



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume XLIX

FIRST SESSION

Number 9

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

Tuesday

June 25, 2019

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: Admit strangers, please.

Order, please!

Before we begin routine proceedings today, I would like to observe an old parliamentary tradition. I have the pleasant task of formally welcoming the Member who was duly elected in the election of May 16, 2019. The Member is Mr. Jordan Brown, representing the District of Labrador West.

I have been advised by the Clerk of the House that the Member has taken the Oath of Allegiance to the Crown as required the *Constitution Act, 1867*, and the Oath of Office as required by the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act* and has signed the Members' Roll.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

MS. COFFIN: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to you Mr. Jordan Brown, the Member for Labrador West who claims the right to take his seat.

MR. SPEAKER: Let the Member take his seat.

Welcome. Congratulations.

MR. BROWN: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: As one might expect, we do have a few visitors today as well.

In the Speaker's gallery today guests of the new MHA are LeeAnn Toomashie, Rosette Brown, Coraline Brown, Ralph Brown, Sadie Brown – there's a theme running here – Sam Button, Doris Brown, Melvin Goulding and Tony Brown.

Great welcome to all of you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I also see in the public gallery today we have the Legal Aid team here for a Ministerial Statement. Joining us are: the

Provincial Director, Nick Summers, and his wife Ann Ryan; the Chair of the Legal Aid NL Board of Commissioners and retired Judge, Timothy Chalker, Q.C; Deputy Provincial Director (Legal), Lauren Chafe; Deputy Provincial Director (Corporate), Harman Khurana; Administrative Coordinator, Donna Brophy; and Executive Assistant, Darlah Durnford.

Welcome to all of you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today for Members' statements we'll hear from the hon. Members for the Districts of Exploits, Humber - Bay of Islands, Bonavista, Mount Pearl North and Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

The hon. the Member for Exploits.

MR. FORSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Fire prevention is very important within the community. In 2007 the Bishop's Falls Fire Department started a program for youth, which their goal was to teach the youth fire prevention and safety at home and school and it also teaches them the hazards that they may have to face in real life and team work.

The Bishop's Falls Junior Firefighter program has seen 249 students to date. Some of the topics they will cover in classroom and hands on are: introducing safety and fire equipment; building search and victim removal; ice water and vehicle rescue; and water supply/fire hose. At the end of the program, the youth get a chance to put these skills to test with a smoke house scenario day.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of the House to join me in congratulating the youth of Bishop's Falls Junior Firefighters for completing this year's program.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, in recognition of National Indigenous Peoples Day, which was held on June 21, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize the Running Wolf Drumming Group from the Bay of Islands.

This group has been together for five years and, when asked, they always take the opportunity to promote the culture, traditions and heritage of the Mi'kmaq people. They also perform at fundraising events, opening ceremonies for graduations, galas and conferences and other organizations, always opening with an honour song for the event and a friendship song.

They carry out interactive workshops and talks at schools with students taking part in creating cultural items such as mini drums, talking sticks and other traditional items. They also hold monthly workshops at the long-term care facility and bungalows in Corner Brook giving joy and companionship to the residents, which is especially important to those who have no family able to visit.

Members of the group include Anne Marie O'Keefe, Laura White, Verna Simms, Dawn Samson, Margie Wheeler and Ashley McCarthy.

I ask all Members to join with me in thanking these ladies for their dedication and commitment in promoting their culture in the community.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure today to celebrate the two sea cadet corps within the District of Bonavista: Lethbridge area corps, 310 RCSCC Clode Sound and the Trinity Bay North corps, RCSCC Golden Hind.

I had the privilege to attend their annual reviews recently where the cadets showcased their skill sets and their precision. The cadet movement

provides exciting opportunities for the youth in the District of Bonavista, from team work, discipline, skill building, character development, to a strong sense of achievement and pride.

The two annual reviews attended showcased all of the above in our district's youth. I was most impressed in how eagerly they engaged in conversation as well, whether discussing skills learned from summer camps attended, the intensity of playing the glockenspiels or the masterful performance on the drums.

The support and camaraderie extended to their neighbouring corps was clearly evident as they attended each other's annual review.

As MHA for the District of Bonavista, I extend my pride in these young cadets and also extend gratitude and thanks to those leaders who volunteer their time to provide a better future for our youth. I applaud their commitment.

I ask the Members of the 49th House of Assembly to join me in issuing a big thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and honour Bill Bradley who passed away recently on May 21.

Mr. Bradley began his career as a constable with the RNC and eventually made his mark in the automotive industry. Along with his business partner, Mr. Bradley started Toyota Plaza Limited which, during their ownership, grew to become the largest import car dealership in Atlantic Canada.

I knew Mr. Bradley through his love for horses. He was a fine horseman and a dedicated husband, father and grandfather. Mr. Bradley's passion for horses led to forming the Newfoundland Trail Riders Association. This group of horse lovers encouraged travel on horseback and promoted the appreciation of outdoor life.

He was a true cowboy and was not often seen without his cowboy boots and Stetson hat. A

sight rarely seen in this province, but he was a cowboy to the core.

Upon his retirement from the car business, he was instrumental in re-establishing the RNC Mounted Unit and donated two horses to the unit, Vince and Townshend.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members present to join me in honouring the life of Mr. Bill Bradley and his outstanding contribution to the community and province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LOVELESS: Mr. Speaker, cancer affects us all, and for some directly and others indirectly, but we all soldier on to battle it and do the best we can.

This past weekend, I attended the Walk of Hope cancer benefit event in Harbour Breton and saw people from all around the Coast of Bays region and communities with groups that certainly know how to fundraise. The efforts of many resulted in over \$74,000 raised to help individuals and families that continue to struggle with this dreadful disease.

It was noted at the event that there were 21 new cancer patients this year, but let's hope that we can help to bring that number down to zero next year and all the years ahead.

Three words posted at the event: hope, faith and cure. Hopefully, someday, through the efforts of groups that I witnessed in Harbour Breton, that we will find a cure.

Congrats to all for a job well done.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to encourage emergency management partners and organizations to submit a nomination for the Emergency Management Exemplary Service Awards. A prestigious recognition for exceptional service and achievement, the awards are delivered collaboratively by Public Safety Canada and provincial and territorial governments. The nomination deadline, Mr. Speaker, has been extended to August 30, 2019.

Awards are granted to groups or individuals in five categories, all intended to recognize excellence in aspects of emergency management. These five categories are: Resilient Communities; Search and Rescue Volunteers; Search and Rescue Employees; Youth; and Outstanding Contribution to Emergency Management. Nomination information is available from the main page of the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment website.

Mr. Speaker, when emergencies happen, a collective effort is required to respond to the needs of affected people. From first responders to municipal officials to volunteers; they are all to be commended for the selfless acts that they do day in and day out. Whether it is helping with search and rescue efforts, assisting a family displaced by fire or volunteering in a community affected by a flood, their efforts are invaluable and should be recognized.

I encourage everyone to take a moment and nominate an individual or group that has shown dedication and commitment to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. I am pleased to learn that the nomination deadline has been extended for the Emergency Management Exemplary Service Awards. I know that a lot of amazing work has been done, and continues to be done, across the province to prevent and respond to emergencies and disasters. I am certain that there are many individuals and organizations that merit the praise and recognition that these awards highlight.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to acknowledge those who work so hard to keep us safe, and we encourage residents to nominate deserving individuals and organizations for these awards.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BROWN: I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. I would like to thank the many volunteers and staff involved in emergency management in our province. I, too, encourage people to nominate other individuals or groups this year for Emergency Management Exemplary Service Awards.

As a former volunteer firefighter, I am deeply familiar with the vital role that these individuals serve in emergency management. Their dedication to keeping our communities safe is truly remarkable. I commend all of them and their work. I also encourage others to consider joining a voluntary and local emergency team if they are not already involved.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today to recognize the hard work of our Legal Aid team and retiring Provincial Director Nick Summers.

In April, the Legal Aid Commission launched their new name, look and brand to change people's perception of the team. They wanted to show people that they are a team of highly educated, experienced and fully accredited lawyers, many with years of experience. This initiative was led by Nick Summers.

Mr. Speaker, Nick Summers has been with Legal Aid since 1990, starting in the position of staff solicitor after spending time working in Ontario. Since that time, he has also held the positions of St. John's area director, senior solicitor with Family and Civil Law and deputy director of administration, before taking on his current role as provincial director. On September 30, 2019, Mr. Summers will be retiring and we are grateful for the work he has done for the people of the province over the past 29 years.

Legal Aid Newfoundland and Labrador has over 130 lawyers and staff operating at 17 locations. They offer services to eligible individuals in the areas of family, criminal and some administrative law matters and aim to ensure all people, regardless of means, capacity or social situation, have access to the knowledge and services they require to protect their basic legal rights. The funding for Legal Aid is provided by the federal and provincial governments as well as the Law Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, as the new logo states, these are real lawyers, for real people and the brand embodies the five main values: accountability, collaboration, compassion, respect and openness.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank everyone at Legal Aid for all of their hard work and their continued dedication, and I'd also like for all of us to wish Mr. Summers all the best in his retirement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for the District of Harbour Main.

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

I'd like to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. The Official Opposition joins with the minister and the government in conveying our best wishes to Provincial Director Nick Summers on his retirement and commending him on a stellar career of public service over the past three decades. Mr. Summers has been instrumental in rebranding the Legal Aid Commission and raising its profile as a centre of excellence in legal aid services.

I congratulate the entire team of more than 130 lawyers and staff for the work they do in 17 locations throughout the province. I had the privilege of serving as a legal aid lawyer for 12 years and I found the work to be deeply rewarding as well.

Legal Aid is about giving people, with limited financial means, the same opportunity that others have to access justice and retain lawyers who will protect their fundamental legal rights. Our legal aid lawyers are highly trained, very experienced and deeply committed to excellence in serving their clients.

We in the Official Opposition express our appreciation to each and every one of them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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 Provincial Director Summers for a long and dedicated career, often working under challenging

circumstances to provide the legal services people need.

We know the Legal Aid Newfoundland and Labrador team sees clients at their most difficult times and we appreciate their professional, effective and caring work.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend those in the legal profession who are participating in the Sexual Violence Legal Support Service, which is providing free legal advice to victims; another service that's really a benefit to the community.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, when I asked the Premier earlier this year about the opportunity to tax the export of power to Quebec which arose in 2016, he seemed surprised.

Has the government asked for and received a legal opinion about this opportunity?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition would be aware, the opportunity to actually tax Quebec has been dealt with, and there have been a number of reviews that would've been done on this very issue.

I think it's fair to say, one of the things that we need to consider in terms of a taxation exclusive to some other jurisdiction, it would also mean that taxation, from what we've been told, would have to occur on the residents in Newfoundland and Labrador.

So I'm guessing what the Leader of the Opposition is saying right now is that he would see that under the circumstance that he's talking about here, we would potentially see extra taxes put on ratepayers in Newfoundland and Labrador and really then be appealed by someone like Hydro-Québec. We've looked this, we've dealt with it, and if indeed at some point this is something we need to pursue, Mr. Speaker, these are all things that we want pursue to the benefit of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: The scheme would, of necessity, be complex. So I'm glad to see the Premier of the province taking an interest.

In an open letter to the Premier Sunday, former Premier Peckford pointed out that provisions in the recently passed federal legislation blatantly violate the Atlantic Accord principle of joint management. He said the government has an obligation to oppose this violation by challenging the legislation in the courts.

Will the Premier consider a court challenge?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: So I am thinking what the Leader of the Opposition is referring to would be, again, about Bill C-69. Once again, this is something that the Minister of Natural Resources, our own Justice Department and other people are taking a very keen interest in.

Mr. Speaker, we will defend – as I said so many times, as I would expect every single Member in this House of Assembly would, all 40 Members. We will defend the joint management principle of the Atlantic Accord. We are now reviewing clause by clause the impact of Bill C-69 and where this piece of legislation would be as it affects the Atlantic Accord.

Mr. Speaker, one thing for sure, I will guarantee you that we will protect the joint management of the Atlantic Accord. Damage was done in 2012.

I think the Leader of the Opposition – I'm not saying this fondly, as you said last week. I am disappointed that that happened in 2012.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Former Premier Peckford also said that if one concept, like joint management, can be blatantly violated than the precedent is set that others like principle beneficiary can be violated, too.

Is the Premier concerned about the precedent?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Interesting enough, back in 2012, some of the people that we're referring to today and the Leader of the Opposition were like crickets. When Stephen Harper was making this decision that would have a profound impact on Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, nothing was said; yet, in this House today we're hearing a lot about this.

Mr. Speaker, we took exception to CEAA 2012. We took it at every single level – every single level, Mr. Speaker. We made submissions to the senator. We actually spoke to many Conservative senators just recently, as you would know.

Mr. Speaker, we are not satisfied with where we are in this province today with the outcome. We want to extract natural resources in an environmentally sustainable fashion to the benefit of Newfoundland and Labrador. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I say we will protect the principles of the Atlantic Accord.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: As the Premier well knows, I was not in this House and in a position to oppose CEAA at any relevant time. As well, he could

have instituted legal proceedings to challenge that.

Last week the Premier stated he would amend the Atlantic Accord, depending on benefits.

What kind of benefits would get his consent to amend the right of joint management in the Atlantic Accord?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, interesting enough, that the Leader of the Opposition is saying that he needed to be quiet in 2012 because he did not want to stand up for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Well, I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition had no issue in seeking a nomination for Stephen Harper to run in the last election. That tells me you had supported what the man had done.

Now, Mr. Speaker, talking about where amendments would be made, I know Members of this House of Assembly that have made – we have stood here and made amendments simply because of things like worker safety, as an example. If there are areas now – as things evolve over time around land tendering, if these can benefit Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, we will make those amendments, but only when they benefit this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, this illustrates why the House has passed a resolution to ask the Standing Orders Committee to improve the operation of Question Period and the answers thereto.

The Atlantic Accord agreements were entered between Canada and the province in 1985 and 2005. Last week our federal Cabinet representative told Noia that the Atlantic Accord

now contains an arbitration clause to resolve disputes over joint management.

Mr. Speaker, the 1985 and 2005 agreements do not contain an applicable arbitration clause.

So my question is whether there is a secret amendment to the Atlantic Accord?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of ways this can be dealt with, as we all know, and we're acutely aware of the impact in 1985 and 2005 in the changes that we've seen in the Atlantic Accord; however, I take exception to the preamble when he said that Question Period – why we need to change the Standing Orders.

I made it quite clear when I answered the last question in where it would impact, because the question was, what amendments we'd be willing to make with the Atlantic Accord. I spoke of things like land tendering. I spoke of things like worker safety. Are these issues that you would see not worthwhile in amending the Atlantic Accord?

I would say to the Leader of the Opposition, amendments were made coming after a very long review by Judge Wells about the Atlantic Accord. They needed to occur.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: To the best of my understanding, the Premier is pointing to a two-year period for discussions contained in the Hibernia dividends agreement which provides for exactly those things to be discussed.

My question, the government has been lobbying Ottawa to have a majority of C-NLOPB members on the Assessment Act review tribunal. As Brian Peckford points out, the C-NLOPB is a federal-provincial body, not a provincial body.

How does C-NLOPB representation on the review tribunal give the province a greater voice

and prevent the weakening of joint management?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, we take exception to having two of the five – minimum of five, there could actually be more. But let's keep in mind: Where did that erosion begin?

Let's not forget this, and I think this is important to remind all Members of the House of Assembly, because people would be watching and they would think that this is an erosion that's just happening with Bill C-69.

Mr. Speaker, that was lost back in 2012. It was taken away by his friend, Stephen Harper.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: The Premier asked federal Finance Minister Morneau to help him find \$200 million a year to mitigate Muskrat rates by refinancing to load more debt on to future generations. This \$200 million a year is already baked into the Liberal rate plan.

What is the status of the \$200 million?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, back in early spring of this year, in April for us, Mr. Speaker, there were two plans that were put forward to the people of our province. There was one, and we should be reluctant to name the plan, I think the Leader of the Opposition referred to it, the PC plan was a CHEAP plan. That was the name that he used, not me, I'm repeating his words, Mr. Speaker, and we put out our plan. In the so-called CHEAP plan there was \$150 million that was doubled counted, therefore, left his plan extremely short of meeting the rates that the plan had set.

Ours did include \$200 million. It was the PUB recommendations that said that the greatest potential to find the \$200 million would be

around restructure the finances, with the federal government, and they have agreed to do so.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, PSA testing is one of the best early screening tools for prostate cancer. Yet, our office has received calls from patients who visited their family doctor and were told they were no longer eligible for PSA blood tests.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister clarify what new assessment rules are being used to determine eligibility for this life-saving test?

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

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

The guidelines for screening testing are those that are based on national standards. I am not aware that any of these have changed recently. I will look into the Member opposite's question and report back to the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, the survival rate for prostate cancer is over 90 per cent if detected earlier. Specialists recommend doing this yearly.

Why is the minister not supporting the fact that we continue to do this?

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

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

I don't believe I actually said that. What I said was that I'm not aware of any changes in the

screening recommendations for prostate cancer. I will look into the Member's questions and report back to this House.

What I can report is that we lead the country in wait times for radiation for prostate cancer treatment, a position we have held for the last four years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We look forward to hearing that this indeed is not the case and these tests have not been cancelled.

Mr. Speaker, there was gut-wrenching story in the media about Samantha Rideout who lost her leg after it took Eastern Health two months to make a proper diagnosis. This 30-year-old single mother of three children had her life forever changed.

Does the minister feel Eastern Health did enough to help this woman?

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

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

Obviously, I can't comment on individual cases before the House. The issue around Eastern Health and its protocols and policies is one they are investigating.

