



NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Speech from the Throne

The Fourth Session
of the Forty-Sixth
General Assembly
of the Province of
Newfoundland and Labrador

March 21, 2011



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Speech from the Throne 2011
Delivered at the Opening of
The Fourth Session of the Forty-Sixth
General Assembly of the
Province of Newfoundland and Labrador
on Monday, March 21, 2011

by His Honour

The Honourable John C. Crosbie, PC, OC, ONL, QC
Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador

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The Power to Grow

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

On the third of December, I had the privilege of swearing in the Honourable Member for Virginia Waters as the **tenth Premier** of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In her inaugural speech that day, she said, “Never before in our history have we as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians been stronger, or better positioned, or better prepared than we are right now to achieve the full measure of our potential. Never have we been more determined to succeed. And never have we been more confident that we can.”

The very **first woman to serve as Newfoundland and Labrador’s First Minister** brings to the role her unique experience, a fresh perspective, unshakable confidence in our power to grow, and unwavering determination to ensure Newfoundlanders and Labradorians reap the benefits of the wealth we are continuing to build – today, tomorrow and well into the future.

Of all the resources we possess in bountiful supply, none are of greater value to us than the deep reservoirs of **strength, self-assurance and pride** that drive us forward to make the most of every opportunity to prosper.



Newfoundland and Labrador took a giant leap forward in harnessing our power to grow with the announcement on the 18th of November to develop the hydroelectricity potential of **Muskrat Falls** – Phase One of the Lower Churchill River Project, one of the most attractive clean energy projects in North America.

Muskrat Falls is a shining example of My Government's tenacity and commitment to securing the path to prosperity for all people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It has the potential to transform Newfoundland and Labrador from a jurisdiction dependent for much of its electricity on nonrenewable oil to a jurisdiction whose electricity system is **98 per cent carbon free**. This project is the lowest-cost, long-term option to meet our growing electricity demand. What's more, Muskrat Falls will mean consumers' electricity bills will be stable for years to come, and lower than if the Province had chosen the alternative: a future dependent on more thermal generation and exposure to volatile oil prices.

Every year, we generate a good portion of our electricity on the Island from the oil-fired plant in Holyrood. This power is costly. In its Energy Plan, My Government committed to the communities and residents who live around the **Holyrood Generating Plant** that it would install scrubbers and precipitators if it did not proceed with the Lower Churchill Project. These would cost in the order of 600 to 800 million dollars and, ultimately, would not eliminate all the emissions from this facility. The plant is aging and

would require outright replacement within a couple of decades; and growing demand would require additional capacity from our limited supply of small hydro, and some wind. However, our main source of generation to meet long-term growth in the province would ultimately be more thermal generation. All told, the capital costs for these alternatives could surpass 3.2 billion dollars. With oil prices rising and forecast to go higher, the costs of generating power at Holyrood would raise consumer electricity prices significantly, hurting families in their pocketbooks and employers on their balance sheets.

If we are to avoid those nasty consequences and keep our province on the path to sustainable growth, we need to shift from costly, nonrenewable oil-generated electricity to renewable clean energy, and we need to do it soon. My Government, with its comprehensive Energy Plan, charted a course for **energy security**. The objective was clear: long-term stability for the electricity ratepayers. The way to achieve that objective was equally clear: identify a secure and environmentally-friendly source of power. Phase One of the Lower Churchill Project, Muskrat Falls, is the means of achieving energy security.

At 824 megawatts and a total cost of 6.2 billion dollars for the Muskrat Falls generation project, the transmission link from Labrador to the Island and the Maritime link to Nova Scotia, this is a mega-project, but it is just one step in My Government's green energy development plan. The **Gull Island Project** has

a capacity to generate an additional 2,250 megawatts of hydroelectricity, and together, these two pieces of the Lower Churchill Project will generate bountiful energy to fuel industrial growth in Labrador.

Indeed, the development of both Gull Island and Muskrat Falls will be a great enabler for **future opportunities in Labrador** and will greatly improve Labrador's ability to attract industrial development in the region.

The combined Upper Churchill recall, Muskrat Falls and future Gull Island power will provide the **storehouse of renewable energy** to fuel industrial growth in Labrador. Such projects could include IOC expansion, new iron ore projects, Voisey's Bay developments and other projects that may emerge. And by 2041, just three decades from now, Newfoundland and Labrador will be released from the draconian provisions of the infamous Upper Churchill Contract and able to turn that energy to our own advantage.

