hear the hon. Members earlier state that the four new school constructions will have recreational areas outside their school. That is wonderful. It wasn't always the case, but it is now and we are to be commended that we, as a government, are doing that. Kudos on that.

I mentioned last week, I heard this specialist on the radio which stated that the life expectancy in BC was 82; Newfoundland, 78, and four-years

differential. Not to be complacent with that, we should always strive for exceeding the 82.

On a VOCM article, they gave some statistics – and it might still be on the VOCM site – but they talked about our population, as small as it is, 25 per cent with high blood pressure; 22 per cent smoke; 52 are inactive and 68 they deem to be overweight. Those are concerning figures.

I would say and challenge that we, as a government, ought to design substantiated, proactive measures in our K to 12 system that would curb these brutal statistics. We are making inroads, but we ought to heighten the challenge and challenge ourselves to make sure that we curb those horrendous statistics. One of the things to do that would be through teacher allocation.

I had a visit one day from the then leader of the Third Party, the NDP, came and wanted to meet some councillors in the community that I was in, and we had a wonderful conversation. One thing the then leader had stated, with a few councillors present, said: Boy, did that government ever go on a spending spree some years back. Where I quickly said that as an administrator of a school who was on the receiving end, I certainly appreciated the investment into education at that time.

One of the things that happened was in 2008 they came out with a teacher allocation model where they had figures and just picked one grade level, like grades seven to nine, where they were looking at a cap of 25 students. Because we all know that smaller class sizes lead to greater engagement and in better academic results, and I would think in the long run would be improvement in the mental health, at least a dialogue in that discussion. I would say to you today, just taking that one grade level in that class from grades seven to nine is 31. Remember, in 2008 it was 25, today it's 31; but, they also added a soft cap where you can go two over. So, conceivably, 33.

I said last week, this hon. Chamber has 40 Members. The Speaker leads it – just think of the analogy with a teacher – he has several assistants with him to help with the operation of this House, and much greater physical space than what a classroom teacher would have, and I

would ask you to envision in a classroom that you can or visited with your own child, imagine 33 young adolescences packed into a room and you want to create a learning environment that is best for them in that case.

One of the courses that we would teach good health would be the health curriculum. I know I've been speaking to seven to nine because the last two minutes I'll address would be the holdback units, but let me just discuss the health curriculum.

A short time ago, I would assume that the Raptors celebrated through the streets of Toronto and probably two million strong celebrated the Raptor's journey which began in 1995. You go back to 1995 and look at the outfits they played ball in and compare them to where they are now. The suggested teaching resource for grades seven to nine in our schools right now is a book that was designed in 1993. If we have a book in 1993 to guide our – it doesn't guide our instruction because the curriculum guide guides our instruction. Teachers ought to be able to adapt with what's current and what's not, and that's our expectation that good teachers will do that. Good teachers in a class of 25 will do it much more likely than a good teacher in a class of 33. I would say to you, we've challenged the system with having the large class sizes that we currently do.

I'll end my time on a final note, and that is the hold-back unit that currently exists within a school in the District of Bonavista, Heritage Collegiate. They have 33 students registered for September. They don't know whether they'll get the teacher or not because they were told by the school district that if one student doesn't show up and they drop to a mere 32 – and I say that sarcastically, which I shouldn't do, but sorry. If it's 32, they conceivably will not get that unit. I would say to you 32 is way, way too large for an adolescent classroom in this day and age. There needs to be a better system.

If we're holding back a teacher unit in this day and age so that now the staff are stressed, not quite disenfranchised but they're bothered tremendously by it, the school council are upset about it because they give their volunteer time for the betterment of that school at Heritage Collegiate and they're doing a great job, and we

hold back that unit and let them know on October 1, if nobody leaves, then we'll assign the teacher – if we assign the teacher when the pool is as small as it possibly could be, we will all say well, there's a substitute teacher available. Maybe the standard they want is they want to select their teacher now when the pool out there is the greatest. Which one is going to be the best to serve the children that they've got in their school? It is now, it is not in October.

This same school that's waiting, their energies are sidetracked by that, but they also got a group with robotics heading to Tennessee because for 12 years they did robotics on our peninsula and they were the pioneers; a very active school that's struggling to make sure that they got the right programming.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just wanted to thank each individual who spoke on this debate. Some of the points that were raised were quite interesting. I agreed with some of them, didn't agree with all of them. Nonetheless, interesting points.

It is an important issue that we're debating here today because it does ensure that our public servants get paid, that the business of government continues, should we go beyond the end of June in the budget debate. It removes the pressure of having to ensure that the budget is completed, voted on and passed by the end of June, so we have plenty of time to debate the budget without pressure. It allows government to continue to pay its bills, to continue to operate, to continue to pave roads or whatever needs to be done beyond the 1st of July, should we need that space.

I wanted to thank all Members for getting involved in this particular debate today because of the importance of Interim Supply.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Seeing no further speakers, I'm going to call the question.

Shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

A bill, "An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service." (Bill 2)

CLERK (Barnes): Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 4 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 4 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 4 carried.

CLERK: The schedule.

CHAIR: Shall the schedule carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, schedule carried.

CLERK: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant-Governor and House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows.

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: WHEREAS it appears that the sums mentioned are required to defray certain expenses of the public service of Newfoundland and Labrador for the financial year ending March 31, 2020 and for other purposes relating to the public service.

CHAIR: Shall the preamble carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, preamble carried.

CLERK: An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

CHAIR: Shall the long title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the resolution and a bill consequent thereto, carried.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 2 carried without amendment.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report that the resolution and bill is carried without amendment.

Is it the pleasure of the Committee to adopt this motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again, the Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): The hon. the Member for St. George's - Humber and Chair of the Committee of the Whole on Supply.

MR. REID: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of Supply reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report that the Committee have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

When shall the report be received?

Now?

MR. A. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I moved, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the resolution be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the resolution 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.

CLERK: *"Be it resolved by the House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows:*

"That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service

for the financial year ending March 31, 2020 the sum of \$2,089,149,900.”

On motion, resolution read a first time.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the resolution be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the resolution be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

CLERK: Second reading of the resolution.

On motion, resolution read a second time.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, for leave to introduce the Interim Supply Bill, Bill 2, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Government House Leader and the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board shall have leave to introduce Bill 2, the Interim Supply bill, and that 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, that the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, “An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 2)

CLERK: A bill, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 2)

On motion, Bill 2 read a first time.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the Interim Supply bill be now read the second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the said bill be now read a second 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, ‘nay.’

The motion is carried.

CLERK: Second reading of Bill 2.

On motion, Bill 2 read a second time.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and

President of Treasury Board, that the Interim Supply bill be now read a third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

CLERK: Third reading of Bill 2.

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 Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2020 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 2)

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

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. A. PARSONS: Hold your horses.

Before going further, Mr. Speaker, I would remind Members that the Estimates for the Department of Service NL will be meeting in this Chamber at 6 this evening.

On that note, I would move, seconded for the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate, 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 tomorrow at 1:30 o'clock.

Thank you.

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