What I would point out to the Member opposite is that each of the health professionals involved in this lady's care are subject to self-regulating professions, and if there is an issue with the standard of care then there is an avenue, at no cost to the individual, for them to appeal that directly to the physicians and nurses regulating bodies.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Can the minister explain why Eastern Health took so long for her concerns to be taken seriously and will he agree to meet with Ms. Rideout to listen to her concerns?

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

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

As I say, I can't comment on the specifics of any particular case. Eastern Health are doing their own review, I am told, under the provisions of our new legislation around patient safety and quality assurance, and I will wait for that.

As I say, if the individual concerned in her care has concerns about the standard of that care then there are other avenues that she can pursue independent of government and at no cost to herself. And I would encourage her to do so, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Budget 2019 included \$22 million in contingency funding that can be used in any way he wants. Will the Minister of Finance commit to reallocating money from this contingency fund to provide coverage for insulin pumps for people of all ages?

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

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

The issue of insulin pump and funding, we have, in *Budget 2019* – currently under debate – money allocated within Health to expand the program by removing the age cap. That is already there, we're currently debating it and I

look forward to that debate going on later this afternoon. We're just waiting for the Opposition to vote it through.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Finance commit to reallocating money from the contingency fund to provide school busing for all children living within the 1.6-kilometre zone of their school?

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

MR. WARR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We've taken action to address the concerns and the current policy is comparable, if not, in most cases, more favourable than other provinces. We are consistently collaborating with the districts to address the concerns and to date, Mr. Speaker, we've put an extra 649 courtesy stops that have been implemented within the 1.6-busing policy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in the last couple of days we had a serious washout on the Trans-Labrador Highway and I want to give the Minister of Transportation and Works an opportunity to update the House on the status of that washout and where we're to today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

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

I thank the hon. Member for the question. Mr. Speaker, yes, early Monday morning we were made aware of a washout. I believe it was around 3:30 a.m. that we were made aware of the situation. TW crews were on site by 4:30 a.m. and equipment was mobilized onsite by 9 a.m.

Right now, my latest update – and I shared with the four MHAs and the Member opposite around 1 o'clock today, the latest information we have – crews are on site, repairs have begun, we'll know again later this afternoon better on our time frames, but there is a significant piece of work that's here that's going to need to be done. By tomorrow morning, we will have helicopter service in place and we made marine freight arrangements as well, Mr. Speaker, for the interim to get us through the process of getting the road back to passable.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MS. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last week officials of the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment testified under oath at the Muskrat Falls inquiry that methylmercury mitigation work in the form of capping had to start by the fall of 2018; however, on June 13 the Minister of Natural Resources told the House that capping was still being considered. So why didn't the minister tell the House that it was already too late for capping?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the question, this is a health issue in how we manage health issues related to methylmercury. I will tell the Member opposite this remains a priority for us. Since the recommendations – four recommendations would have come in on

April of 2018 – there's been quite a bit of work done in terms of gathering analysis and monitoring in the reservoir and downstream in Lake Melville.

None of the examples or none of the increases in methylmercury that would have been anticipated and predicted back in 2018 actually happened within the system, using the monitoring system that was approved by the IEAC. I will continue to say to the Member opposite, we are looking at options that we can actually have to mitigate methylmercury as early as this morning.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MS. EVANS: The Independent Expert Advisory Committee report was released in April 2018. Will the minister confirm that due to her government's inaction, it is now too late to perform any of the methylmercury preventative work recommended by the Independent Expert Advisory Committee?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the Member opposite, April 8 I sent a letter to all three Indigenous groups within Labrador inviting them to a meeting. There was a bunch of scheduling problems getting that meeting prior to the election. We did get a chance to meet on October 9, so the implementation committee which was recommended by the original Independent Expert Advisory Committee – this is where we're trying to get this committee to come together. They all agreed that they would report back in one week. So now I've only heard back from one so far.

I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, it's our intention to work with those three Indigenous groups to look for ways to mitigate methylmercury. Protecting health risks is something that this was all about. The 1,300 samples that have been done, however, in the reservoir, we're not seeing the spikes that were predicted with methylmercury.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

The Independent Expert Advisory Committee recommended an impact security fund be established to guarantee access to local country food or alternatives.

How much is in that fund?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: As I said a few minutes ago, Mr. Speaker, the implementation committee – which is what we're trying to get in place right now. I've already met with the three Indigenous leaders, and the minister responsible was there, as were others in the room. It was a good meeting. The takeaway from that meeting is to come back with representatives, members that they would put on this implementation committee. That's the group that I'm referring to. They said we needed a week to actually respond to the draft terms of reference that we supplied to them to begin their work from.

We haven't heard back from two, but, Mr. Speaker, we're looking forward to getting this committee in place so we can start the implementation, based on the evidence that we now have available to us.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. EVANS: Once the methylmercury is released into the water, we can't mitigate it. I want to point that out, and it looks like inaction is going to actually result in that.

Mr. Speaker, I will ask the minister if she will confirm to the House when the date of impoundment of the reservoir is determined. The minister said that she would inform the House when the date of the impoundment of the reservoir is determined.

Has the date of impoundment been determined yet?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Back to the previous question, in terms of the amount. This is something we'd need to work with the implementation committee that I just spoke about.

In terms of methylmercury creation, Mr. Speaker, and the message that this may have been too late. Well, that is not the case, because when you look at topsoil removal, the expert advice that came from three of the four scientists said there was a risk of removal – of soil removal and vegetation removal would actually increase.

Mr. Speaker, this is something that was brand new, new information that has come forward based on the monitoring program in Lake Melville and the reservoir that was completed over the summer of 2018, which was post the IEAC's recommendation.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair that we get the Indigenous groups together so all this data that we now have available to us can be shared with the Indigenous groups.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue. I'll get that one yet.

MR. DWYER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last week, WorkplaceNL reported there were 36 work-related fatalities in the province in 2018. This number is sad and alarming.

Minister: What action is the government taking to help prevent workplace injury and illness?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for WorkplaceNL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Member for his question.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, there was a report of a significant number of fatalities, but the majority of them were occupational disease related. Occupational disease has a 10- to 40-year latency.

WorkplaceNL works alongside the employers and the workers. We do educational campaigns. There's a significant amount of consultation completed.

Mr. Speaker, we have employer reps in place. There is a significant amount of work done with the employers to ensure their workplaces are safe.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

MR. DWYER: The majority of the occupational disease-related facilities were due to exposure to harmful substances.

Minister: What is the government doing to ensure that workers are no longer exposed to harmful substances in the workplace?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for WorkplaceNL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, occupational disease is one of the priorities of WorkplaceNL. We are focusing on occupational disease. We have staff down at WorkplaceNL who do.

Mr. Speaker, there are a significant amount of inspections done by occupational health and safety, and directives are put forward with employers when there is an issue.

Mr. Speaker, we are working with WorkplaceNL and OHS to ensure that the workplaces are safe.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

MR. DWYER: Mr. Speaker, the Marystown Shipyard Family Alliance, which represents former Marystown Shipyard workers, is requesting the establishment of an intake clinic to collect their medical history of the workplace toxic exposures.

Will the minister commit to setting up the intake clinic that the Family Alliance has requested?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for WorkplaceNL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, the act, as it exists, allows for an occupational health and safety committee. A medical committee, Mr. Speaker, not an intake committee. An intake committee is where people come together and discuss their symptoms amongst themselves.

In actual fact, WorkplaceNL is willing to put three oncologists in place to meet with individuals from the Marystown Shipyard Family Alliance. Right now, mesothelioma and work-related asbestosis is covered by WorkplaceNL, but we are willing to work with that committee. We have, in fact, corresponded with the committee and haven't heard back from them whether or not they are going to agree to do the committee with the three oncologists.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

MR. DWYER: The Marystown Shipyard Family Alliance represents the affected former Marystown Shipyard workers and they want an intake clinic. Dr. Noah Kerin has done a lot of work to date to this.

Can the minister explain why government is refusing to address the ongoing shipyard workers' health issues with the intake clinic they have requested?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for WorkplaceNL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, we are following the act and we are willing to put together a committee that has three oncologists to work with the individuals. If there are any

news claims or any new evidence that the individuals would like to put forward, we are open and willing to review each individual case.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue for a quick question, please.

MR. DWYER: A quick question is that Dr. Noel Kerin has done a lot of work to date on this file.

I'm just wondering if the minister is going to include Dr. Noel Kerin in the committee.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for WorkplaceNL for a quick response, please.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, WorkplaceNL is aware of the work done by the doctor. The committee, as I stated before, will be of three oncologists.

The Marystown Family Alliance can be engaged in that conversation as we determine what three oncologists will be on the committee, but, Mr. Speaker, that is what the act covers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In a recent letter to the Minister of Natural Resources, international hydro expert James Gordon withdrew his public endorsement of the safety of the North Spur dam on learning Hatch did not review the work of SNC-Lavalin.

I ask the minister: What does she have to say about Mr. Gordon's change of heart on the North Spur?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I've indicated to this House, there have been over 30 different studies on the North Spur by leading experts, SNC-Lavalin, Hatch, as the Member opposite has indicated. There have been stress and strain tests. I'll be tabling tomorrow the response to the question that the Member opposite asked last week about the reports and whether or not stress and strain tests have been done.

I can advise the Member opposite to review those 30 different reports. Mr. Gordon has his opinion. I can only assure the Member opposite that we have the 30 different reports, including – for example, Hatch, most recently in 2017, also looked at the dam safety program itself and made sure that that was up to par as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

MS. COFFIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Nalcor's hand-picked North Spur peer review panel did not consult the community or experts concerned about SNC-Lavalin's methods and results. The panel also said it did not perform any calculations of its own and explicitly disclaims any liability for the work done in its report.

I ask the minister: The Muskrat Falls inquiry is uncovering more and more examples of Nalcor's rogue behaviour, interference and overreach. How can the minister continue to trust Nalcor's claim that everything is fine with the North Spur?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is indeed an important question and I certainly don't want to minimize the important work that has been done on the North Spur, and the work that will continue to be done to ensure its safety.

We have 30 different reports from many different professional organizations such as Hatch, such as SNC-Lavalin, among others, Mr. Speaker, on this very important work.

Stability of the North Spur has been – the work has been undertaken and a review of the Dam Safety Program, an audit of the Dam Safety Program has been reviewed by Hatch, Mr. Speaker.

I can assure the Member opposite we're taking this very seriously. If there's something more that needs to be done, we'll certainly consider it.

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.

Mr. Speaker, in Question Period last week the Minister of Natural Resources said she would ask Nalcor if there have been any required stress and strain tests carried out on the North Spur, and also if there are further things that need to be done to ensure the safety of the dam.

I ask the minister: How did her meetings go with Nalcor and what did she find out?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do have before me a list of work that has been done. There's been numerous geotechnical tests that I did indicate to the House last week, over 30, including stress and strain tests that were requested last week. I'd be happy to table all those tests. I was planning to do so today but there's one more late-breaking piece of information that is just coming to me.

There's been a slope stability analysis. There's been a seismic site characterization; a Reservoir Induced Seismicity study; a landslide wave-generation analysis; Churchill River valley landslide work; progressive failure study; dynamic analysis, which is earthquake triggering; hydrology 3D model. Mr. Speaker, I can tell this House there have been lots of studies done. We'll be happy to table them.

MR. SPEAKER: Great.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

MR. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, in defending the stability of the North Spur, the minister constantly refers to Nalcor's assurance that the dam meets Canadian safety standards, yet experts claim the unique geology and conditions of the area require additional assessments using more modern calculations.

I ask the minister: Given this matter of safety, does the understanding of the independent expert review of the stability of the dam of North Spur, is it critical?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Congratulations on the first question in the House. It's wonderful to have you sitting there and asking these important questions.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that we take this very, very seriously. North Spur has to undertake the Canadian dam safety regulations. As I just indicated, Mr. Speaker, a dam safety audit was undertaken by Hatch to make sure the program that's in place for the dam safety is as robust as it needs to be.

There are 30 different tests and analyses. I just named some into the record, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to table those. If there is further work that is required to be done, this government will certainly undertake that. We want to make sure, obviously, that this is very well constructed, manufactured and able to stand up to the most rigorous tests.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The time for Oral Questions has ended.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, who beat him to the gun.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I wish to table the Private Training Corporation's 2018 annual performance report.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further tabling of documents?

The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the requirements of section 5 of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, I am pleased to table the 2018-19 business plan for the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety and Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, section 28 of the *Provincial Court Act* requires that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council appoint a tribunal every four years to review and report on the salaries and benefits of Provincial Court judges and present its recommendations and reasons to the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

A tribunal consisting of Brad Wicks, Q.C., David Eaton, Q.C. and John Whelan were appointed in June 2018 to make recommendations for a four-year period from April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2021. Public hearings were conducted by the Wicks tribunal on January 31 and February 1, 2019. The tribunal report was presented to me on June 6, 2019.

The tribunal report made recommendations on salary, severance, long-term disability benefits, interest and travel per diems for judges.

Section 28.2(2) of the act requires that the report must be tabled in the House within 15 days of the start of this session of the House. The act also directs that within 30 days after the report is tabled a resolution must be submitted to the House of Assembly to confirm, vary or reject the tribunal's recommendations.

I hereby table this report in the House of Assembly.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

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

I have two notices here. The first one, I give notice and by leave move the following motion that Mr. Jim Dinn replace Ms. Alison Coffin as a Member of the Public Accounts Committee.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour of that motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

MR. A. PARSONS: Excellent.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to move the following resolution: A resolution respecting the appointment of the members of the Independent Appointments Commission.

WHEREAS subsection 6(3) of the *Independent Appointments Commission Act* provides that the Independent Appointments Commission shall consist of a minimum of five and a maximum of seven members appointed by the Lieutenant-

Governor in Council on a resolution of the House of Assembly; and

WHEREAS the following three members have submitted their resignation as Members of the Independent Appointment Commission: Clyde K. Wells, Zita Cobb and Shannie Duff

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the following persons be appointed members of the Independent Appointments Commission for a term of three years: Edward Roberts, Q.C., Gerald Lloyd Anderson and Peggy Bartlett.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to move the following private Member's resolution.

BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador:

(1) to admonish the House of Commons and Senate of Canada for passing Bill C-69 with provisions that violate the principle of joint management contained in the 1985 Atlantic Accord and its implementation legislation;

(2) to take all reasonable measures, including court challenges where necessary, to safeguard against conflicting federal legislation, the hard-won joint management rights that Newfoundland and Labrador secured under the 1985 Atlantic Accord and its implementation legislation; and

(3) to refuse to enact any provincial law that will erode those rights.

It's seconded, or will be, by the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In accordance with Standing Order 63, the private Member's resolution read out by my colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, will be the private Member's resolution that will be debated on Wednesday.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given

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

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My hon. colleague, last week, asked me a question regarding the social media campaign that we had for the Newfoundland and Labrador social media campaign for 2018-19 for the Immigration Action Plan. He asked if there were requests for proposals. I wanted to let him know that there was. It was released on January 26, 2018 and closed on February 5, 2018 with six submissions received.

M5 was the successful proponent and was awarded the contract on May 14, 2018 for \$300,000 to develop original content, implement the campaign and play social media content and social media platforms for 2018-19. The campaign ran from October 29 to December 9 with a break there for Christmas and started again February 4 to March 31.

I have the documents here for tabling for the hon. Member.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

Further answers to questions for which notice has been given?

Petitions.

Petitions

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

MR. LESTER: Mr. Speaker, the Adult Dental Program coverage for clients of the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program under Access and 65Plus Plan were eliminated in *Budget 2016*.

Low-income families and low-income individuals, particularly seniors, are struggling with the cost of living and struggling to meet some of their basic needs. Dental care is one of them. Many seniors and low-income individuals and families can no longer access basic dental care, and those same individuals can now no longer access dentures leading to many other digestive and medical issues.

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, called on the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to reinstate the Adult Dental Program to cover seniors, low-income individuals and families to ensure better oral health, quality of life and dignity.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great disappointment to once again see that this is not a consideration in this proposed budget. This is basic dignity; people's confidence enabling them to better themselves in life.

Here in Newfoundland and Labrador, we have the highest rate of unemployment in our history. We also have one of the highest vacancies in certain job profiles. Mr. Speaker, that is because people who would be able to fill these jobs do not have the confidence in themselves to get out and get off the social system and, therefore, become more productive within society. This is just a basic need that we are ignoring.

In this current budget, there is no relief for people on low income, nor seniors. The only relief we do see in the heavy tax burden that we must bear as a province is within the tax on vehicle insurance. We need to remove these barriers from people being able to get out and

work, from people being able to enjoy just basic life, being able to eat properly, which also, of course, goes on to improving overall health of individuals.

This is some of the basic needs that are continuing to be ignored and, therefore, I am in full support of this petition. It's definitely time we put some dignity back into our decisions.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

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-aged children throughout our province who live inside the eastern school district's 1.6 kilometre zone, therefore do not qualify for busing; and

WHEREAS policy cannot override the safety of our children;

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to eliminate the 1.6-kilometre policy for all elementary schools in the province, and in junior and senior high schools where safety is a primary concern.

Mr. Speaker, this issue has been brought forward on a number of occasions, and here we are approaching the end of a school year. The kids will be getting out and running around and we'll have to be wary of them on the streets, and our teachers, who've done great work, will be – be released I was going to say, but get out of school.

When we talk about this, it's a good time to get talking about it because in no time we'll be going back to school. We've heard from government about the courtesy stops. The

courtesy stops are only as good as the courtesy seats that are on the bus. There could be a seat on the bus one day and not on the bus the next day. There could be multiple kids from the same family, some get on the bus, some cannot.