What's more, the agreement with Emera provides Newfoundland and Labrador, for the first time in our history, with a link to consumers in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and New England, firmly establishing Newfoundland and Labrador as a **clean-energy superpower** in northeastern North America. This project is unequivocally in the best interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Muskrat Falls Project will generate 8,600 direct person-years of **employment** in our province with 5,400 of these in Labrador. In its Energy Plan, My Government committed that Labrador residents would be the primary beneficiaries of the Lower Churchill Project, with jobs and business activity from the construction and operation of the projects as the first and most tangible benefits. Approximately 450 million dollars in labour earnings and business income will be generated for Labradorians and Labrador-based enterprises. Members of Labrador's Innu Nation will have first consideration for employment, then other qualified residents of Labrador, and then residents of the province generally. My Government is excited as it looks forward to the dawn of a new era of opportunity, prosperity and self-reliance for the Innu people of Labrador.

Muskrat Falls is also a tremendous project for Canada, generating 540 million dollars a year in labour and business income during the construction phase, totaling 3.5 billion dollars by the time this project has been completed, plus some 525 million dollars in federal tax revenues. Newfoundland and Labrador has wrestled in recent years to be heard, understood and respected by Federal leaders in meaningful ways on issues that matter most to our people, but today is a new day. Our Premier has presented to the Prime Minister Newfoundland and Labrador's compelling case for **Federal support** for this national green-energy project.

Securing a **loan guarantee from the Government of Canada** will mean savings in interest costs for the project, all of which will go to further reduce rates for consumers, putting more money directly into the pockets of residents here in Newfoundland and Labrador and in Nova Scotia. Regardless, this project stands on its own merits. It makes sense economically. It makes sense environmentally. It makes sense for the consumers of Newfoundland and Labrador. Developing Muskrat Falls gives us **the power to grow.**

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An Invitation to Build

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

The power to grow resides in each of us. It is the Government's duty to create conditions conducive to growth: a strong commitment to **fiscal responsibility**, a solid foundation of reliable infrastructure, competitive taxation, minimal red tape and progressive public services, including a range of instruments and initiatives to help businesses grow and individuals prepare for opportunities. To make growth happen, individuals, businesses and communities must rise to the challenge and seize the opportunities before them. Through a **partnership of collective effort and individual responsibility**, we as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can achieve goals others think impossible. Each of us has the power to master our own destiny, and each of us has the responsibility to use it.

The conditions for growth were not always as favourable as they are today. For too many years, for want of proper **infrastructure**, our province languished while other regions of the country prospered. My Government has taken action against this problem by implementing a multi-year infrastructure strategy currently valued in excess of five billion dollars to address the massive infrastructure deficit it inherited in 2003. Our roads and highways, wharves and bridges, ports and terminals, schools and hospitals: all needed attention, and since 2003, all have received it. Without those investments, developers

would have stayed away in droves, but with the results of those investments clearly evident in regions throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, our province has never been more attractive to those seeking opportunities to grow.

Nowhere are the impacts of those investments more profoundly felt than in Labrador, where the historic interlinking of Phases I, II and III of the Trans-Labrador Highway has been greeted with long-overdue celebration. In Labrador and elsewhere throughout our province, people realize infrastructure is not an end in itself but a beginning. It is a foundation – **an invitation to build**. Every dollar My Government has invested in building and fortifying Newfoundland and Labrador's foundation of infrastructure is a dollar invested in opportunities for our communities to grow.

It is because My Government has put in place a solid foundation of public investments that private sector developers are finding the conditions and the confidence to build. Region by region, resource by resource, industry by industry, and enterprise by enterprise, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are moving forward with boldness in the marketplace to generate the kind of economic activity that is going to sustain our communities for generations to come. More and more, new growth in regions throughout this province is going to be grounded in the enormous wealth of resources and opportunities all around us. With the vision, the ingenuity, the passion and the right public policies, **My Government is ensuring those resources work to our advantage**.

From Labrador West to Baie Verte, from Pine Cove to St. Lawrence, from Duck Pond to Beaver Brook, from Voisey's Bay to Long Harbour, **the very rocks beneath our feet are fueling opportunities to grow**. Valuable rare earth elements have been found from central Newfoundland to northern Labrador. Our iron ore industry is expanding to meet the growing global demand for iron and steel. The Iron Ore Company of Canada is continuing its half-billion-dollar expansion program to increase production to 23 million tonnes per year, and two new **mines** in northwest Labrador will tap the first new deposits of iron this area has developed since 1982. My Government is also close to completing its evaluation of the Crown-owned Julienne iron ore deposit in Labrador West as a possible further contribution to the economic growth of this region. Our future depends on the development of resources like these.

To ensure it is doing everything it can and everything it must to fuel growth of our mining sector, My Government will continue public consultations on the development of a Provincial **Minerals Strategy** for release and implementation later in the year. My Government believes this strategy will benefit the mining sector the way its first comprehensive Energy Plan has benefited our energy sector. The opportunities are real, they are rural, and they are happening right now.

When mineral deposits are identified, My Government will work with the developers to maximize opportunities associated with their development.

Our Premier played a pivotal role in negotiating improvements to the province's agreement with Vale Inco to process nickel at **Long Harbour**.

Work on the project is about to shift into high gear, and the economic benefits and employment gains for the province generally and for the Long Harbour region in particular will be tremendous.

Our Premier also played a pivotal role in securing unprecedented super-royalty and equity agreements for the White Rose Growth Project in 2007, the Hebron Project in 2008, and the Hibernia Southern Extension Project in 2009. At Bull Arm, work is about to ramp up in preparation for the **Hebron Project**, and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are poised to reap significant benefits in jobs, economic spinoffs and revenues.

Global oil price increases will ensure Newfoundlanders and Labradorians reap even greater benefits from our province's **equity participation in projects offshore**.

My Government's foresight is certainly paying off. Thanks to its extraordinary leadership, Newfoundland and Labrador is becoming the principal beneficiary of our offshore oil riches.

With massive hydropower resources across Labrador and huge oil and gas reserves both delineated and under active exploration, Newfoundland and Labrador is right to call itself an energy warehouse. But when it comes to energy, My Government is also thinking of ways to increase the benefits from the development of these resources. It is moving forward to develop

an **Energy Innovation Roadmap**, consolidating research to date and charting a course to bring on stream new energy technologies offering new promise to communities and businesses looking to prosper. We are already beginning to see what communities can accomplish when they tackle old energy challenges in new ways. In an isolated community on the south coast of the Island, the people of Ramea have demonstrated the capacity of an innovative wind-hydrogen-diesel project to transform power generation and open new doors to long-term growth, not only in their community but in other isolated communities in our province and throughout the world. New schools in Torbay, Placentia and Paradise, as well as the Mount Pearl Glacier Arena are using the earth's own geothermal radiation to generate heat.

In Western Labrador, a reliable supply of competitively-priced electricity has been of great value to IOCC and Wabush Mines, both of which have benefited from the TWINCO arrangement that expires in 2014. Cognizant of the growth of the mining industry in Labrador and the demands this will mean for electrical power, My Government will soon announce a **new policy on industrial electricity rates in Labrador** to ensure all industrial customers, existing and new, benefit from a supply of competitively-priced power.

Labrador's people, land, diversity and culture are fundamental to our province's identity. To fuel further growth in Labrador's communities, My Government will continue, through the **Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador**, to open up new economic opportunities

while ensuring the social and infrastructure needs of the region receive priority attention.

My Government has been working with the **Nunatsiavut Government** to finalize a Land Use Plan, subject to consultations that will be undertaken in the coming year. It was honoured to host, on October 28, a historic joint cabinet meeting with the Nunatsiavut Executive Council, demonstrating a shared commitment to forge even stronger government-to-government relations in the years ahead.

In regions throughout our province, our fisheries have the potential of sustaining many hundreds, and surely thousands, of people in rewarding careers. There is no straight path, however, from the overcapacity and structural inefficiencies we see now to the vibrant, profitable fishery we need for the future. My Government is not prepared to cut communities adrift. The **fisheries Memorandum of Understanding** involving the province, the fisheries union and the fish processors' association was intended to chart a course forward to where we ought to be – not just cutting but restructuring.