I think from a safety perspective, and it was raised in Oral Questions today regarding the contingency fund and utilizing some of that for the 1.6 kilometre busing, I really think we need to look at this and we need to address, if not for anything but the safety of our children.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further petitions?

I'm sorry, the hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development for a response, please.

MR. WARR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker

I appreciate the concerns of my hon. colleague. We hear from parents all the time, Mr. Speaker, with regard to issues around schools and the safety of busing children. We have consistent dialogue with the district and we'll continue to collaborate with them to address areas of concern.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I will go back and say that during the election there was a figure that was posted with regard to the cost of busing these children that live within the 1.6 to a tune of \$3.5 million. I've asked for that figure to be presented to our department so we can have a look. To date, Mr. Speaker, I haven't received it.

The other question, if I can ask it, would be, if we were going to continue to spend money on education services is that a priority of your party?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further petitions?

The hon. Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's timely to come up with this petition again after that response.

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-aged children throughout our province who live within the eastern 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 high schools where safety is a primary concern.

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

As we know, this petition was just presented and the minister opposite provided commentary. It's probably good to come back at this again to probably bring some clarity to what the minister had said.

This has been a priority. It was in the Blue Book, we've committed to the 1.6 busing policy, Mr. Speaker. This is not new to us. This is not new to Members on this side of the House. It's not new to me. It's not new to anyone in this Legislature. We've been lobbying for this since 2015. There's nothing new about what we're doing.

What it is, is determination. This is determination. I believe if you're principled, you stand on an issue and you stick with that issue, regardless of what faces you along the way. If you stand on an issue, you can never go wrong by being principled. I believe this is a very principled argument and makes a lot of sense.

To say that you're comparing on cross-jurisdictional scans, Mr. Speaker; respectfully, why shouldn't we aspire to be the best? Why should we be second, third or fourth best? Because others have worse, we're going to be okay with that. I don't agree with that. I respectfully disagree totally with that.

The cost; they keep putting it back to what we had estimated the cost to be. They estimated \$8.5 million. I've yet to see where those numbers came from. That was a number that's been kicked around for years.

No one actually will give this enough respect and consideration within the department to give proper numbers. I've asked for those numbers. I spoke publicly. Why don't the department come out and provide us with the numbers?

Two years ago, I was at a protest and I said that. I'm here asking again. We're not going away on this issue. We have lots of people who want it. This issue is alive and well everywhere.

Government keeps coming back with those answers; we've been hearing it over and over. We're not giving up. We're not going anywhere and the parents are not going anywhere.

Those parents of those children want answers. They want busing. They don't want their children walking to schools in these unsafe road conditions, no shoulders. It's fine now, you got a beautiful day out. I got roads up there; I've got that wide a shoulder on a four-lane highway, so I'm expecting a six- or seven-year-old child to walk those roads?

Some parents cannot do it. Some parents are single parents, two small children, they cannot physically do it. It's a stress on the family. I've said it many times and I'll say it again, this issue, the policy is outdated. How any government, respectfully, any Member opposite, can stand up and defend it, it defies all logic in my mind.

We're not going anywhere. I'm not going anywhere on this issue. This issue will stay alive and well for as long as I'm in this House of Assembly.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There have been numerous concerns raised by family members of seniors in long-term care throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly those suffering with dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive debilitating conditions, whereby loved ones have experienced injuries, have not been bathed regularly, not received proper nutrition and/or have been left lying in their own waste for extended periods of time.

We believe this is directly related to government's failure to ensure adequate staffing at those facilities.

We therefore petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: To urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to instate legislation, which includes the mandatory re-establishment of an adequate ratio of one staff to three residents in long-term care and all other applicable regional health facilities housing persons with dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive debilitating conditions in order to ensure appropriate safety, protection from injuries, proper hygiene care and all other required care. This law would include the creation of a specific job position in these facilities for monitoring and intervention as required to ensure the safety of all patients.

Mr. Speaker, petitions today are from the Clarke's Head area, Gander, Victoria Cove, Massey Drive, Labrador City and Wabush.

Again, Mr. Speaker, as I've presented this now, I don't know how many times, numerous times, and the concern is still there. What it comes down to is a concern for the safety and the well-being of our seniors. Seniors who have dementia, Alzheimer's disease and so on that are in long-term care, and, certainly, there is anecdotal evidence from hundreds of family members that there are times when their family

members are not being taken care of properly. Not because the staff are not professional and not because the staff don't want to do their job, but there are times when they're simply working short staffed.

There could be any number of issues around that. It could be the fact there are delays in hiring people when they leave. It could be issues around not replacing people when they're off on sick leave, when they're off on annual leave and so on, issues around that.

I know in health care, I've heard in hospital settings and other health care facilities, where, at one point at least, they had this policy of not replacing the first sick call. That can't work. If that's the case in these facilities, I don't know if it is or it isn't, but that type of situation cannot work for vulnerable seniors in long-term care.

I ask the government to make sure that we're taking care of our seniors.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further petitions?

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise again with a petition on behalf of the people of Corner Brook, Western Newfoundland and all parts of Newfoundland.

WHEREAS the successful proponents for the new hospital in Corner Brook are scheduled to be announced this spring with construction anticipated to begin 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, today and tomorrow might be the last chance that I have to present petitions. The House may not be open again until November sometime, or October November, and the contract may be awarded to the successful proponents and construction may have started.

The minister has already said he's going to work on trying to get up to 90 per cent. I encourage that. I'm hoping there's work on the go now to deal with the tradespeople in the province so that we can start working out any details if we need to now and get them to work with the successful proponent when the announcement is made.

When I asked the Premier a question there two weeks ago today, actually, he mentioned there was going to be an announcement in the next couple of weeks. Well, I look forward to that. I just hope there won't be a protest again this year with a lot of local tradespeople. Last year, a lot of iron workers were protesting because they couldn't get any work on the site itself.

So I urge the government today and tomorrow – it's going to be possibly my last couple of days to present the petitions. I made the commitment during the election – before, during and after – that I will bring this up every possible opportunity that I can, which I'm doing again today.

I urge the government, before they make their final decision, to ensure they put their two cents' worth in, that they hire local people, Mr. Speaker, because this is a great project. There are a lot of great qualified tradespeople and labourers in the area that can do this work. It would be great for the local economy. It would be great to have people home with their families and it would be great all around that once the hospital is built, Mr. Speaker, that we all can say that everybody in Newfoundland and Labrador benefit from this project.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I call Orders of the Day.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you.

I will call from the Order Paper, Motion 4, the Budget Speech.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Looking for a speaker.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

The Minister of Finance refuses to tell the House how or where the Liberal government will make \$617 million in cuts that his own budget says are necessary to meet the balanced budget target in 2022-23 and he refuses to table the documents that set out this analysis.

The Minister of Finance stonewalls while Newfoundland and Labrador is facing the most difficult population, fiscal and economic challenges it has confronted since joining Canadian Confederation in 1949. These challenges threaten the future of the province and the present Liberal government is failing to acknowledge them, let alone execute a plan to overcome them.

We know the goal is to balance the budget by 2022-23, but where is the plan to reach the goal? The minister says we have not turned the corner, but he can see the corner. The minister needs to give the public the same eyeglasses he is using to see the corner so we can check the prescription. The minister can stonewall Question Period but he can't stonewall his eyeglass prescription.

My Finance critic colleague, the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port, has spoken to the

budget details. Other Members of the newly strengthened PC Party Official Opposition caucus have spoken to aspects of the Liberal budget as it affects those they were elected to represent. I will not repeat the criticisms already made by my colleagues; rather, I will place the Liberal budget and its failings in a broad context.

The broad context points to the conclusion that Newfoundland and Labrador needs a new deal with Canada to help us recover from our population, fiscal and economic challenges, and become both fiscally sustainable as a province and a contributing member of Confederation.

The provincial Liberal government had an opportunity created by the 2005 Atlantic Accord arrangement to negotiate this new deal for fairness within the fiscal framework of Confederation and threw it away in exchange for a hocus-pocus Hibernia dividend deal worth chicken feed. And to the shame of our provincial Liberal government, it agreed in writing with the Trudeau Liberal government that they have now completed the review of the 2005 arrangement on offshore revenues.

The opportunity created by the 2005 Atlantic Accord to review the fairness of our fiscal treatment within Confederation and negotiate a better deal is closed and cannot be reopened. This squandered opportunity cannot now be reopened without a federal partner ready and willing to reopen it, and that partner, obviously, will not be the federal Liberal government and its silent seven MPs.

In 1992, the year of the cod moratorium, the population of this province was 2 per cent of the national population. At 525,000 presently, it is 1.4 per cent. The Canadian economy has grown 58 per cent since 2000, while the Newfoundland and Labrador economy has grown by 32 per cent. We see the consequences of depopulation, an aging demographic and relative economic decline most acutely in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

With great challenge comes great opportunity for those with vision and resolve to build a stronger Newfoundland and Labrador within a stronger Canada. The recovery of Newfoundland and Labrador as a contributing component of

Canada requires a determined defence of the Atlantic Accord against what was Bill C-69, now on the books of Canada as the *Impact Assessment Act*.

This federal legislation attacks the joint management principle established by the 1985 Atlantic Accord. Furthermore, while there is more yet to do, we have made a significant contribution to greenhouse gas reduction through our massive regional coal power, displacing investment in green hydro energy on the Lower Churchill River. This gives us a moral authority to fight the Ball-Trudeau carbon tax. This carbon tax does not take into account either the hardship on a rural population which must use gasoline for extended travel, or the contribution this province is making toward meeting our national climate change goals based on international commitments.

Three core issues underline the challenges for this province and require immediate action: One, the massive and growing debt of the province, which is brought about by lack of expenditure control, greatly aggravated by the huge over-budget costs of the much-delayed Lower Churchill hydro project; two, the fiscal unfairness arising from the federal government's failure to honour the 1985 Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord and its stated objective that Newfoundland and Labrador will be the principal beneficiary of our offshore natural resources, now coupled with the unilateral federal legislative assault on the 1985 Atlantic Accord principle of joint management; three, the significant and continuing decline in our province's population since 1993, combined with the older age profile of our existing population of 525,000 people.

The Lower Churchill hydroelectric project's huge cost overruns and multi-year delay are the greatest immediate threat to our financial and social stability. The project has a current completion cost of \$12.7 billion, which may yet rise. We must take action to address this massive debt and to ensure that power rates are affordable for the people and the businesses of our province.

While we now have an interconnected electricity system from the Upper Churchill Falls to the Island and onward to the mainland of Canada

and North America, the implications of cost overruns cannot be absorbed into the existing power rates of the province's consumers in any normal, step-wise rate increase manner without destroying the provincial economy and accelerating our depopulation. That is why early this year the PC Party of Newfoundland and Labrador released our plan, the Crosbie Hydro Energy Action Plan, to hold the impact of the Lower Churchill Falls Project coming into service to a zero effect on rates.

Proof of the viability of our rate mitigation plan is that the Liberal government adopted substantially the same plan, but rate mitigation requires taking from sources of funding that cannot be used for other needs and many other deserving needs exist.

The Government of Canada is already a partner, in a broad sense, in the financing and development of the Lower Churchill generation plant and related transmission systems in Labrador and across the Island. Without the \$7.9 billion of federal financing guarantees, extended by both the Harper and Trudeau governments, this project likely would not have been constructed. These guarantees were stated to be part of a national and regional clean energy and reduction of greenhouse gases strategy and were justified as an economic benefit for all of Atlantic Canada and as a step toward compliance with international greenhouse gas obligations.

It was envisioned decades ago that the Lower Churchill would be developed by a joint federal-provincial corporation called the Lower Churchill Development Corporation, with 51 per cent provincial and 49 per cent federal equity participation. Legislation establishing such a corporation still exists.

Together with our partner, the federal government, we must put in place a comprehensive Lower Churchill Falls plan to protect the viability and sustainability of this important national and regional hydroelectric project. This nation-building plan requires the federal government to provide additional support to the Lower Churchill Project to ensure power rates are affordable to consumers and to reduce the enormous additional debt that will be

imposed on Newfoundland and Labrador residents.

The Trudeau Liberal federal government shows no indication of being willing to give this support, and the Liberal provincial government shows no indication of understanding the need to advocate for this support. Putting extra debt onto the shoulders of future generations by refinancing project debt to further backend load the repayment of it, as the Premier has asked Trudeau's Finance Minister Morneau to do, will add to our indebtedness and drive young people away.

This is not the federal support we need. The federal support we need could take the form of equity investment. The total debt of Newfoundland and Labrador is already approaching \$16 billion, the largest per capita debt of any Canadian province. A significant increase in the Muskrat Falls partnership commitment from the Government of Canada is necessary to address the peril this province is in.

The federal government and other Atlantic Canada provinces must also explore the potential for maximizing the sale of clean, renewable Lower Churchill Falls power and for contributing to an earlier phasing out of existing coal-generated power plants in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick than currently expected.

Furthermore, increasing the utilization of the expanded and integrated electricity transmission system from Labrador to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and beyond would create opportunity for the generation of wind power throughout the Atlantic region and the achievement of the national objective of reducing greenhouse gases.

Federal equity investment in Churchill River green energy is an excellent fit with the goal of strategic interconnection of electricity grids to connect regions with clean power proposed in A Real Plan to Protect Our Environment, the national energy plan released by the Conservative Party of Canada last week.

An affordable resolution to the Lower Churchill rate dilemma is in the national interest. The province and the federal government are partners in this clean, renewable hydro power project and must take responsibility for the

financial problems that now exists and each must participate and share in the solution.

Any discussion of issues and opportunities on the Churchill River should not ignore the fact that tax exemptions for the export of power from Upper Churchill expired in 2016, and that this province has the opportunity to take advantage of the expiry of these contractual exemptions.

Section 92(a) was added to the *Constitution Act* in 1982 when the federal government patriated the constitution. Sometimes called the Resource Amendment, it empowers the legislature of a province to make laws in relation to the export from the province to another part of Canada of the production from facilities in the province for the generation of electrical energy – end quote.

An enormous opportunity has presented itself by which this province can gain leverage over Quebec to work more co-operatively with us in the development of Labrador hydro resources and their interconnection with the North American grid, but this is also a signal opportunity by which we can achieve a fair and equitable return to us as the owner of the Upper Churchill Falls resource as we look forward to the expiry of the unfair and inequitable renewal contract in 2041.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians should be alarmed that when earlier this year I asked the Premier about the expiry of tax exemptions and the opportunity to tax the export of power from the Upper Churchill to Quebec, he appeared not to know what I was talking about.

Our provincial Liberal government has been missing in action on yet another issue critical to our prosperity and sustainability, namely the issue of a fair and equitable return to us as owner of the Upper Churchill hydro resource. The expiry of Quebec's tax exemption gives us critical leverage to achieve this fair and equitable return.

Fiscal unfairness is intimately related to depopulation. Depopulation affects every aspect of our social, fiscal and economic well being. Most people think of federal transfers in terms of the equalization program, which is intended to provide reasonably comparable access to

reasonably comparable levels of public services across Canada.

There are two other transfer programs: the Social Transfer and the Health Transfer. The Health Transfer is even larger than equalization, because federal Health and Social Transfer programs are now based on an equal per capita cash basis, the annual financial loss from our decrease in population is in the order of \$80 million. This financial loss of \$80 million, annually, does not include the impact on federal equalization payments caused by the failure to honour the principle beneficiary obligation enshrined in the 1985 Atlantic Accord.

The 1985 Atlantic Accord was entered into between the PC administrations of Brian Mulroney and Brian Peckford, and my father, John Crosbie, was one of the signatories. The 2005 Atlantic Accord fiscal arrangement was negotiated by PC Premier Danny Williams. A renewal of the 2005 fiscal arrangement was intended to be negotiated by the federal and provincial governments, as agreed by the parties, and we in the PC Official Opposition charged the provincial Liberals with squandering a critical right granted by the 2005 Atlantic Accord to review the unfairness of our treatment within the fiscal framework of Confederation and negotiate a new deal with Canada, which protects and enforces the Atlantic Accord and our sustainability, prosperity and future ability to contribute to Confederation.

The Premier wrote to the prime minister on February 13, 2018 and invoked rights of review, which were established by the 2005 Atlantic Accord agreement negotiated by PC Premier Williams. The 2005 agreement was a sequel to the 1985 Atlantic Accord between Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador. The 2005 agreement dealt with the treatment of petroleum resources under equalization and it resulted in a contribution of at least \$2 billion toward the province's debt.

The parties agreed that no later than March 31, 2019, they would commence to review the arrangement and a list of issues critical to the fiscal position of Newfoundland and Labrador within Confederation was spelled out for review. The letter the Premier sent to Prime Minister

Trudeau mirrored the list of critical issues set out in the 2005 Atlantic Accord agreement.

The Government of Canada was legally obligated to address the following critical issues, which the letter the Premier sent to Prime Minister Trudeau quoted word for word from the 2005 Atlantic Accord arrangement.

This is from the Premier's letter: "a) the extent to which the Atlantic Accord objectives have been achieved, including the key objectives of the Atlantic Accord that Newfoundland and Labrador be the principal beneficiary of its offshore; b) whether Newfoundland and Labrador has realized lasting fiscal and economic gains from its offshore petroleum resources revenues; c) the Equalization arrangements then in effect; d) the fiscal disparities that then exist between Newfoundland and Labrador and other provinces; e) Newfoundland and Labrador's undeveloped offshore petroleum discoveries."

To our lasting shame, the provincial Liberal government, led by this Premier, went to Ottawa to review whether we have realized lasting fiscal and economic gains, as principal beneficiary of our offshore resources in the context of equalization and fiscal disparity with other provinces, and came back with no resolution of these issues whatsoever. Shame I say.