Certain elements of the **MOU Report** hold promise for enduring and progressive change in the province's fishery. The marketing initiatives put forth by the industry and the proposals advanced by several fleet sectors to enhance access to capital for licence combining warrant further discussion and will be pursued with the fishing industry. My Government will be receptive to proposals for structural change

that hold the potential to meaningfully address the industry's long-term income and viability challenges.

According to the report of the MOU Chairperson, in the absence of an imposed solution, the industry will adjust itself over time. Still, My Government is not prepared to wash its hands of the overcapacity challenges it inherited, but will focus on the measures it can responsibly take to grow the value of the sector and promote **fishing industry renewal**. My Government will continue to urge the Government of Canada to work with the Province on creative approaches to renewal and restructuring, but it will not wait for them to act.

In this year's Budget, it will announce measures related to **fisheries technology and innovation**. It is also working on other measures to clear the path to efficiency. At the same time, it will continue to engage our fish processors, fish harvesters, fish plant workers, fisheries union and fishing communities to identify innovative means to move the industry forward with minimal negative impact on those who rely on this sector for their livelihood. My Government believes the fishing industry is capable of sustaining families in communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador for generations to come, and will move forward with this objective clearly in view.

Innovation has been a real game-changer in the fishing industry. Farming fish has revolutionized the economies of rural communities once reliant on the wild fisheries, and that is clearly evident on our south



coast. By investing responsibly in biosecurity and environmental protection measures, My Government will ensure our **aquaculture** industry continues to grow safely and sustainably and leads the country in the years to come. It is committed to ensuring that the fishing industry of the future is a sustainable and vibrant economic driver for coastal Newfoundland and Labrador.

My Government has focused greater attention on the sustainability of our wild fisheries as well by launching the province's **fisheries science and stock assessment initiative**, supporting the new Centre for Fisheries Ecosystems Research and chartering the fisheries science and oceanographic research vessel the *RV Celtic Explorer* to examine stocks in Newfoundland and Labrador waters. It is learning valuable lessons to help better manage the fisheries sector on which so many of our communities and families depend. To complement these efforts and promote responsible and sustainable development, My Government will this year release its Coastal and Oceans Management Strategy.

There are also other opportunities in the very same regions where our fisheries have thrived. Take agriculture, a sector offering enormous promise that we have really only started to explore. Through a series of consultations, My Government has now developed a five-year **Agriculture and Agrifoods Action Plan** entitled "Our Farms, Our Food, Our Future" to address challenges and build on opportunities.

By tapping the power of research and development, we can further expand our opportunities to develop this sector. This year, My Government will be enhancing its **Agricultural Research and Development Program** to provide stronger research capacity at the government and institution level, to enable farmers and processors to undertake R&D work to grow their own operations and to give agricultural researchers enhanced educational opportunities.

New opportunities are also at hand for our forestry sector. Our province's **Centre for Forest Science and Innovation** is drawing together experts from Memorial University, the Government of Canada and the forest industry to identify ways to grow this sector while ensuring the best available science is used to manage the resource.

Since 2003, the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development has invested more than 60 million dollars in a wide range of economic development initiatives throughout our province, with some 71 per cent of that money targeting rural communities. We have witnessed the emergence of **regional clusters** – cooperative networks linking private enterprises, post-secondary institutions, economic development associations and communities around core industries built on regional strengths. My Government's public investments have drawn people to the table and, as a result, its 60 million dollars has levered close to a quarter of a billion dollars from other partners, quadrupling the value of its initial investment.

This is truly exciting, and precisely what it intended when it launched the **Comprehensive Regional Diversification Strategy** in 2005. My Government is working to establish new clusters across our province, drawing more and more people together in cooperative partnerships that diversify existing enterprises, establish new enterprises and give businesses the strength and confidence to test markets beyond our borders where new opportunities abound.

This **regional approach** is already transforming two important sectors of our economy: the tourism sector and the cultural sector, which collaborated most recently to turn the Cupids400 celebrations into an economic success story for the Baccalieu Trail region.

In 2009, My Government released its long-term **tourism vision** for Newfoundland and Labrador, entitled “Uncommon Potential”, which was developed in partnership with Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador. Surging forward on the strength of an amazing, award-winning marketing campaign, our tourism industry for the first time in our history has reached and exceeded the half-million mark for non-resident visitors in a single season – remarkable on the heels of the global recession. This year, working with the Provincial Tourism Board, My Government is focusing on broadening and enriching the range of tourism products and experiences.

Successes in our cultural industries are reinforcing this work in tourism. CBC’s incredible “Republic of

Doyle” is showcasing Newfoundland and Labrador in homes around the world and proving a product second to none can be produced right here at home. Congratulations to Allan Hawco and his gifted colleagues for proving that the potential for growth in cultural industries is open-ended, limited only by our imagination. Through initiatives in this year’s Budget, My Government will build on investments it has made under its cultural strategy to further support opportunity in the **arts and heritage sectors** in this province.

As exciting and rewarding as these traditional economic sectors are proving to be, many of our province’s most amazing success stories are in sectors on the leading edge of research and development. R&D is critical to capitalize on innovative opportunities in resource development that achieve economic growth for this province. My Government believes that continued support of research and development in areas where we have a competitive advantage or can realize development opportunities will have a long-term impact on the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador. Its Research & Development Corporation is leading the way to sustained prosperity by managing investments in, and support for, research and development. The RDC’s work builds on My Government’s **Innovation Strategy**, which has given local enterprises the tools to successfully commercialize new products and technologies – observation and monitoring technologies, marine simulation, e-learning, medical advances. **My Government is expanding**



its programs to enhance support for innovative activities throughout the province that can make our traditional industries more competitive, open doors for rural businesses, and propel our strategic advantage in innovation-driven sectors.

Fulfilling a commitment in the Province's Energy Plan, My Government will soon release a new **Climate Change Action Plan and Energy Efficiency Strategy** to lead the way for communities, businesses and citizens to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to a changing climate and improve energy efficiency. Its focus on sustainability has already helped to fuel the development of innovative eco-friendly technologies.

In one sector after another, we are building partnerships, selling all sorts of products, and showcasing Newfoundland and Labrador as a place to invest, a place to visit, a place to make a home. Through the delivery of targeted **export education, awareness and outreach initiatives**, My Government is helping Newfoundland and Labrador firms to recognize and seize the opportunities of globalization in high-growth countries like Brazil, India and China. It is doing more to explore emerging markets, to capitalize on the benefits of trade liberalization, and to help local enterprises make lucrative connections and plug directly into the channels of global supply chains. This business networking approach is transforming our approach to trade missions. My Government continues to promote and support new and growing trade relationships in longstanding priority markets such as the United States and the European Union.

It has just announced that it will take a more active role in negotiations to develop a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union, the world's largest single market. From green technologies to life sciences, from ocean technologies to commercial services, we are finding new ways to capture the interest and the business of investors in foreign markets. By seizing opportunities far beyond our shores, we are fueling growth in our own communities in enterprises large and small.

Growth requires not only the free movement of goods but also the free movement of people. To open even more doors to growth, My Government will follow through in implementing its new **air access strategy**.

In all of these ways and others, My Government is fueling the kind of new growth that is needed for young people to make homes in our communities, to stay here, to sink down roots, to raise their families and to reap the benefits of the work we are doing to raise Newfoundland and Labrador to the full measure of its magnificent potential.

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A Clear Path to Opportunity

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

My Government has no doubt that people are eager to rise to the challenge and seize the opportunities. As Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, we have long been celebrated for our skills, our ingenuity and our industrious work ethic. But some have faced barriers in their paths to employment and opportunity. My Government believes lowering barriers will clear paths to opportunity and enable more to succeed.

My Government understands that a family's path to opportunity may require access to **child care**. Parents in our province who would like to balance parenting with careers are not always able to do so because they cannot find child care spaces. Many have little choice but to put their careers on hold. My Government believes insufficient access to child care is not only a barrier to employment but also an obstacle to economic growth. My Government is determined to create the conditions that will enable families to grow and children to develop, conditions that will support people in fully participating in the workforce and contributing to the economic growth of our province. My Government is moving forward to develop a comprehensive child care strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador so more families will have opportunities to make balanced choices. In this year's Budget, My Government will announce a significant initiative in child care, with a focus on infant care, with the potential to increase child care spaces. The beauty

of this initiative is that it will benefit families not only in larger centres but also in rural regions where child care spaces are especially scarce.