As a distraction to hide their failure, the Trudeau/O'Regan Liberals and their provincial enablers launched a massive propaganda campaign to brand a convoluted Hibernia dividend's agreement as an Atlantic Accord deal. The formal name of the agreement, dated April 1, 2019, says it all: Hibernia Dividend Backed Annuity Agreement.

This is not the name of an Atlantic Accord agreement. This Premier's complete failure to negotiate the promise of the Atlantic Accord required the provincial and federal Liberals to institute a loud propaganda branding exercise aimed at districting the public from what was an obvious failure of leadership of epic scope.

Trudeau's provincial Liberal enablers did not negotiate a renewed Atlantic Accord deal as intended by the 2005 Atlantic Accord arrangement. True to the no fight in Dwight

brand, they completely capitulated and surrendered a hard won opportunity to address the recovery of this province from our population, fiscal and economic challenges through a new fiscal deal within Confederation.

So, obviously, is the phony Liberal Atlantic Accord deal not a fulfilment of the principle beneficiary promise of the Atlantic Accord that this Premier and Trudeau's messenger, O'Regan, are currently doubling down on their propaganda campaign to distract attention from the Trudeau government legislative attack on the Atlantic Accord principle of joint management of the offshore.

A video from Trudeau's messenger, Minister O'Regan, was played at the Noia conference last week. The audience of oil industry executives greeted the message with stunned silence.

In a letter to *The Telegram* Saturday, former PC Premier Brian Peckford gave the audience a voice calling the O'Regan comments insulting and "hogwash." He denounced, "The bloody nerve of this excuse for a federal minister to so insult the competent people of Noia and the overall resource sector."

Among the many astonishing and insulting statements by Minister O'Regan is the following: And while I know that C-69 does not undermine the principle of joint management, it is good to know that if a dispute were ever to arise – and I think the Premier made this clear during his speech a couple of days ago – the Atlantic Accord now contains an arbitration clause to resolve it. Let me be clear, if a provincial government ever endangered the prosperity and sustainability of our offshore industry, you'd better believe that we need to be prepared to use it.

Why this excuse for a federal minister thinks a provincial government would ever endanger the prosperity and sustainability of our offshore industry was not explained. Trudeau's messenger, Minister O'Regan, stated that the Atlantic Accord now contains an arbitration clause to resolve disputes over joint management, suggesting that this is a recent amendment.

The only major new document publicly released and signed by the federal and provincial governments this year that contains an arbitration clause is the Hibernia Dividend Backed Annuity Agreement. This agreement contains a typical commercial arbitration clause that provides for resolution of disputes arising out of the interpretation of the agreement in which it is contained.

The agreement in which it is contained is an agreement about Hibernia dividends and not an agreement about the Atlantic Accord. Unless there is a secret amendment of the Atlantic Accord, the astonishing statements of both this Premier and O'Regan are plainly incorrect. There is no such arbitration clause. The talk of an arbitration clause is merely more propaganda to fool the public and extend the charade that the Hibernia dividend agreement has something to do with the Atlantic Accord.

There is a benefit to this province in this convoluted scheme to receive Hibernia dividends spread over a 38-year period, but compared to the adjustment of our fiscal position within Confederation that this Premier should have come home with, it is indeed the chicken feed and slight of hand it was labelled by former Premier Peckford.

The Telegram carried a story on April 26 in which they interviewed an Alberta expert about equalization and the Atlantic Accord. The expert effectively told *The Telegram* that if this Premier had been astute enough to obtain Trudeau's agreement to exclude offshore resource revenues and recalculate equalization based on non-resource revenues, then this province would be receiving about \$316 million in 2019 alone. This would be the added revenue to our Treasury – in his view – of applying an offset in accordance with the precedent established by PC Premier Williams in the 2005 Atlantic Accord arrangement.

We, in the PC Party Official Opposition, say the annual loss of funding to the province caused by failure to honour the principle beneficiary obligation is even greater. This is desperately needed funding that the provincial Liberal government left unrecovered when they announced their chicken feed Hibernia dividend deal, instead of negotiating an offset of offshore

resource revenues against the equalization formula in accordance with the precedent established by PC Premier Williams in the 2005 Atlantic Accord fiscal arrangement.

Newfoundland and Labrador requires a federal-provincial recovery plan that recognizes that this province cannot survive within Confederation if we continue to lose population and are unable to provide the basic services that all other Canadians receive. These basic services are guaranteed by section 36 of the 1982 Constitution. Equal opportunity, economic development, essential public services of reasonable quality, and sufficient revenue to provide reasonably comparable levels of services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation are all enshrined as constitutional rights by section 36.

The threat to Newfoundland and Labrador's future, posed by profound depopulation, should be of concern to every Canadian. We need a joint federal-provincial recovery plan to address our profound loss of population and the threat it represents to the very survival of Newfoundland and Labrador as a province in Canada. This recovery plan will be part of a nation-building commitment by Ottawa to the rehabilitation of the Atlantic region as a vibrant and contributing region of Canada.

Policies to encourage population growth should include: focusing on attracting more immigrants; establishing a graduate retention program; creating economic and social conditions to increase our birth rate; removing financial barriers to people who have or want to have children; and a community action plan to promote diversity, focusing on immigrant retention with targeted, specific regional immigration strategies.

We can yet address our population, debt and fiscal unfairness challenges through massive, committed government action. However, massive, committed government action will require champions both at home and elsewhere in the country, champions who can only be created by honest leadership, practising accurate thinking about the depth and scope of our problems, and leadership which shows the courage and confidence to advocate for solutions.

The fisheries resources Newfoundland and Labrador brought into Confederation were once the envy of the world. Under the management of Ottawa, those resources fed the world at the expense of Newfoundland and Labrador, as nations overfished the stocks with reckless disregard and impunity. Recovery of these stocks is essential to our sustainable future. The federal government must fulfill its obligation to manage the stocks based on science, ensuring proper assessments are done regularly of all stocks and predators such as seals.

The federal government should look to the Atlantic Accord to define a model for joint management by Ottawa and Newfoundland and Labrador over the fish stocks our people and economy rely on. Those resources must never again be traded away or taken away to serve other purposes. We must be a partner in their development, just as we are a partner in the development of our offshore oil and gas resources.

Newfoundland and Labrador needs a formal role at the decision-making table for our fishery resources. The federal government should commit to joint regulatory management of the fishery, similar to the joint management of offshore petroleum resources performed by the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board, along with dramatically improved fishery science and modernization of current management practices.

Joint management of our fishery would ensure that we have a voice at the table and that abuses of ministerial discretion, such as those which led to clam scam, the Arctic surf clam quota debacle, are not repeated. In addition, a commitment from the federal government to reverse the decision to reduce the Arctic surf clam allocation for our province would show understanding of the economic importance of the fishery to the future of rural Newfoundland and Labrador, while recognizing and making amends for a grievance against the Trudeau Liberals validated by the federal ethics commissioner.

I will summarize the action called for by these budget remarks. The federal government must make a commitment to redress the relative decline of the Atlantic region and the absolute

decline of Newfoundland and Labrador within Confederation. Sadly, the track record and attitude of the Trudeau federal Liberal government shows that this government and its silenced seven federal Liberal MPs will not be our partners in this nation-building, joint-recovery challenge.

The commitments required of the federal government are: one, a commitment to provide additional support to the Lower Churchill Falls Project to assist us to ensure consumers have affordable power rates and to reduce the enormous debt burden this project will impose on the province already deeply in debt. A significant investment in the Churchill Falls Development Corporation is one path by which the federal government could assist in this nation-building project. Two: A commitment to reopen the review of our fiscal arrangements within Confederation, promised by the 2005 Atlantic Accord, which this Liberal government squandered and signed away by their Hibernia dividend agreement.

A federal commitment is required to implement the promise of the Atlantic Accord that Newfoundland and Labrador will be principal beneficiary of its offshore resources as if they were on land. This means renegotiating the value of the gain to this province of applying the 2005 Atlantic Accord offset precedent which is worth hundreds of millions of dollars per year to this province. These desperately needed dollars were left unrecovered this year by this Liberal government's capitulation to the Trudeau Liberals, and their abandonment of the right contained in the 2005 Atlantic Accord arrangement to review and negotiate the issue of fiscal unfairness.

Three: A commitment to joint, regulatory management of the fishery, similar to the joint management of offshore petroleum resources performed by the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board, together with a commitment to dramatically improve fisheries science and the modernization of current management practices.

Four: A commitment to respect the Atlantic Accord obligation of joint management by repealing the Assessment Act of Canada as it applies to our offshore. Respect for the Atlantic

Accord principle of joint management also entails recognizing the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board as sole regulator of our offshore petroleum resources.

I opened these budget remarks by saying that this province is facing the most difficult population, fiscal and economic challenges it has faced since Confederation. In the face of these challenges, the author of the budget, the provincial Liberal Minister of Finance, tells us that his back-to-balance plan requires a reduction in expenditures of \$617 million, but refuses to explain how this is to be achieved. The bond rating agencies are taking note.

This provincial Liberal government has failed to put its own fiscal house in order and has failed to fight for us in Ottawa. These are failures which are abject and of historic proportion. This minority government lacks the guts, grit and determination to master its own budgeting, or to defend our Atlantic Accord joint management right to create jobs and prosperity, or fight for fiscal fairness through the principle beneficiary obligation.

God guard Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have some remarks that I would like to talk about. Well, I think it's a great budget for Newfoundland and Labrador. Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition has taken some exception to what this budget looks like.

There are a couple of things, and I just caught about four or five minutes of his speech there, but it seems to me there was a big focus on the provincial-federal relationship, Mr. Speaker. So I want to talk a little bit about the federal relationship that we've seen.

Mr. Speaker, like any family, you don't always get along and sometimes – I know with my own family, we would sit down. There were certain things we could find agreement on when we sat down, when we took the opportunity to sit down at some Sunday afternoon dinner or if it was a

Saturday night, or whenever it was we'd gather our family together, and we did this quite often. Often, I know with my own father and with my own brothers, we would have some very heated discussions from time to time on various issues that impact people within our own family.

So, Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying is we don't necessarily always agree, and I think that is very fair. What we do is look for the areas that we can find agreement; yet, we will still have to, sometimes, agree to disagree.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when I look back over the last three years – and I didn't come out today to really talk about a federal relationship, provincial relationship, but based on the comments I've just heard, I think we need to do that. Because when we look at the last 3½ years in Newfoundland and Labrador – and I think every person that I've met when we go around this province, they clearly tell us that it's been pretty good in terms of getting things from Ottawa to come to Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I'll give you an example. I can give you many examples, and I do have some time so I think I will just do a bit of this. Going back to the Core Science building, the previous provincial administration talked about and made a commitment to put nearly \$100 million – \$125 million of money towards a Core Science building. So, Mr. Speaker, after the election in 2015, we worked with the federal government and nearly \$100 million came from the federal government to replace the commitment that we had made.

The Leader of the Opposition was using examples of saying no fight in Dwight. I think that was the words he was using or something like this. Mr. Speaker, I will tell you, when it comes to actually working with people you don't always necessarily have to bark, because getting results is really what matters.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, that is one example. I can go on and on and on about the infrastructure improvements we've seen within our province, and they've been tremendous. Many of this has been done with joint shared arrangements with the federal government.

As an example, in 2014 – the Leader of the Opposition just talked about misses of this government. Well, Mr. Speaker, missed opportunities – in 2014, when his friend, Stephen Harper, was the Prime Minister of Canada at the time, no one from the caucus that he now leads even bothered to actually participate.

Mr. Speaker, I think the Leader of Opposition would know that equalization – now, he's not going to tell all the facts about what equalization is and how it's defined. He's going to simply think that you can go up and take that money.

Well, the fact is, I don't like the current equalization formula either. I just don't like it, but it's a federal program, I say to the Leader of the Opposition and those in this room. We will do whatever we can to change it but, at the end of the day, the federal government make the decision on equalization, whether we like it or not. I don't like it. I've made that quite clear, that I don't like the rules around equalization.

As a matter of fact, it was Stephen Harper who said they were going to change it. And guess what? He reneged on that gift to Newfoundland and Labrador as well, I say, Mr. Speaker.

I will also say I was disappointed with the current federal Liberals, in this case, and I don't mind saying this, that they didn't change it either. That didn't happen. So to simply think that one Premier of this province can go up and tell Ottawa to change the equalization formula, the Leader of the Opposition and everyone in this building who sit in those seats should know that it's not a decision that is made at the provincial level.

There is nearly \$18 billion that is distributed across this country to provinces. I will guarantee you that Newfoundland and Labrador, when you look at the concept of a have province, we do not meet the definition of a have province as is in the equalization formula, Mr. Speaker. I don't like it either, but I don't determine those rules. The Leader of the Opposition knows that because he's had people close to his own family that actually would have been participating in those same discussions.

Mr. Speaker, that's the equalization formula we talked about, but I talked about the Core Science building. I talked about infrastructure. I talked about the road network that has been developed, the water and sewer programs that we see in our province today. The Labour Market Development program that's been developed, some \$949 million that comes to this province. The largest in the history of this province, I say, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to share the story of how some of this actually unfolded. This was about discussions that we, at premier's meetings – and I had to work fairly closely with other premiers across this country to make sure that if you look at those numbers today, we get the Labour Market Development Agreement in a disproportionate amount to what other provinces would. But the Leader of the Opposition is not going to tell Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that, because that is good news for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: It's enabling us to take single moms, even some single dads, and get them retrained so they can get back into the workforce, Mr. Speaker. That's how that money is being used. It's being used to support women getting the skills they need to get in the workforce.

That is not good news from the Leader of the Opposition. So I wouldn't expect him to be talking about this here today but, Mr. Speaker, these are some of the things we've been able to do over the last 3½ years working not only with the federal government but also working with other provinces to get their support for what we need in this province as well, and we've been successful in doing that.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say that when people look at me and they talk to me about where we've been in the last 3½ years and the things and the agreements that we've been able to put in place, just recently the new housing agreement that we put in place which was important for us as well. It will actually help with a lot of the housing problems that we had and challenges that we have to deal with in this province. That was signed on April 16 of this

year. Mr. Speaker, these are the things that just don't fall in your lap and these are areas that we've been able to work with our federal government.

So, as I said when I started my comments today, Mr. Speaker, none of these situations are perfect but I'm not going to stand here today and say that we have not been able to bring benefits to Newfoundland and Labrador over the last 3½ years, because I will tell you, everyone in this province knows that if there was a time of darkness for Newfoundland and Labrador where we couldn't even get the phones answered in Ottawa, it was during the previous federal Conservative administration and right here with the PC administration that we had in our province. Mr. Speaker, you couldn't get the phone answered up there, let alone try and get a meeting at the political level. That's the reality. I was disappointed with that as well.

Why would I want to see people in Newfoundland and Labrador being shut out from meetings in Ottawa? They just did not occur, and it was very difficult and lots of lost opportunities for Newfoundland and Labrador. So that is why, Mr. Speaker, there was no question that we needed to actually make the relationship and improve on that relationship. I will say, Mr. Speaker, not perfect, because everyone in this room would know that we've taken exception to Bill C-69.

For those that are listening and we talk a lot about Bill C-69, this is really about how you develop natural resources. A lot of the conversation around offshore oil and gas, but, Mr. Speaker, it's about the mining industry as well. We know that if you live in this province the best opportunity you have is around our natural resources. Many people would have heard me say many, many times that as a province we have more natural resources available to us. These are assets that we have available to us that will create employment for Newfoundland and Labrador. We have more than a lot of countries, Mr. Speaker, and that we can be proud of, but we cannot allow for overregulation to actually prevent that resource from being developed to our benefit. We will always do so making sure that the environment is protected. It was never about one or the other. It was about how you extracted the natural

resources to the benefit of our province and while protecting our environment.

Mr. Speaker, I want to get back for a few minutes to *Budget 2019*, and there are a lot of real good things in *Budget 2019*, that's the reason why we're having this discussion today. Before I go into that, I do want to talk a little bit about the Atlantic Accord and the recent discussions that we've had and negotiations and the value that it did bring to our province.

Mr. Speaker, \$2.5 billion of guaranteed income. This is guaranteed money. We know that in 2005, when the \$2 billion came in, that had to go toward debt. The condition was put on by the federal government. The Leader of the Opposition, I didn't hear him say that, but that is what happened. If you look at what happened subsequent to those investments, there are a lot of people that have followed this and said that, today, there is really literally no value in what happened because that all got lost in certain markets. We all know what was happening in the world in that time frame.

Now, people have talked about how this got booked for Newfoundland and Labrador, and people will say that was a fake way, that these guys cooked the books, but, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't like that. The Leader of the Opposition, he knows this as well, it's just a little bit of politics that gets played from time to time.

The rules around the accounting principles as applies to government is very different than those that would apply to business. Coming from my previous life, Mr. Speaker, that would not have been booked in the business world like it's booked in the world of public accounting. It is very different.

We didn't say go and do this. We knew that in order to obey the rules of public accounting, this is what needed to be done and that is what was done. That immediately brought benefits to our net debt situation.

To give you an example, Mr. Speaker, there was a chart in some of the presentations around our budget this year. If you go back to 2015-2016 timeline, our net debt to GDP was 58 per cent, and that was very tough because when you talk

about bond-rating agencies, these are the things that they look for.

I will say this, as a result of the Atlantic Accord, the recent changes that have been made and the discussions that we've been able to do, this brought us down to just less than the 40 per cent range, Mr. Speaker. From the goal from 2015-16, at nearly 58 per cent, down to less than 40, Mr. Speaker, that's a remarkable achievement to be able to do in such a short timeline. That is another example of why the Atlantic Accord was of particular value to us.