Children will also benefit from age-appropriate programs and services before entering the K-12 school system. In this year's Budget, My Government will introduce measures to advance the implementation of its **early childhood learning** strategy, entitled "Learning from the Start", to give children a firm footing in their emotional, social and cognitive development.

My Government understands how important it is for our children to receive a solid education and the targeted support they need in our **K-12** system. In this year's Budget, it will build on its enormous investments in K-12 infrastructure and programming, and continue to ensure teaching is tailored to students' diverse needs. It will invest additional dollars in technological resources to support 21st century learning.

My Government understands that a person's path to opportunity may require assistance to access a **post-secondary education**. Building on the advances of the past seven years, it will extend its investments in infrastructure at College of the North Atlantic and Memorial University, and continue to ensure Newfoundland and Labrador leads the country in post-secondary affordability and accessibility. This year, it will also open the brand new College of the North Atlantic campus in Labrador West and the new



College extension at the Grand Falls-Windsor campus, and unveil the renovations at the College's Prince Philip Drive campus, following on the completion of improvements at the Seal Cove campus. My Government has been listening to students at the regular Ministerial Roundtables on Post-secondary Education, and is working together with students to realize the benefits that successive improvements in our education system are making to the quality of education they receive.

My Government understands that a person's path to opportunity may require access to **apprenticeships**. Through its White Paper on Public Post-secondary Education in 2005 and its Skills Task Force in 2007, My Government has opened wide the doors to rewarding careers in industrial projects large and small. It continues to collaborate with industry partners and is providing incentives so more graduates can work as apprentices and gain the hands-on experience they need to qualify for careers that can change their lives and our province's future.

My Government believes a person's path to opportunity should not be barred because she is a woman. Our Premier played a key role in securing **gender equity** agreements on major energy projects to help ensure women benefit fully while these projects are in high gear. My Government will enforce employment equity requirements for Hibernia South and Hebron, and will enforce similar equity requirements for new major mining projects and the Lower Churchill Project. It is going to do more

to enable women to advance in all sorts of non-traditional occupations, from engineering to skilled trades, from law enforcement to corrections, and in positions of leadership. As women share fully in these opportunities, Newfoundland and Labrador will benefit more fully from the unique skills and perspectives our province's women bring to the table.

My Government believes a person's path to opportunity should not be barred because of a disability. By finding creative ways to remove these barriers, we can help ensure persons with disabilities have access to equitable participation in the economic and social life of our province. Having engaged people in a well-attended series of public consultations, My Government will soon unveil its **Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities** and put it into action.

My Government believes a person's path to opportunity should not be barred by poverty. In 2006, it set in motion a strategy to reduce poverty in Newfoundland and Labrador by targeting some of its causes. Each year since then, it has adjusted the strategy's initiatives in a concerted effort to make as great a difference as possible with the resources committed, winning the attention and the praise of national antipoverty leaders in the process. Some of those initiatives are improving the standard of living of those who remain reliant on the social support network; others are lifting people out of poverty altogether; and others are preventing people from falling into poverty. My Government has just

completed a series of consultations and will soon release its next **Poverty Reduction Strategy action plan**, along with a series of new initiatives to help people slip the bonds of poverty and experience the freedom that self-reliance brings.

My Government believes a person's path to opportunity should not be barred by a lack of **affordable housing**. Few things are more fundamental than having a place to live. In consultation with many stakeholders, My Government unveiled a Provincial social housing plan, entitled "Secure Foundations", to help low-income families, individuals, seniors and others to access housing they can afford. As a follow-up to many major advances recommended by our community partners in the past few years, in this year's Budget it will announce further investments to make affordable housing even more accessible to many. Among those to benefit will be single-parent households led by women, persons with complex needs and low-income seniors, including those living in their own homes.

Measures we take right here right now can swing wide the doors to opportunity for many. Access to child care and early childhood learning; improvements in K-12 and post-secondary education; access to apprenticeships; greater career access for women; measures to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities; actions to fight poverty; and access to affordable housing – all of these initiatives place self-reliance within reach of many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who might not achieve it otherwise. **My Government's priority this year is to enable individuals and families to seize opportunities that will have very real and lasting benefits.**

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Security for the Vulnerable

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

An individual cannot focus on seizing opportunities to grow when under threat of harm. In any society, if citizens are to be truly free, measures must be taken to protect the vulnerable from those who would do them harm. Preventing violence against women and other vulnerable populations in every region of Newfoundland and Labrador remains among My Government's highest priorities. It will move forward this year to evaluate its six-year **Violence Prevention Initiative** and develop priorities for a new action plan in 2012, building on the strengths of the current plan.