Now, interesting enough, the Leader of the Opposition, many times here made comments about the Atlantic Accord. As a matter of fact, when it was signed, it seemed to be, or said to be, some fake Accord. Yet, Mr. Speaker, not unusual what happened, if you look at the so-called Blue Book that was released during the election just a few weeks ago, I will tell you what, if that was a fake Accord, I can tell you what, they didn't mind spending the money because they actually said in their Blue Book that this would come from the money from the Atlantic Accord. Mr. Speaker, I noticed that.

On one hand, how can you say, publicly, that this is a fake Accord? This Accord doesn't exist. That's not real money. That's kind of counterfeit money. That money is not going to come and, yet, you go out in your own plan, your own plan for the future of this province, and you spent it. Now, not only did you spend it once but you spent it twice, Mr. Speaker.

We all know that kind of financial discipline is not something that we can – and I can point to many examples over the last number of years. When I sat in Opposition, Mr. Speaker, I used to speak out about this a lot because the Atlantic Accord, that money, is a guaranteed revenue stream for us right now.

Decisions have been made and people often want to talk about the net debt, the financial situation of our province, but, Mr. Speaker, I want to share a little story. We all know this province, we all love this province and I think every single Member that sits in those chairs, we do so to bring benefits to the constituents that elect us. That's what we're here for and we take great pride in that.

Mr. Speaker, in 1949, we all know that was a significant piece of the history of our province. We came into Confederation by choice. Newfoundland, at the time, decided to enter in Confederation. I think if I was alive at the time, and I know talking to people that were around, including people like my father, they were very proud to become part of Canada, Mr. Speaker, to build the province.

When you look at hospitals, when you look at schools, when you look at all the infrastructure since 1949 that's been built in this province, it's no different if you were building a business or if you're building a community, you establish debt. You have to go out and have to borrow things, and you, basically, measure that against your assets.

Mr. Speaker, in this case, since 1949 to where we are today in 2019, this province has accumulated some \$13.8 billion in net debt; \$13.8 billion in net debt. That's a big number, but I tell that story to talk about all the remarkable things that we've been able to build in this province, to say this.

The Muskrat Falls project is nearly 30 per cent of that \$13.8 billion. This was a decision that had no public debate. The Leader of the Opposition and others want to talk about referendums and special debates, all those sorts of things never occurred. We're finding out through the Commission of Inquiry right now, there are a lot of things that were not considered.

So, when people in Opposition, I know they have a job to do, and I know it's not always easy to check the politics at the door when you get in this room, but I will tell you, I'm concerned about Newfoundland and Labrador. I'm not going to just sit here and allow others to sit in this room and think the decisions that we've had to make since 2015 has led us to where we are today, when one project that people in this province had very little say into, major marketing campaigns to go out and to support a decision at \$6.2 billion that is now at \$12.7 billion, is 30 per cent of the net debt of this province.

Do you know why that's important, Mr. Speaker? If you look at those budget documents today, go look at it closely. We have people in

these seats today, you've been going through Estimates, and you've been asking line by line by line about Transportation and where is government spending money or why are you spending money here and there?

Everyone in these chairs today, ask yourself where nearly \$1.3 billion is going. It's there in those documents. During the considerable debate that we've had on this budget, and we've spent a lot of time, did you ask yourself where that money is going? Did you ask yourself what the second largest line item is in this budget, next to health care? More than Education, more than Transportation and Works, debt servicing; nearly \$1.3 billion. Think about that.

That didn't happen as a result of decisions by this government, I would tell you, Mr. Speaker. Yet, if you listen to people, you would think that, yeah, that fellow, Dwight Ball, he's responsible for everything, go smack the mouth off him. He's responsible for all the bad things that have happened to this province since 1949.

Well, that is not the case because I sit here, I will tell you, with passion and I genuinely want to make a difference for the lives of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: I'll put some clarification around this. For all those people now that want to shift the blame of the Muskrat Falls decision over to me, I'm not going to take it because we sat and had the longest filibuster in the history of this province on two pieces of legislation, go read it, it's there, Bill 60 and Bill 61.

They were the two bills. We ran a filibuster some 86 hours I think the time frame was, when we couldn't get Members in government of the day to even stand in their seats. They sat down and just listened to us because we had to get up every 15 minutes and ask questions. They wouldn't have a special debate on the largest impact of the net debt in this province. It couldn't occur. They would not allow it to occur in this House of Assembly. They shut it down. That's what was really happening, Mr. Speaker.

Now, you wonder and you ask why I raise the issue of \$1.3 billion, a year in debt servicing.

That is exactly what I'm talking about; \$3.9 billion gone into that project. It would have been around 23 cents in electricity rates.

I ask Members opposite who are listening to this, when that decision was made to sanction that project in 2012, did anyone ever think that 23 cents that people in this province – you've been at the doors. You've talked to seniors. You've talked to community groups. You've talked to business leaders. Let's be honest with ourselves, did you meet one person that said 23 cents was affordable?

If you're willing to stand up on a point of order and I'll sit down, if anyone in this House today met one single person during the recent election who said 23 cents was something that they would accept. Stand up on a point of order; you can do it right now. I didn't think so, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't expecting a big crowd to jump to their feet on that question because we all know that seniors can't afford it. We all know that families can't afford it. We all know that it would make businesses uncompetitive.

Mr. Speaker, that wasn't a decision that was made by this Liberal government. That was a decision that was made without a special debate right here in this House of Assembly, and I can tell you I was sitting right where the Leader of the Opposition is sitting now for those 86 hours, through the night, asking questions about that.

People even said to me at the time: Oh, that guy thinks the sky is falling. That won't happen. But where are we today? We're left to deal with it; some \$725 million a year in the gap that it is going to take to get rates down to 13½ cents. That is the reality of the issues and the magnitude of the issues that we are dealing with today, Mr. Speaker. These are real numbers. That is why we deal with issues around \$1.3 billion a year in debt servicing. That is money that can be used for the very things that Members in the Opposition are asking for.

That is money that could be used to support insulin pumps. It's money that could be used for things like busing services. It's money that could be used to support our arts community. It's money that could be used for all the things –

AN HON. MEMBER: Child care.

PREMIER BALL: It could be used for child care; that's right. It could be used to actually add even more teaching resources to our education system. It's money that can be used to fix some of those potholes that we're all just sick and tired of driving over, Mr. Speaker.

Am I right in saying that? Wouldn't that money be better spent going to fix our road network, going to improve our health care sector, going to improve our education sector as opposed to paying the financial institutions? Back during the Muskrat Falls debate, it used to go like this: This is the lowest-cost option. Everyone remember that? There was public campaigns around that too I believe.

Mr. Speaker, this is where we were. They said we got to build the Muskrat Falls Project because we got to keep the money out of those oil companies so that money stays here. Well, that's a good concept; I agree with that. Let's build a piece of infrastructure in Newfoundland and Labrador and then the money won't be used to buy oil to fire up Holyrood. That was kind of the basis of the argument. That made sense, except the cost got to the point where it got out of control and it meant rates would have to be 23 cents.

Wouldn't the same argument be made if you said I would rather have a new clinic, I would rather have insulin pumps for everyone as opposed to giving the money to those banks, to those financial institutions to support debt servicing? Isn't that the same argument? We want the money to be spent wisely to benefit Newfoundlanders and Labradorians but, as a result of the increasing prices, cost of Muskrat Falls, we're now seeing more money going toward debt servicing; therefore, it makes it more difficult to get some of the services that we all want.

Do you really think that I'm standing here today and do not want to see people that could have insulin pumps get insulin pumps? I sat over there as the Health critic at the time back in 2007 when I had lots of questions, when there was no insulin pumps in this province. I can remember asking question after question: Why is it that we can't have insulin pump coverage in Newfoundland and Labrador?

That was my background. I think people would know me, that I came from that background as a health care professional. These are the types of questions because I want better lives for people who are dealing with Type 1 diabetes as well. They were all fair things to be asking for. This year, as part of the budget in 2019, we are able to make more investments into things like insulin pumps so those that are using the pumps don't come off the system. That is what this is like. You do it; it was affordable now and sustainable now. So these are some of the things that we're able to do.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition just mention that our Minister of Finance hasn't disclosed where we're going to find some of those savings. We've been able to stabilize spending in this province now for about four years, up to four years. Keep in mind, we consume things as a government as well, so when you can actually hold certain lines that are controllable expenses, there are certain things you can't control 'cause you're also a consumer and, therefore, that is what's driving up some of our costs, simply because we're a consumer and we have to buy things, too.

So I will tell you that we are here today with discipline, we've put in place a seven-year forecast to return to balance or return to surplus within our province. That's important because that sends the message to people like our bond rating agencies. The Leader of the Opposition said a few minutes ago that the bond rating agencies are looking at budgets like this. I agree they are and they should, they have to and that's what they do. I remember in 2015 we didn't even have a group here that was designed to go out and actually borrow in the best possible way. That was one of the first things that we had to do.

But we have made some significant progress in the last nearly four budgets right now. *The Way Forward* came in in 2016 and we're seeing improvements in places like aquaculture and agriculture, where if you go to certain areas around this province right now people are working. We've all seen some of the nice ads that we see on TV right now in support of the aquaculture industry.

My friend in Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune – it was a dream of his, by the way, to represent that district for a long, long time, and I was thrilled on election night to see that little check for Mr. Elvis Loveless. I don't mind saying his name in this House because I worked with the guy. People in that area now are publicly saying that it gave them a job where they felt they wouldn't have a job, and that was in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

We're seeing now agriculture – just as a good example, one of the little things that we did back in the spring of 2017 or so – and I know my Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources was there – we went to Wooddale. For people in this province and I'm sure the critic over there for agriculture would remember this, Wooddale was a nice, little asset; a great, little asset in this province. Not a lot of people would know, but it's in Central Newfoundland and Labrador. It was designed to actually go to support the forestry industry where seedlings would be grown there. They would be transplanted as part of forestry management.

We looked at that and, of course, we considered what options do we have to go in to Wooddale and grow vegetable transplants so farmers could use those to take and kind of get an early start. We've done it two years. I think the first year was some 286,000 vegetable transplants. This year, because I've been watching this because I think the people would know me that agriculture, from food self-sufficiency and so on, is important to me.

So 1.4 million transplants this year – we're doing that to go from 286,000 up to about 1.4 million transplants, and they're going to run out we're told. Mr. Speaker, this is a way that we're doing, in a very tangible way, in support of the agriculture industry. We set aside land and made that available to them. That was another provincial-federal program that we were able to sign just recently as well, Mr. Speaker, to bring benefits to the farming community within our province. I get this, because I know in my own district it's a big part of the food basket that we see in our province where just dairy alone is some 36 per cent. The whole province's dairy comes really within a few kilometres of where I live.

Agriculture is now starting to produce more jobs. We're seeing more interest in farming, Mr. Speaker, and we're supporting that industry. I've already mentioned aquaculture. I could speak about forestry. I can speak about *Mining the Future 2030* when we've seen new mines that have been opened up in Glenwood. I welcome the Member for Labrador West. I remember being up there just a few months ago and the reopening of Tacora mines – the reopening of Wabush Mines is now Tacora.

Mr. Speaker, they're on track to take what was a closed mine, no different than the Antimony Mine in Glenwood, a closed mine, getting that reopened. Now, with Tacora Resources, we worked extremely hard I will tell you as a government to make sure we were working with that company to actually get them working, because we knew it was important for the people in Labrador West. They were looking for those jobs. We saw Tata Resources, just north into Labrador Trough, now creating jobs, nearly \$750 million investment by Tata to bring even more jobs that will be used to the benefit of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you, Tacora was kind of written off in the early days that this could never be a success, just like the Wabush pensioners. I just remind the Member for Labrador West that he would remember all the history around the Wabush pensioners. There was a lot of anxiety and stress when they saw their health benefits. But at the time we took that to get an opinion to the Supreme Court, and that opinion came back to our favour but not to our favour, to the favour of Wabush miners.

I've been a few minutes now talking about this budget. I will tell you, the budget really speaks for itself. It's a sustainable budget. It will bring benefits to every single Member that sits in this House of Assembly here today. When you think of the capital works investments in our municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador, no matter where you live, your district will be impacted.

I look at some of the Members that we would see here that live in Central Newfoundland, and if you're looking at long-term care sites, if you live in Grand Falls-Windsor you know that

you're getting a long-term care site coming to Grand Falls-Windsor.

Now, I've been around a while at this. I remember when we've heard announcements but what we didn't see was action. Mr. Speaker, I look at the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans today, he knows that in his district seniors that require long-term care are going to get the facility that we committed to bring to them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: This is not an announcement, Mr. Speaker, this is an actionable item. If you live in Gander, it's the same thing. If you live in Corner Brook, guess what? There's a meter when you walk into the long-term care site that will actually tell you – I think the meter says Valentine's Day in 2020. So maybe you can drive by that site – and it's a good looking site by the way. If you're ever in the Corner Brook area, go look at it. That is not an announcement, that is something that will be delivered, no different than the Corner Brook hospital.

I've sat through, I think, seven or eight announcements on the Corner Brook hospital – never, ever happened. They were announced, all kinds of nice backboards, all kinds of nice little videos that were done up, but they were never delivered. Mr. Speaker, I will tell the people on the West Coast of this province it will be delivered. We are going to make that happen.

Before I move on to the replacement of the Waterford, something that we don't often talk about, I'll just speak to the Member for Exploits, the protective care unit for Botwood – something you've been looking for. I spoke to a lot of the health care professionals out there, Mr. Speaker, because it was important not just as a protective care unit, because they were doing a real good job out there, but it was also important for the training for medical students.

They wanted to go to a rural community and get the opportunity, and I would speak to physicians like Dr. Jody Woolfrey and Members here would probably know Dr. Woolfrey. He's done a remarkable job; he'd made a huge commitment to the people in that area, and this was

something that was keen for him to be able to do. Guess what, Mr. Speaker? This is not an announcement. This is an actionable item. Things like this in this budget, we're actually going to make that happen as well.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to talk a little bit about the Waterford before I sit down, and on and on I could go. There's a lot of discussion about the flood zone risk and all this area about the replacement of the Waterford. Just to give you a little bit of context. Think about this now, in 1855 this Waterford Hospital was opened up. Anyone here born then? I guess not. Mr. Speaker, think about it. We all know the impact of mental health and addictions on families in this province, and they've been remarkable. It has actually stolen lives from young men and women in this province and they have not been able to lead productive lives, simply because the resources, in a lot of ways, weren't here. So, we made a commitment that we were going to replace the hospital.

Again, it was one of those things that we looked through announcement after announcement after announcement, analysis, consultant, more analysis, on and on it went about the intention to replace the Waterford but we're going to replace the Waterford, Mr. Speaker. I know there's a lot of discussion around flooding in that area, but I want to put this in context for you.

The Core Science building that I just mentioned with the support of the federal government and Memorial University is a fantastic building. It's just an absolutely remarkable building; some \$325 million is the cost of it. It's going to be an icon, I tell you, and it's going to be one of those lighthouses that you'll see and you'll look at Memorial University, we're going to all be proud of it, when we see it, as we get that opened up.

Then we had the Animal Resource building that is going up. We've seen developments around autism. We've seen Ronald McDonald House in that area. All of this infrastructure has been built in that area, and now we're hearing people speak out about building a replacement for the Waterford Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, mental health advocates have told us loud and clear that in order to treat mental

health appropriately and send the right signals for people that deal with mental health, it needs to be connected to acute health care centres. You didn't need to separate it. Don't go putting up barriers or closures. That was the whole concept of adding the two together. That was the concept of bringing the two together. We rely on the people that know this because one of the things that we don't want to do is put up another barrier.

I know there are discussions about moving it on the land and so on, but fundamental to this decision would have to be that the replacement for the Waterford Hospital has to be connected to the acute care centre. That is what people who deal with this and know this better than we would, that is what they've been asking us to do and that is what we're going to do. This is not an announcement. The Waterford Hospital will be replaced.

One other little area of the province that we don't often talk enough about, but we have the Member, I'm talking about the community of Springdale. I've been, obviously, back and forth to Springdale a lot, I've got family out there. One of the things that was very important to them, they had a very old hospital out there and the design of it wasn't functional. It was tough just for the flow of patients and for health care professionals to work there. Mr. Speaker, long overdue; once again, we saw announcement after announcement on the replacement of the Green Bay Health Centre, but it was never delivered.

Mr. Speaker, if you're out there, they've got some fantastic places to stay. If you're looking for a little trip to go on this summer, I'd encourage you to drive through the Green Bay area, on your way to Deer Lake and Gros Morne, that's in my district. Mr. Speaker, if you go into the Springdale area, you will see a structure that people in that area have been waiting for, for a long, long time. That's not an announcement either. That's something that's going to be delivered.

These are just examples of the things that we've been able to deliver during some of the most challenging times that we've seen in our province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: There are a few things before I sit down, and I won't be much longer, but I want to talk a little bit – because it gets raised in this House and I don't often talk about this issue – and this is about busing – the 1.6.

There's been some examples that have been given; why don't we get rid of that policy. Mr. Speaker, I want to go down through a list because, as you know, there are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians living everywhere in this country, everyone would agree with that I think. Everyone would agree that if you're a grandparent in this province right now, in all likelihood in Alberta or Ontario, you know some people and probably your own grandkids are living there.

There are a lot of questions around 1.6 busing. If you're a K to 6 student anywhere in Canada today, in all likelihood, there's a busing problem. If you live in Newfoundland and Labrador, we all know it's 1.6 kilometres. If you live in Nova Scotia it's 1.6 kilometre. This is if you're K to 6, Mr. Speaker.