No population is more vulnerable to violence than **children and youth**. In 2009, My Government established the new Department of Child, Youth and Family Services – a department focused principally on the safety and well-being of children and youth. During the past year, the new department has begun to lay a strong foundation to address the systemic issues in child protection services. As child protection social workers move from the four regional health authorities to the new department in the coming year, their work will be transformed by the application of a new organizational model that will work towards establishing manageable caseloads and greater supports for frontline staff in fulfilling their responsibilities. The department will employ a new unit at the Stephenville campus of College of the North Atlantic to provide mandatory child protection

training for social workers and supervisors and a consistent targeted approach to skills development across all program areas. My Government is determined to create the best-possible child protection system and is therefore moving forward with a clear focus and constant vigilance to ensure we get it right.

Violence often has its genesis in childhood, and intervening early may prevent a lifetime of suffering. My Government will focus on improving its **Safe and Caring Schools** policy and procedures to promote respect and cultivate self-esteem among our students.

In this year's Budget, it will also build on initiatives taken to date to combat **child exploitation**.

The Department of Justice is making changes to the legislation governing our province's corrections system to make it contemporary and comprehensive. The new **Correctional Services Act** will replace the *Prisons Act* and the *Adult Corrections Act*. These legislative changes will be taken in the best interest of our corrections staff and inmates and are intended to improve the delivery of correctional services in our province.

Other measures related to law enforcement and corrections will be announced in conjunction with the tabling of this year's Budget and will build on the measures we have taken in the past seven years. Among those is support for Transition Houses, where women and children in fear of their safety can find refuge. When it is functioning optimally, our justice

system takes those who pose a danger away from those they mean to harm, and sends an unmistakable signal that people who harm or threaten others will be punished.

Intolerance of violence is important for us all, young and old, to embrace and communicate in our homes, workplaces, schools and communities. **Living free from the fear of violence is vital to the achievement of true self-reliance.**

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Shared Responsibility for Health

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

The first principle in promoting health is personal responsibility. One of the most effective things a person can do to promote greater self-reliance is to take individual responsibility for choosing a healthier lifestyle – to exercise more, to eat healthier, to quit smoking, and to make other sound choices. **Prevention** has the added benefit of reducing the cost of health care delivery, but its primary benefit is the improved quality of life an individual enjoys. Unhealthy diet and physical inactivity are linked to the relatively high rate of diabetes and the prevalence of certain chronic disease risk factors such as obesity in Newfoundland and Labrador communities.

This year, in collaboration with community partners across the province, My Government will build on the measures already taken under the **recreation and sport strategy** to better integrate physical activity into the daily lives of people of all ages. A vital, vigorous and engaged population is the wellspring of productivity.

As My Government follows through in implementing its provincial wellness plan and its healthy aging strategy, it is also turning its attention to chronic diseases. Arthritis, cancer, chronic pain, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, lung disease – unlike many acute illnesses that can be treated and cured – are chronic conditions which can remain with people for the rest

of their lives. My Government will move forward this year to release a new **Chronic Disease Management Strategy** which will include a comprehensive and collaborative approach to chronic disease prevention and management throughout the province.

My Government recently launched a new **Cancer Control Policy** Framework that aims to reduce the incidence and impact of cancer and to improve the quality of life of those living with cancer in Newfoundland and Labrador. This strategy calls for measures to diagnose and treat cancer sooner. To that end, My Government will work with stakeholders throughout the province to identify opportunities to enhance screening programs.

When concerns about cancer diagnostic testing errors extending back to 1997 were brought to light in 2007, My Government moved swiftly to appoint the Cameron Commission of Inquiry to determine what went wrong and what needed changing. My Government also moved swiftly to implement Justice Cameron's recommendations when they were received in 2009. Complementing her report were the recommendations of the Task Force on Adverse Health Events. In light of the lessons of the Cameron Report, My Government this year will roll out a **new adverse events reporting system** to ensure all such events are properly reported and properly managed within our health care system.