If you live in PEI; PEI is doing a real good job. They're not 1.6, they're 0.5. The only other one that would be less than the 1.6 would be Saskatchewan. We have two provinces: PEI at 0.5 and we have Saskatchewan at 1. Newfoundland and Labrador, 1.6; Nova Scotia, 1.6.

This is where it gets real interesting, Mr. Speaker. Now, this is a jurisdictional scan that people often ask us to do. It's fair, isn't it? This is how you make decisions, what's happening in other provinces and so on.

If you live in New Brunswick and you're in the K to 6 system, it's 2.4 kilometres, Mr. Speaker. If you live in Ontario, I think we all recognize that Ontario is the most populated province that we have in the country, and if you're in Ontario they're going to let you know that, they normally do. If you live in Ontario and Quebec, they're going to tell you that 60 per cent of the whole country's population would come from Ontario and Quebec. That's what they tell you. I believe that.

If you live in Ontario, K to 6, it's 1.6. If you live in Manitoba it's 1.6. If you live in Alberta, remember where a lot of grandkids are, it's 2.4. If you live in British Columbia it's 4 kilometres.

Mr. Speaker, safety is the number one concern for us when it comes to busing. When you look at those numbers, Mr. Speaker, we're not off the charts here. Can we bring improvements? Yes, we can, and we've been able to do that by adding extra courtesy seats, some 600-and-some-odd courtesy seats.

We're concerned about this, but there's a way to deal with it and I think this is a great example of working in collaboration that we can actually get this done.

Another important statistic, Mr. Speaker, when you look at this, and this is not about putting a price tag on this because there's no price tag on safety, but in our province, right now, it is \$58 million that we spend busing 42,000 students in our province. This would give you some glimpse of the magnitude when we're talking about busing in our province; \$58.6 million, Mr. Speaker. That is just a few million dollars short of our snow-clearing budget. It's about \$12 million or \$14 million short of our ferry budget, as an example, but, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you, we will not compromise on safety.

As I conclude my remarks today, first of all, I want to welcome a lot of the new MHAs. This is going to be your first opportunity to vote on a budget in Newfoundland and Labrador. I will assure you that when you look at this budget, when you look at the capital works, when you look at the infrastructure, when you look at some of the roadwork that's in this budget, you can find areas where every single – either Opposition or government Members – you can see yourself and you can see where constituents in your own districts will see the benefit.

In this spirit of co-operation, Mr. Speaker, as we've come here based on the May 16 election, people have asked us to co-operate more to bring forward these benefits.

They're not perfect. I'm not here to suggest that these are perfect, but I can tell you, based on what I've just told you, we are making significant progress. I can tell you that this

province is in better shape now than it was in 2015. There is no doubt about that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we would love to have hundreds of millions of dollars more that we're spending on debt servicing, as an example, and put that into more roads and put that into reducing the homeowners' insurance. We're going to get there, but we're going to get there very methodically. We'll do it when we can afford to do it.

If there's anything about Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, one of the things that they always tell us, spend your money wisely, don't waste my money, spend it wisely, and let's make sure that we can afford the things that we're committing to. I wish we had taken some of our own advice back in 2012, prior to the sanctioning of Muskrat Falls.

Mr. Speaker, we're making significant investments in our province. We want to continue to do that. It's important now that we work together, and I'm asking old and new Members that sit in this House today, I'm asking you and encouraging you to support this budget in 2019.

It's important for all of us to be able to get some of those programs that are within this budget, to get those out the door so we can start putting money back into the pockets of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

At this time, I'd like to adjourn debate on the Budget Speech and I would call from the Order Paper, Order 3, Concurrence Motion for the Resource Committee.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Minister for Municipal Affairs and Environment and Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm very pleased this afternoon to take a few minutes to talk about *Budget 2019*. I'm going to talk about *Budget 2019* as it pertains to Municipal Affairs and Environment and climate change, because we are into the Resource Committee now.

For any of the people out there, the political people that like to follow this, we go through an Estimates process in the House after the budget is brought in and we go line by line through departments, and they're under the Government Services and social policy.

Tonight, Mr. Speaker, myself and my team in Municipal Affairs and Environment, we will sit in this House for three or four hours, however long that takes. The Opposition and the Third Party will have the opportunity to go line by line through the budget, for the purposes of those watching, and they will get to ask us questions about the budget in Municipal Affairs and Environment.

I want to talk, Mr. Speaker, about some of the great programs and services that *Budget 2019* is going to be funding. The Premier did a great job in giving us an overview on where we were in this province in 2016 as a new government and some of the things that we were grappling with, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to where we are now and just how far we have moved the dial in this province. It wasn't easy. When you didn't have that money tree in the backyard to look for, we had to be very innovative and we had to find ways to do more with less, like I often say.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm new to the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment, I'm definitely not new to the municipal world. I was involved in municipal politics for a number of years in Charlottetown, my hometown, on the Southeast Coast of Labrador. Not only through sitting there as deputy mayor for a number years but through my involvement with Combined Councils of Labrador for years, through my involvement with – I got elected as the Labrador representative on the provincial municipalities

board, and I got to engage with many municipal people around Newfoundland and Labrador. Being involved gave me an understanding first-hand, especially rural communities, of the challenges that come with being a leader in those local communities.

Mr. Speaker, we have an aging population. We talk about it all the time. We reference it. It's something that impacts across departments and because of that that means that we have a very large segment of our population that's on a fixed income, yet we have these small communities that require basic services, that comes with a cost. So when these municipal leaders sit around a table, generally in the month of December maybe and they're looking at putting their budget together for the coming year, it's not an easy task. I talked about it recently at the PMA. You may have a need to raise the mill rate in some of those communities, yet you know the residents of your communities and the fixed income that they're on.

So there are challenges that come with that. Those municipal leaders in the communities, Mr. Speaker, they step up just because they want to make their communities a better place. They want to help the place that they call home become a little bit better. It's not for what they are getting out of it, other than the gratitude in knowing that they have played a role, Mr. Speaker, in helping to develop their communities.

It's a tremendous privilege to talk about, from a Municipal Affairs and Environment perspective, why I would support *Budget 2019*. There are number of reasons why – tremendous investment going into communities, Mr. Speaker. We talk about water and the importance of communities having access to clean drinking water. In the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment that is the highest formula that we have, 90-10, so communities can apply and have 90 per cent of the cost of water access to their communities covered.

Sometimes, like we just saw on the weekend in my district, little communities that aren't able to come up with maybe 10 per cent, they have the opportunity to go out and partner with other groups. Like this weekend we saw a

NunatuKavut Community Council partner with the Town of St. Lewis in my district. They worked together and when the government came on, we are seeing progress through partnership, Mr. Speaker, and that's how it's done.

I'm just going to take you through some of the four pillars that are in the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment. Mr. Speaker, I meant to mention upfront something about the tremendous staff, acknowledge the work of the staff over in Municipal Affairs and Environment.

As I was going through my briefings, Mr. Speaker, you could see the passion, whether it was climate change people at the table, whether it was the water resources division people at the table, whether it was the municipal people at the table, whether it was the environment people at the table, you could see the passion that these public servants had for the work that they do. They care too about this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. They, too, want us here in this Legislature, Mr. Speaker, to get it right when we make those decisions.

Mr. Speaker, I've only been in the department three or four weeks but, since then, I've had the opportunity to see how the department engages with residents, governments and stakeholder organizations to support safe and sustainable communities. I've seen again and again how this work is resulting in better services and better outcomes for our residents.

In our close work with communities, we continue to provide funding and support to encourage strong, local governance and high-quality services. It's so important, Mr. Speaker, that we have that local governance out and about around in the four corners of our province. We make decisions in this Legislature, but we have to have people in those communities providing a leadership role. Those communities, those municipalities they identify the priorities in their communities and then they reach out to government and seek funding applications and things like that, but absolutely essential.

I once heard, and I've quoted it many times, Craig Pollett with MNL. I once hear him a number of years ago, I guess make quote or say a statement, he said he was a firm believer that

the closer decisions are made to the people most impacted by them, the stronger the likelihood of them to succeed. I've said that many times myself since, Mr. Speaker. I believe that. The closer decisions are made – so that's why we have to support strong local governance and have those communities be able to prioritize their own projects and then, as a government, we support that.

We support them in a number of ways. We have municipal capital works projects where it's a partnership between the province and the municipal councils and the local service districts. Then we have other projects like ICIP where we prioritize our applications, we send them to the federal government and they're cost matched, for the most part. Sometimes the province does pay a little bit more, but it's about leveraging federal funds once again so that we can do more with the money, with the budget that we have, that we are working with.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we are currently doing right now in MAE is we're looking at modernizing municipal legislation. I don't have the dates right in front of me, but it's been a long time since that act was reviewed. We heard from people around the province that it's time to modernize the municipal legislation. It's time for that legislation to be more enabling, to be less prescriptive.

So public consultation sessions were launched, Mr. Speaker. We heard from Municipalities NL, from groups like PMA, from local governments that they wanted the legislation modernized and we have certainly fully engaged with them as a part of this review.

So right now, where we are in that stage, the data has been collected. There is a what-we-heard document that has been put together, and for anybody who has an interest in viewing that they can log on to engageNL.ca.

During consultations we heard from participants regarding such issues as Code of Conduct legislation for elected officials and staff, conflict of interest provisions that are more clear, as well as more clearly defined municipal purposes. Mr. Speaker, those are very valuable things.

When we think about some of our municipalities that are far from where we are here in the city, far from the Avalon in many cases, yet they play a very important local governance role in running their little communities. We have to ensure that mechanisms are in place, that there's clarity around what staff in those offices would have to accept in the workplace and would not have to accept. We have to support that.

A lot of times in small communities around the conflict of interest piece, you don't get a long lineup of people to run for council – and we'll have council elections again in September '20. You may have a person that's sitting on council that's also a business person in that community. So it's important that we modernize the legislation and that those people be able to sit there if they have a clear interest in representing their community, but at the same time that they not be in any conflict of interest with the decisions that are made.

One of the pillars in Municipal Affairs and Environment falls under Municipal Infrastructure and Waste Management. Through the Municipal Infrastructure and Waste Management Branch, we are investing in stronger infrastructure, providing better access to clean drinking water and protecting our environment.

Mr. Speaker, we were very pleased just recently over the past year to have improved cost-shared ratios so that communities are better able to initiate projects. We've also been very proud as a government that we have laid out our long-term plans so that communities can best take advantage of funding.

The clock won't permit me to finish what I wanted to say today, which is the same story, a different time on my feet, but I wanted to just briefly mention in September 2018 when Premier Ball announced an agreement for \$555.9 million in federal funding for the next 10 years under the Investing in Canada fund. Once leveraged, joint funding will result in over \$1.3 billion over 10 years in this province. Investments in public transit, green infrastructure, communities, culture and recreation, rural and northern communities.

Mr. Speaker, this \$1.3 billion is anticipated there will be over 4,000 person-years of employment created. I'm really looking forward to the types of things we will be able to do with this funding coming.

Maybe I'll have another opportunity again, but, Mr. Speaker, there are so many reasons in *Budget 2019* that all 40 Members of this Legislature should be quite proud to stand up and mark an X for, because from a quick scan of the budget, Mr. Speaker, I believe there's money allocated to every single district in this province. There are many, many things, as the Premier alluded to, that will certainly make life a little better for the people that call Newfoundland and Labrador home.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further speakers to the motion?

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

MR. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's again a pleasure to get up and speak and represent the District of Bonavista once again. I'd like, first of all, just to make a few comments based on the budget, the Premier's address, then some items on the District of Bonavista which I would hope that if anybody can assist in any way in the areas of transportation and works and tourism, with what I throw out, and they're not big issues but if there's a little something that can be of assistance, I would love to hear from you. Then I'll finish a little more on education.

To start, I'd like to thank the Minister of Education and his team this morning for a wonderful job. We had three hours of engagement, lots of questions. There are lots of things I think that are good that are going on in education that we are all aware of.

I'd also like to thank the Chair from Harbour Grace - Port de Grave for keeping everyone on track. It was a much longer break than five minutes. I think it might have turned to 20. I don't know what happened there.

When the minister states we've got a debt management that's going to run to take number two on our expenditure, I think I might have referenced last week that that was gross. That is something we all united to collaborate to get a handle on.

There are several ways of looking at getting a handle. I thought when I was listening to the speech, and if I had rental properties but I kept jacking the rent up, eventually nobody would rent. I know there are several things in economics that you look at. One would be you tax more, the other would be that you try to stimulate economic development but sometimes more taxes means less economic development.

The minister just said in the address that there are some things that we would look at, and I spoke to it last week on the budget. Several things I would look at that are different now in the District of Bonavista than what they were years ago, the taxation is certainly a difference. If we have to find more efficiencies, then I would say to you that some of the things we did in the District of Bonavista would need to be questioned.

If I can just throw one out; let's say that from Bonavista to the next medical facility is Clarendville. Just say that if we said that in Bonavista if you needed to get an X-ray after 4:30, it's not available but you need to travel to Clarendville which is about an hour and 20 minutes. I would say it doesn't show up in the taxation, but it was a measure that created a whole lot of hardship on the residents in Bonavista when they found that if they needed an X-ray after 4:30, they needed to go to Clarendville.

Often it was a lot of, obviously, medical needs. They were seniors, they were youth. If they travelled at this time of year they can manage but it's still costly for them. I can only imagine what it would be like to be able to – or have to travel in the wintertime after 4:30 at night.

So I would say to you, while it may have been an efficiency that you thrust up on the District of Bonavista, that was one that created a whole lot of hardship for a lot of people, and I would say it still stands. If they need to get an X-ray after 4:30, it still stands.

When the minister mentioned about the 1.6 kilometres, the busing, and I know the first thing that's thrown out and said: Wow, where's the cost, or where are you going to cover that? There is no desire or need that I had heard in the District of Bonavista. But one thing I did hear that there are a whole lot of areas where there are needs. And I know that when the Premier says and gives the comparison with other domains in Canada, we are a little different. The same doesn't always measure up.

You walk the roads on a four-lane highway with limited snow clearing on the shoulder of the road and you compare that to some of the locations that he had mentioned, that's not comparing apples and apples. The areas where they are needed – and I think there was probably an accommodation this morning by the team through the three-hour Estimates that we had that, like always, they would entertain any individual circumstances that would warrant, and to bring to the attention of the department, which is good.

I know they hold that now for the courtesy busing but if there's something that is an impediment to safety, then I would think the minister probably invited that to at least let the department know this morning during Estimates.

I went to Bonavista on Saturday. I met a gentleman who always watches the House of Assembly. I didn't know if there was anybody down there in Bonavista who watches the House of Assembly, but he's a gentleman who stays in the seniors units in the Golden Heights Manor. His name was Granville Dyke and I had the pleasure of meeting the man for the first time. But I just want to say hello to him while I get up to speak because if he's true to his word, he's watching right now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PARDY: And just before I leave that and go on, I would say a super-skilled senior, if you look at the model boats that he builds or the artwork that he does, he's very busy in his senior years, but one very skilled gentleman. So a big hello to Mr. Dyke and hopefully he's watching. If not, maybe there might be a second person watching that can pass it on to him.

The District of Bonavista, we are big on tourism. As you know, we've got a wonderful peninsula. We receive many tourists. I would think under economic development, we're doing well on the peninsula and we're probably doing well for the province, I would think. I think the minister stated last week here that the Bonavista-Trinity Regional Chamber of Commerce once had 80 members, and I stand to be corrected, but now they have 158 members. I would say that's good news. There are a lot of things happening in Bonavista.

One thing I would say to you, we have four domains that immediately jump out at people in Bonavista. We have Bonavista – this should be a Q and A because most of you would know the destinations – Trinity is one. We have Elliston and we have Port Union. Those are four big tourist destinations on the Bonavista Peninsula.

Let me throw out another couple and several more that ought to be on the tourist destination for the District of Bonavista. If we think we've reached our peak now of tourists, I often say I think we're just beginning – up, up and away. On Saturday, I visited Trinity East. It's a beautiful, picturesque, unincorporated community, and here's the first lifeline that I throw out or something that if you can help in any way or information-wise.

Trinity East has two dilapidated properties. The gentleman said they were eyesores. They have been for some time. I would say to you in Trinity East there are only two. Try to find another one, but the community is struggling with what intervention or what action they can take to try to have these two dilapidated properties addressed, again, because it enhances tourism. The whole part in economic development is to enhance tourism, especially in that realm. So if there is any information from somebody, they can pass it along.

If you haven't heard of Tickle Cove on the Bonavista Bay side, you would love and you should visit Tickle Cove. Tickle Cove, if you don't know, has a scenic sea arch. I had a lady call – and I hope I can share her name – who sent an email. Yes/no? Her name is Mary Dawe. Mr. Speaker, she had notified and said that she had property close to this beautiful scenic sea

arch. I haven't seen them so I'm assuming it's singular, one arch.

Shamefully, but my next visit I'm going to visit Tickle Cove to see the arch, but her point is that you can't find it. Nobody would enter Tickle Cove as small as a community it is, as beautiful as it is, but they don't know where to find the sea arch and it is another factor or feature in tourism on the Bonavista Peninsula that's going to attract a lot of people.

I would say to you, she requests and said what we need is a sign which states sea arch, and an arrow pointing left from one side of the road to point where you go down to meander to get to the sea arch. It is not a lot she's asking for but it may be something that we can put on the tourism and another one of the locations that we would look for. A couple of others I would be remiss to state. I would say there's Sweet Bay. I think the Minister of Fisheries has been in Sweet Bay previously. It's a beautiful, scenic, picturesque community. Visitors, on the Bonavista Peninsula – it ought to be highlighted when they do visit this area.

The Bonaventures, Old Bonaventure, New Bonaventure; a step back in time, the old *Random Passage* site; Burgoyne's Cove, the American aircraft that went down years ago and the wreckage still remains. It's probably a site that has so much potential, especially for our American friends who come here to our province to visit. They want to go to visit the site.

The only thing I throw out to you, and I stand to be corrected, if we have a five-year plan for roads, neither one of these areas are going to get it and that is the understanding. The only thing I would say to you and I would present for a thought would be that if it is economic development and it has potential to add to the tourism in the District of Bonavista, I would say it ought to be considered, even though there may be a little population but the attraction for the tourist is high.

I would say finally the last one, everyone like to travel in a loop – most people. You design a walking trail, you like not to travel back over the same trail but you like to loop around. Those in vehicles and tourists like to do the same thing.

They travel down the Bonavista highway. I would say we ought to let them know that perhaps Route 235 on the Bonavista Bay side is something they ought to catch before they leave the Bonavista Peninsula. That road may need a little bit of attention, too, but under Tourism, maybe it's something that we ought to have a look at; under economic development it maybe something to have a look at.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to move on to Education, which I think the three hours this morning we covered most of that.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's always a pleasure to stand in this hon. House and speak to a bill, or a budget, or whatever it may be at the time.

Mr. Speaker, I'm kind of prompted to speak now based on the private Member's motion which has been submitted now by the Official Opposition for tomorrow's debate and some of the commentary I heard from the Premier in debating the budget.

Mr. Speaker, I think I speak for a lot of people in this province, I'm sure, when I say that there is a lot of concern over Bill C-69 and the impact, or the potential impact, that's going to have on our offshore oil and gas. As the Premier so rightly points out, and his ministers and so on, not just oil and gas but on mineral exploration and on the development of our minerals as well. This is very important. I think there's a lot of concern over this bill and the impact, as I said, that it's going to have.

The Premier wasn't wrong when he spoke and he talked about the sour relationship that we've had with Ottawa over the years; certainly, the sour relationship the previous administration had with Prime Minister Harper. I remember it well. I can remember the very infancy of the ABC

campaign and how it started. Of course, we all recall the flags coming down and referring to the prime minister as Steve and all that stuff. I think a lot of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians got behind that movement, at the time, because we were all very, very angry and frustrated with Ottawa.

That's not something that just happened. I think that frustration ties to the system. It ties to Confederation, and the fact that regardless which political stripe happens to be here, provincially, and regardless of what political stripe happens to be in Ottawa, federally, the reality of it is we have seven MPs, and we must remember that. We have seven MPs sitting across – I'm going to say sitting across the table, figuratively speaking; I suppose literally speaking to some degree – but over 200 from Ontario and Quebec versus seven.

Regardless of who's in power, I believe that Confederation, while it certainly has its benefits, no doubt, it's very challenging for small provinces because we simply don't have the number; we don't have the numbers of MPs compared to the larger provinces like Quebec and Ontario. Regardless of who's there, there's always going to be challenges around getting our priorities on the federal agenda and getting the majority government, regardless what stripe they should be, getting them on side to place the issues and the priorities of Newfoundland and Labrador at the top of the agenda. That's a reality.

As I said, we know that there was that very, very frosty relationship and we know that, I think it's fair to say, we paid a price, to some degree. It felt good at the time, and I was one of the people that was right behind it. Come on, let's take on Ottawa. It did feel good at the time, but there's no doubt that I think we suffered, to some degree, at the hands of Stephen Harper, as a result of that. I think of the search and rescue as being one issue that we paid a price, I believe, because of that.

With that being said, when I hear the Premier talk about that, about what did your administration do and your relationship with Stephen Harper? Even though that may very well be true, and it is true, the fact of the matter is that doesn't mean that because we had

problems with Ottawa in the past, that somehow that negates or takes away from the importance of the issue at hand.

The issue at hand is the growth of our offshore industry and of our mining industry and the ability for us to develop our natural resources, whether they be at land or whether they be at sea. Not just the royalties that will come into government coffers, that we so desperately need to pay for our health care and our education and everything else, but also the jobs associated to those developments.

I've talked about in the past about the importance of ensuring that as we develop these resources that we maximize the jobs to our province and for our people. We maximize these benefit agreements. We enforce these benefit agreements. We ensure that local suppliers are benefiting from these agreements so that we can keep people employed and we can keep the money flowing here within our province and not seeing opportunity and money and taxes and everything else leaving the province to go to other jurisdictions. This is a critical piece for us as a province.

Yes, I will acknowledge, again, as the Premier will saying, that they have a good relationship with Ottawa. They talk about it all the time, we have a good relationship. Yes, I'm sure that that relationship has made it perhaps easier to navigate different federal programs and funding that may be there. I acknowledge that. Again, there were times under the Harper administration where there was money left on the table and I'm glad to hear that's not happening anymore. At least, I certainly hope it's not. I don't think it is.

Albeit the programs that we're talking about when the Premier talks about money for housing and so on that we desperately need, I don't think, even with the good relationship, I don't believe it's a case of we're getting anything extra. These are national programs that apply to all provinces. Everybody is entitled to their share because we all pay taxes, federally, on our income tax the same as whether you're in Ontario or BC or in Newfoundland and Labrador. We're all entitled to our share.

I'm sure we're getting our share, which is a good thing, but I don't think we're getting anything over and above. I don't get the feeling, when I see these announcements for small craft harbours or I see money in health care transfers or I see money for other things: roads, multi-year capital roads, infrastructure, water and sewer projects and housing projects, I don't think we're getting anything extra. I think we're getting what we're entitled to, as we should, and, again, if we weren't getting it in the past because of that frosty relationship, I'm glad that's ended. That is beneficial, but I would also say that just because we now have a good relationship with Ottawa and we're getting what we're entitled to, as a member of this federation, as we should, I don't think that means that we should somehow sit back and be afraid to take on Ottawa, when necessary, on particular issues.

We can get along where it makes sense. We can work together where it makes sense, but when there are times that we fundamentally disagree on something that is very, very important to our province and our needs are not being met, our issues are not getting addressed, then I think it is important that we have to say: B'ys, on this particular issue, we're going to have to agree to disagree and we're going to fight for what we believe is important for our province and our people.

I think there should absolutely be an expectation that when those times occur that our federal MPs, who are duly elected to represent this province, not the party they were elected under, but to represent the province and their riding and our people. We have a responsibility to hold them to account as well and insist that they are standing up for our province on matters of very, very serious importance, such as this one right here; such as the matter that's been identified in the private Member's motion that was read in the House of Assembly by the Leader of the Official Opposition as it relates to Bill C-69.

I'll say in advance, when the PMR happens tomorrow and there's an opportunity to debate and vote for this, I will be absolutely supporting the private Member's motion because I think it's the right thing to do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LANE: I believe it's the right thing to do. I would hope that everybody in this House, on all sides of the House, would support this, I really would.

We talk about working together, and we have a minority situation, as we all know, and we know that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, through the marking of their X this time around, have given us a mandate that they want us to work together. If there was ever an issue that we should be working together on, and I can think of more than one. The fishery is one that comes to mind where we should be working more together to try to get some more change in Ottawa in terms of the principle of adjacency and other issues.

There are other things I can think of, but this one here, certainly, is at the very top of the list because, as we all know, we've seen what's happened and our dependence on oil, we've seen what's happened when the price oil has dropped and the price of minerals has dropped and how we've suffered as a result; yet, we have to diversify the economy, absolutely.

Sounds more like a catchphrase, a lot of people think, than a reality because you hear it all the time, but it is true. We do need to diversify. I'll give credit to government, I have seen improvement. Not just this government but the past government as well. I think we've seen improvements in tourism, as an example, particularly, in parts of rural Newfoundland over the years and that continues to grow. That's a very positive thing. I think we're seeing some growth and opportunity in IT. The sky's the limit with that one. I think we've only just started there and I think there's tremendous opportunity.

We've seen growth in the aquaculture industry, albeit there are concerns from an environmental point of view that I have. I'm sure other Members have raised it in the past. Just because you raise concerns about the environment and concerns about ensuring that environmental practices are followed and policies are followed, that doesn't mean that you're against aquaculture or you're against anything.

That's some of the rhetoric we heard in the last Assembly, where somebody actually had the

nerve to say: Did we do a full environmental assessment? You'd hear someone chirping on the other side saying: You're against development, you're against aquaculture, you're against this community and that community because you asked a question. We need to get ourselves beyond that.

If we're following the proper environmental practices, yes, aquaculture is an opportunity and it's a great opportunity. I went to a session, I believe it was actually my colleague, the Member for Mount Pearl North, at his facility, his business; the Mount Pearl-Paradise Chamber of Commerce, Paul Antle was the guest speaker to talk about Marbase. What a tremendous opportunity that he presented in terms of Marbase and where those efforts can even be duplicated in other parts of the province. There's no doubt there's an opportunity.

We've seen some improvements, I think, by making more agricultural land available for farming and so on. I think that's a good thing. I'm not going to stand here and bash the government and say that they've done nothing because that's not true. I'm not going to say that some of the initiatives that they have taken have not been good ones because I believe they have. I believe some of them will pay off over time, but, at the end of the day, even though we are seeing some attempts at diversification and we're seeing some success, the reality of it is our province is very, very dependent and reliant on our natural resources, on our oil and gas, at least our oil, at some point, hopefully, our gas as well, and our mining, our minerals.

This bill, C-69, which I'm sad to say has passed, and has passed through the Senate as well, that is a concern. The oil industry, the people at Noia and so on who are experts in this more than I am – I'm no expert in it – but they are all raising red flags and concerns.

Former Premier Peckford, who was, I guess, one of the authors of the Atlantic Accord, has been raising red flags and concerns about what impact this could have on our ability to have control over our own natural resources. If those people have concerns, as a layperson who tries to read up on this as best I can, and that doesn't mean I'm going to be right or everything I'm hearing is right, because we know what happened with

Muskrat Falls. I put a lot of faith in so-called experts there and we all know what happened there, so I say it guardedly, but the point is that industry players and stakeholders are raising concerns.

I think we need to listen to what they're saying. I think that if there are concerns there and there are changes required, if there are points to be brought forward to the federal government to ensure that this legislation is not going to halt development or slow it to the point that investment is going to dry up and no one's going to want to develop it here, then I think that we all have a responsibility, collectively. Regardless, if we're in a party or we're not, or what side of the House we're on, I think we have a responsibility to: (a) get our federal MPs on board and get them to start standing up and speaking up for us, and (b) to get our own House in order and for us to collectively stand up and speak out and work together on this for the benefit of our province and for our people.

Again, we're seeing a private Member's motion coming forward tomorrow, it talks about certain things that they want. It's being suggested, basically, to fight to ensure the Atlantic Accord, I guess, basically, is not diminished in any way.

Personally, I think – and I'm not going to speak for my colleague next to me here from Humber - Bay of Islands, he is more than capable of speaking for himself. But one of the things he talked about as well was if there was an opportunity for an all-party committee or for Members to actually work together in that format, this is something we should all be working together in such a format to ensure that our resource development is protected, ensure that our Atlantic Accord is protected so that we're going to have the money in the future to pay for health care and education and all the other services we require.

Again, not just money into government coffers for those things, because that is very important, but also to create employment. That is the big thing I'm sure all Members have heard from people, whether they be in their district or not, talking about the concerns related to jobs. Everybody needs a job.

I think the survey – and I'm not going to try to be funny about it, but the survey that got a little bit of attention last week, the Minister of AESL, about why people are leaving Newfoundland and Labrador or why expats are not returning and why they left and so on, it was because of jobs. I don't think I needed anyone – I don't think anyone really needed anyone to do a study to tell us that. I think we all knew it, but I guess it confirms the fact that the reason why we are losing young people to other jurisdictions – not the only reason, some of them want to leave Newfoundland because they want to explore other options. They want to see the world. They don't like the weather. There are lots of reasons, but I think a primary factor is the fact that they cannot get a good paying job.

To say, yeah, there are lots of jobs. You can get a job at Tim Hortons or at Walmart or whatever, that's not what they want. They're not going to university and putting all that time and effort and money into an education so they can go to work at retail somewhere. That's not what they're doing it for. They want good paying jobs in the field of study of which they undertook. That's what they want, and that's not an unreasonable expectation.

So our resources will play a big role in ensuring that we can keep them home and keep them working here in Newfoundland and Labrador, and Bill C-69 certainly can be considered a big threat to that. So we all need to fight together, collectively, to ensure that our province is protected.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Member's time is expired.

Thank you.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further speakers to the motion?

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to stand and speak for a few minutes on some issues in the district and then on Bill C-69, because I was a part of the discussions very early into it. I agree that we need to come together to let Ottawa know the impact it's going to have on Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

There is no one in this Legislature – and I'm confident speaking on behalf of everybody. There is no one in this Legislature who is not concerned about the environment. There is a way we can work with all officials to ensure that the environment is safe; yet, create an atmosphere where we can have economic activity on our offshore.

I think we all agree that we're going to unite to fight Ottawa on this to show the implications of it. I think we need to get our MPs involved. We cannot let the MPs in this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador say, well, I'm working on your behalf, join us. There are some issues that happen that we need all the MPs onside. We need everybody in this Legislature onside.

This is a great opportunity because it will have significant impact on Newfoundland and Labrador in the offshore. This is the time now, not only should we come together, we should reach out to the MPs. We have seven Liberal MPs and say, look, here's an opportunity for us to stand up for Newfoundland and Labrador. We can go as a force with the MPs to Ottawa. Can we get it changed? We'll find out, but we can't let it just drop. Mr. Speaker, we can't just let it drop.

So I'm in full agreement of the private Member's motion tomorrow. I'm in full agreement with what the Member mentioned about an all-party committee. Also, I think we should add that we should get the MPs involved also to help us out so that we're all working together as one.

In the district, Mr. Speaker, I bring up the hospital again. I understand there is going to be an announcement soon. The Premier mentioned two weeks from last week that it's going to be couple of weeks. So, hopefully, it's going to be sometime this summer.

Then, also for the workers; I'm hoping we can work something out to have local workers and workers in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador at it. I've raised it and I said it before the election, I said it during the election and I said it after, every opportunity I get I will raise that, and I have. People are aware that I'm raising it.

So I just want government to know that this is a big issue out in the area. All throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, when you talk to Trades NL and you talk to a lot of different unions, which I have – the ironworkers union in particular who started the protest last year, and rightly so. When you talk to them, this is a big issue for a lot of them.

This is the kind of thing, Mr. Speaker, that we must, as a group, try to work together and get it resolved so that we don't start off in the way that we started off last year. I'm encouraged by the Minister of Transportation and Works having the meetings that he had with Trades NL, the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Association and others to work on that.

The other thing I'm working with the Minister of Transportation and Works on, again, is Route 450. A lot of the work with the flood that happened in early 2018 is going to be done this year, and there's some other work that the minister mentioned.

He's aware about the slide out in Copper Mine Brook. That's dangerous, it's very dangerous. There are some spots there in John's Beach that because I feel and some people feel that it wasn't – when you have 15 or 20 tractors running over one little spot and digging everything up, a lot of that damage was due to the flood. I know the minister is working with his staff for Route 450 in this House through the Bay of Islands. I just want to thank the minister for that and let people know that we are working and we are talking on that. He has engineers working on that kind of stuff.

Mr. Speaker, there are a few others things I have to bring up. It's the truck in Meadows. As we all know, and I brought it up before, there was a truck announced for Meadows, or supposed to be announced, and it went to the Premier's office and it was taken away. It's sad. I'll say to

the Premier, and I know he's in the Legislature, it's sad.

Remember when you first started out as the Premier in 2015, the first group that jumped on side was Meadows. I know there was a truck announced for Meadows. I know it was in the queue. There's no way that anybody can convince me, I know.

When I spoke to the chief of staff, Premier, the chief of staff did tell me, yes, he made the decision. So, Premier, I'm just saying, find a way to resolve that. Get that resolved. You can't put lives in danger. You know what Meadows does. They have a seniors' home, they have 600 kids in that school. They do a lot of first responders with Gillams. They go on all the north shore. You have to find a way. You can't let that go on.

If you have a beef against me, take it out on me. You can't do it to Meadows. I have to stand up for Meadows. There's absolutely – I am convinced and I know, because I was told, that it was done. Your chief of staff told me that he made the decision after he got it to 60.

So, Premier, those people supported you. They had belief in you. They gave you the confidence that helped you become Premier of the province. Live up to what you told them at the time, you would treat everybody fair, everybody equal. Go back and check on this for me, check on that. Check on it and you can see that the rescue vehicle is down now. Just fix the problem. We'll say it was a misunderstanding, and let's just move on. I can't let it rest. I just can't let it rest when I was told personally – I called him personally and was told it was picked. It's wrong what happened. It's wrong.

Were you in the room? I don't know; I don't know. You weren't in the room. Okay, I see the Premier saying he wasn't, and I have no reason to believe that he was in the room. I have no reason to believe it.

So, Premier, now you know the issue. You spoke to the fire chief in Meadows and he explained the concern that he has. It's important, it's urgent. Can you imagine, right now, they have no rescue vehicle? There's one on the North Shore but there's none capable of going

into the school? The largest K to 12 school in this province is in Meadows. There's a seniors' home in Meadows, and a lot of the seniors at the home in Meadows are Level 3. When they started the pilot project to bring in people with special needs in the homes and extended needs in Level 3, they're in that home.

So Premier, I'm urging you now to go back and just check it out, see where they were on the ranking list, and put that in place so we can say it was a misunderstanding so we could take it and move on. I can't let it drop, because I know the urgency for the North Shore of the Bay of Islands for that fire truck. We got to have it.

I know the Premier's over there looking at me now, and I'll say to the Premier: Go out and check with the officials, check with your chief of staff, and I can assure you you'll find out that there was a misunderstanding 'cause you can't have that happening, have a vehicle that should've been there because of priority-based ranking, and then have it taken away. You can't put lives in danger; you can't put people in danger because you got a beef with me. It just can't happen.

They're saying you weren't in the room, I can't say you were or weren't, but I can tell you now you're over there in this House of Assembly, you are aware of the issue and you must deal with it, Premier. That's all I'll say about that now, and please God you'll deal with it as any Premier should, go up and get the facts and make that decision.

I'm going to take the next few minutes to speak on the issue that people know about me; it's about the complaint that was made and the report that was filed October 18. During the election, out of 10 people I spoke to at the doors, every seventh or eighth person said bring it up, don't give in, and I'm not.

I just want to explain. I was never interviewed. We all know about the Management Commission and things like that, and hopefully that's going to be dealt with. I won't bring that up either right now because hopefully that's going to be dealt with. But there are a lot of issues in here that, if you ever had the opportunity to present the facts – I'll just give you one.

Here's a rumour that the minister, the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's, put in the report. Here's the rumour now that I had to go and defend. Just to let everybody know, I had to defend myself against this rumour. "There was a rumor that Minister Joyce had used the VALE funding to leverage Federal funding for the west coast and that was why it was tied up. I could not verify this rumor" When I tried to speak to him, that's all he would say, it's a rumour.

That was put in the report. I had to go and prove that I didn't take \$30 million, leveraged federal funding, and spend it on the West Coast. Just to give you an example, I'll go into it a bit further, if I had to do that, first of all, the money had to come in through Natural Resources, Natural Resources had to give it to Treasury Board, the Department of Finance, Finance had to give it to Treasury Board, Treasury Board had to give it to Municipal Affairs, I had to take the money, put up the planning priorities, bring it into Cabinet – which she's a part of – to get it done.

Now, just some information on that I could have presented because somewhere in province when you make these serious allegations, you got to pay a price. You just can't do this to Members or anybody. You got to pay the price. You have to pay the price.

And the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's made that complaint. Here's the information that I could have – some of it I did because it was never – but here's the information. I just want to read this here. This is the Minister of Natural Resources saying this, Mr. Speaker, that was negotiated, and I can save \$10 million a year over three years, I believe the first tranche – I have to check – was in 2017, the next in 2018, and 10 in 2019. That was common knowledge. That's what the minister said in this House, which she had access to.

Here's another one, July 4: The final payment will be made in 2019. That was said in this House. Everybody in this House had access to it. And the Minister of Service NL, the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's, had access to this, yet she made the allegation and I had to go and prove it.

Here's another one; this was February 18, 2016. Because when the funds came in from Vale, it goes to the Minister of Natural Resources who

gives it to the Department of Finance. Here's 2016 – and this is a letter from the hon. Sherry Gambin-Walsh, MHA for Placentia - St. Mary's –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the Member not to use the name.

MR. JOYCE: I'm just reading the letter.

MR. SPEAKER: That's fine but you're not going to use that name.

MR. JOYCE: Anyway, and then this is from the Minister of Natural Resources – this was sent to her personally – to date, we have not been transferred from Vale for these four initiatives. I understand that Vale has sought direction on how the funds will be transferred. That was sent to the Member directly from the Minister of Natural Resources, yet I was accused of using the \$30 million.

Here's what she told the town council down in Placentia. I had to go prove this now that this never happened. It says: Swimming pool, January 15, 2015, the Minister of Service NL advised that although the previous administration had made the commitment of 4.5 to this pool project and while her government intends to honour that commitment, she has no further information to offer of when the funds may be distributed. The minister advised that there has been no process put in place for the government to receive the Vale money, nor is there a process in place to distribute the funds when they are received. Her information is that this could take up to a year to get in place.

Now, that's the allegation. Then the minister at the time, the Minister of Service NL, agreed to check if there's an agreement that indicates a deadline for Vale to deliver the money and in terms of the payment. That's the information she had, yet she made an allegation against me.

March 21, 2017, here's another one. This is from Stuart Macnaughton and he outlines when the funds will be coming in: 2017, 2018, 2019. This was easily available to everybody in the House of Assembly, but I had to go defend that I didn't steal \$30 million – not steal it; you took it and leveraged it without anybody knowing it. You

can put it however you like. That's one of the allegations that I had to go prove I didn't do.

The minister had full information on a regular basis of everything here, said in the House of Assembly, the information given to Cabinet Members. She knew where the fund was going to go, yet that was one of the allegations.

The second, Mr. Speaker, is the capital works. This one here is another one. Apparently, I didn't explain to her about the capital works. I have to talk about the capital works because we all know how the capital works does work. When I was the minister how the capital works worked, we would give each MHA the list, and we did it to the Opposition too, so it wasn't just the Liberals. I sat down with the Opposition also and they had the list and we said: Okay, b'ys, here's how much money we all got per district. Let's go. What do you want done?

So, what happened? She put down her list, the Minister of Service NL, the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's put down the list, she gave us the list and in it she said: Okay – so she put in her report – I'm trying to find the exact part of it, Mr. Speaker. What she said is that the report itself, that I took the money, I wouldn't explain it to her and when we put out the list, I was giving the money to Placentia. She also puts in there that Placentia got too much the year before. That's right in this here. I could get the page if I had time but I don't want to – but it's in there that I gave Placentia too much.

Here are the details. I wrote the Town of Placentia, they're going to confirm everything I already said, but here are the details on it. In October 2017, there was a meeting in Corner Brook during MNL, the Town of Placentia, the minister, her EA that was with Municipal Affairs at the time and seven councillors; I think it was seven or six, from the Town of Placentia. What they wanted to do was take \$800,000 from Dunville to put it towards the swimming pool. So, to get the swimming pool started – the one that she claims that I wasn't working on, to move towards the swimming pool.

They asked if they took \$800,000 and put it towards the swimming pool, would we replace it in the spring, capital works, the Small Communities Fund. I made the agreement, yes,

we would. The minister was sitting in the room, her EA was sitting in the room, and seven councillors from the Town of Placentia were sitting in the room. We would replace the money.

So when the opportunity came up and we gave her the list, I said, well, don't forget Placentia. She didn't include Placentia as a priority. The Minister of Service NL, the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's didn't include it. So I went to her, I said we got to do Placentia. She said that's your problem. You made that commitment, she said, not me. You made that commitment. I said, but you were there. I said, we got to fulfill that commitment. We made a commitment to the Town of Placentia, we got to fulfill it. No, she said.

She put a claim against me, I bullied her, because I didn't explain capital works. Can you imagine? And there are no repercussions to it. I challenge anybody, phone Mayor Bernie Power, or phone any councillor, that what I just said is incorrect. I'll even show you the letter I wrote to council, that they're confirming that it's true.

Now, because I was living up to a commitment, a commitment that was made at the time on her request, because I followed through on that commitment, I did not – because she wanted it somewhere else. I'll even show the people of Placentia, when I got the list of priorities, Placentia wasn't even on the list. They were down below. That's your problem, she said. You made the commitment, not me.

So I had to turn around again and say, no, I made a commitment, you were a part of it. We're living up to that commitment. And guess what? I was called a bully because I wouldn't go with what she did. Now, can you imagine? This is all documentation, by the way. This is not hearsay.

I just want to talk about a few other things, Mr. Speaker. Everybody knows about Tammy, who Tammy is. I don't know if I need to explain to anybody who Tammy is, but I will.

When all this broke on April 25 – and the Premier is aware of this because I gave it to him. On April 25, when all this broke, there were three people in the meeting. There was one staff,

the Premier and the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's. That afternoon it was raised in the House of Assembly by the former premier, the former Leader of the Opposition in this House.

Anyway, when I got the complaint and sat down, there were names missing. I said, who in the hell – so they wouldn't give us the names. Finally, when it was threatened to go to court, we got the names. One of the names that she was speaking to was Tammy. So we said, who in the hell is Tammy? It came back – the Premier knows this, the caucus knows this. Do you know who Tammy was? The code name for Tracey Perry – oh, sorry, I can't use the name. The code name for a former member from the Opposition.

MR. SPEAKER: And I do remind the Member of my warning from last week, that you will not cast aspersions on anyone who is not a member of this House of Assembly.

MR. JOYCE: I'm just reading the reports here.

MR. SPEAKER: I don't care. I don't want to hear it.

MR. JOYCE: Okay. Well, I guess you can't read nothing.

MR. SPEAKER: Proceed, carefully.

MR. JOYCE: Anyway, I'm just reading what's in the letter that was sent to me. Usually you're allowed to read the letter, if it's in the letter. That has always been a standing practice in this House for 30 years I've been here.

MR. SPEAKER: I will remind you, you will not cast aspersions on someone who's not a member of this House.

MR. JOYCE: Anyway, I'll go on to another thing that was brought up and another thing in there that I – the complaints.

I'm glad the people of Humber - Bay of Islands supported me on this because I'm not giving up. Who knows where it's going to end up. I'm hoping the Management Commission is going to step up, too. I'm hoping, I really am. And I'm confident.

Here's another thing, when the allegations were made – and I have a copy of it, if anyone wants to see it – is that, apparently, I was bullying a certain Member, the Member for Virginia Waters - Pleasantville. Apparently, I went up and I was bullying him.

Here's a letter that the Member said to me: In respect to the conversation between the Premier and the Minister of Service NL, I have no knowledge of any conversation whatsoever or any statements whatsoever. Yet, I had to go and say that's another person that I had to go and get – there's another person over there. There are three others there that had to go and prove, no, there's nothing to this. That was a parliamentary assistant, she went up to the Premier of the province and said that I was bullying. In a letter here he said: I don't know what he's talking about; no such thing.

Also, to talk about we put a wedge between myself and the parliamentary assistant. Here's what the Member for Virginia Waters - Pleasantville said: I'm completely unaware, referring any wedge that you are referring to. Yet, I had to go and justify that there was nothing to it.

Premier, somewhere along the line you had to know this. I gave you all this information.

I'll have another opportunity later, Mr. Speaker, because I will continue on and the Premier –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Your time has expired, definitely expired.

MR. JOYCE: – has a lot of this information, but yet I was found –

MR. SPEAKER: Your time has expired. Sit down, take your seat.

MR. JOYCE: Pardon me?

MR. SPEAKER: Take your seat. Your time has expired.

Any more speakers to the motion?

The hon. the Member for Corner Brook.

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

I'll close my 'confuser' here, and let's get going.

We have some great debate going on here, some great discussion about, how do we improve our natural resources? How do we get it? That's the Concurrence Motion of the Natural Resources Committee. We talk a lot in Estimates about improvements that have occurred in some of our resource industries, but I do want to say how much I appreciated the attention of all hon. Members.

Our Committee sat for five hours, Mr. Speaker; five hours where we talked about – we went from 5:30 on a Wednesday until 10:30 that night, and we spoke about the issues that really matter to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. How do we improve and increase and keep the momentum going on revitalizing our renewable natural resource industries as well as our oil industry? How do we make sure that we keep that momentum going?

Mr. Speaker, I can say that when we, all as Members, all of us, collectively, we sit with common mind and common goal, we can, indeed, accomplish a lot.

I really want to say a thank you to everyone who sat through five hours of continuous, consecutive debate and discussion where the Department of Fisheries and Land Resources, some of the incredible achievements that have been made in recent months and years, were on full display. Things like improving our access to new technology and new innovation in our fisheries, with great help from the Atlantic Fisheries Fund. We spoke at length about some of the projects that are underway through the Atlantic Fisheries Fund, improving quality and improving value to our fish products.

We spoke, as well, about improving our aquaculture, making sure that our aquaculture industry is up to par with high quality regulation, but as well high quality product to be able to meet a global demand, and, yes, Mr. Speaker, there is a global demand.

There are currently 1.9 million tons of farm-fresh Atlantic salmon that graces consumers'

plates throughout the world. We in Newfoundland and Labrador only produce 25,000. So, in the relative context of our industry to the global industry, we are but a small player, but we have huge potential. That's what we all seize on, is where can we go, where can we grow. That is really what our aquaculture industry strategy is all about. We're already seeing results because we are attracting foreign investment. We are attracting domestic investment in our own industry but we're also attracting foreign interest.

Mowi, the former Marine Harvest, largest salmon producer in the world is investing in Newfoundland and Labrador. Grieg NL, a joint venture, a partnership between Newfoundland and Labrador; OCI, Ocean Choice International; our own expert wild-catcher harvester; our own expert processor has joined forces with one of the largest and one of the most significant players in the salmon aquaculture industry, Grieg, from Norway. They have established Grieg NL and they are investing in our province. We are seeing our steelhead trout industry now starting to come back again as a product of interest.

Mr. Speaker, yes, there is 1.9 million tons of salmon growing in this world; we produce 25,000 tons of it. We have so much to grow, but we're going to do it in an environment which is prudent from a regulatory point of view. We are a relatively greenfield operation, but we're going to be one of the best players, both in terms of quality and environmental protection, on the planet as well, Mr. Speaker. You can look forward to hearing me speak, and others speak, more about that in the coming weeks and months ahead.

Mr. Speaker, where we're also growing is in our farming. Food self-sufficiency is absolutely essential for Newfoundland and Labrador. We only grow 10 per cent of what we consume. How could it have occurred where in 1949 we were 100 per cent food self-sufficient? We were traders with the Caribbean nations. We were trading with foreign countries, but we were totally food self-sufficient in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Over the decades, over the years, we began to really let our farms and our farm communities

evaporate and that had to be stopped. Just from the period of 2010 to 2015, if my memory serves me correctly, Statistics Canada points to a 20 per cent decrease in farms in our province, just in a short period; five years from, I believe, it was 2010 to 2015, that period, we lost 20 per cent of our farms. This government took on, as a concerted effort, to change that.

What I can report to you, Mr. Speaker, is that we have grown. The number of farm jobs, if we were to use some of the metrics which are so important to this debate, to this discussion, the number of jobs that have grown within the farm community, within farming activity in this province, is 200 in just 18 months. That's reported to us by our farmers. It's not a government statistic, our farmers are reporting those numbers to us. So, I think we can take them with great credibility.

On our forestry sectors, we are growing already. We have achieved about a 16 per cent increase in timber allocations over the previous five years. We've had a difficult situation there with the closure of two of our major pulp and paper mills. We still have one paper mill which is the heartbeat of the industry. All of our forestry operations are synergistic. They're all intertwined with each other. They're all codependent on each other to be able to get pulp wood and to get fibre for pulp, to be able to get sawlogs for the sawmilling industry, both have to work co-operatively and in support of each other, and that's what's happening in our province.

We've got some regulatory changes, some policy changes that have been able to increase the amount of fibre that's currently available and being utilized. We're also blessed with the hard work we were able to achieve through the softwood lumber arrangements. Newfoundland and Labrador is tariff-free to export to the US on softwood lumber, so that has led to a significant increase in the number of board feet that's exported to the US and has allowed our industry to grow from 60 million board feet of lumber to 90 million board feet of lumber – a significant achievement, Mr. Speaker.

What I will say, I will close off and simply say that one thing that I do recognize that I've heard in this Chamber is that it's as if there has been a

bystander presence by some Members of the House, that circumstances this government now faces, if someone were to simply come to this Chamber and watch from the gallery section for the very first time ever, they might be left with the impression that what we face today is a product of this government, that it's a product of what we created.

Mr. Speaker, the age of austerity in this province began in 2013. When we had billions of dollars of oil revenues, we still had deficit budgets in 2013. I remember in *Budget 2013*, programs of the College of the North Atlantic were scrapped, were cut in cost-cutting measures. I remember when not-for-profit organizations, there were 200 layoffs of employment officers and economic development officers and training officers throughout all of Newfoundland and Labrador when over 50 not-for-profit organizations were told they were losing their funding.

What I find really interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that when you look at the situation of where we are today, it's as if there was a bystander effect that none of this occurred with any helping hand from a former government. When I hear the words coming forward that we need to fight harder with Ottawa, I can't help but think there is a certain level of effectiveness to not burning the earth totally under your feet to be able to achieve an objective.

Yes, this government has stood tall and stood strong to be able to support the interests of Newfoundland and Labrador. No, we did not declare that Ottawa and every federal politician were persona non grata, but we certainly made our voice clear and we continue to do so.

So, when I think of the messaging that often gets delivered on the floor of this House, if you were a bystander sitting in the gallery, you would have heard continuous reference to how unacceptable it was that there was an oil spill off of Newfoundland just recently. What did you do to stop it? What did you do to prevent it? What did you do when it became known? What did you do? This House was ceased with the notion that there was an oil spill. The Opposition asked several questions and basically the rationale or the opinion that could be easily extended was that you have to take greater precautions.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that whisper, that voice was not lost on anyone and was weaponized, in many respects, because even the Opposition, the Progressive Conservatives, said you have to take greater care of our ocean resources and you have to ensure that these things are well protected. Our government went to Ottawa with rationed, reasoned voices to make sure that our oil industry had good regulation, to make sure that it is prosperous in the future.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll size it up with this: In order to get effective results, you have to be effective. In order to be effective, you just cannot simply scorch the earth beneath your feet, you have to have reasonable argument, and that is what this government is all about.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Any further speakers to the motion?

Is the House ready for the question?

The motion is that the report of the Resource Committee be concurred.

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, Report of Resource Estimates Committee, carried.

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

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

Given the hour of the day – actually prior to closing, I would advise all Members of this House that the Estimates Committee will be

meeting for the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment at 6 p.m. in this House.

On that note I would move, seconded by the Member for St. George's - Humber, that the House do now adjourn.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been 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.'

The motion is carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 o'clock.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 10 o'clock.