Early diagnosis and treatment require timely access to health care professionals and the various services they provide, from CT scans and MRIs to surgery.

Delivering health care to a population as dispersed as ours presents challenges, but My Government has proven these challenges can be overcome. For example, since 2003, the number of sites where individuals can access dialysis services has gone from seven to 14 – a doubling of sites. In the year ahead, My Government will continue to ensure all residents of our province have access to quality health services as close to home as possible through investments to purchase new equipment and maintain existing **health care infrastructure** that means so much to the people who need it.

My Government has also invested in health care professionals, successfully negotiating agreements which have not only resulted in fair compensation for those whose expertise we rely on, but also improved the prospects of **recruitment and retention** efforts. It is by continuing to focus on recruiting and retaining the health care professionals we need that we will continue to reduce wait times.

Essential to building a stronger health care system is the **strengthening of relationships among health care professionals** across all regions and disciplines. Our health care system functions best when it functions effectively as a partnership – an integrated network, with each element supporting and being supported by the others. My Government will ensure the Regional Health Authorities as well as its own officials identify and seize every opportunity to build partnerships. Many of the most effective measures to shorten wait times are essentially partnership-driven.

Such measures can reduce not only wasted time but also wasted resources, and support better health outcomes.

In this year's Budget, My Government will also build on initiatives announced last year to strengthen **mental health and addictions services** in the province, which included work on a new residential treatment centre in St. John's for children and youth with complex mental health needs; a new residential treatment centre in Grand Falls-Windsor for children and youth with addictions; an adult residential addictions treatment centre in Harbour Grace; enhanced child psychiatry services at the Janeway Hospital; and new community-based projects focusing on mental health and addictions issues.

As people age, needs change. Seniors generally require a greater level of care. Still, like most other Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, they would like to maintain as much independence as their health and circumstances will allow. By emphasizing a progressive continuum of care, we can enable many seniors to enjoy a greater degree of autonomy well into their golden years. Last summer, My Government undertook extensive consultations throughout the province to engage the public and other stakeholders in a discussion on the future of our **long-term care and community support services** system. During August and September, twenty public consultations were held in nineteen communities throughout the province to allow input and dialogue. This process has enabled My Government to establish priorities

and identify strategic investments that it will continue to make this year to make the system more responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people the system is designed to serve.

Closely related to health care are the approaches we take to occupational safety and emergency response. The tragedy of **Cougar Flight 491** two years ago remains fresh in our minds and continues to weigh heavily on our hearts. Justice Wells issued recommendations last year to improve the safety of workers traveling offshore, and My Government has accepted all of them, including Recommendation 29, which calls on the Province and Ottawa to agree to establish a new Independent Safety Agency for our offshore. In the coming year, My Government, in concert with the Federal Government, will also bring forward amendments to the **Atlantic Accord Act** to implement a new Occupational Health and Safety regime for the offshore.

Public safety also arises as an issue whenever natural disasters strike. When **Hurricane Igor** struck in September, My Government's officials, municipal governments, volunteer fire departments, nongovernmental organizations such as the Salvation Army and Canadian Red Cross, area businesses and construction companies, local residents and many young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and their colleagues in the Canadian Forces worked side-by-side in many regions of our province to rescue people from danger and to bring help and supplies to people in need. Tragically, one man lost his life, but how much

worse the suffering would have been without the concerted efforts of all who stepped forward to make a difference. The worst of circumstances brought out the best in people, as so often in this province it does, and we have learned valuable lessons that we can apply in years to come. We celebrate the efforts of our elected municipal leaders, their officials and community volunteers who helped to mitigate the damage to municipal infrastructure caused by this unprecedented storm. Their leadership is ensuring that appropriate rebuilding is continuing to take place. We also acknowledge the many acts of kindness of people who reached out to their neighbours to ease their pain.

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New Ways to Work Together

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

Is there any clearer demonstration of the power of working together?

As our Premier stated in her first address in this House as Premier on the 6th of December: “We as a team are blessed to have surrounding and supporting us many thousands of people in communities throughout the province who share our commitment to a brighter future for Newfoundland and Labrador, and are willing to work with us cooperatively to advance us toward our goals, region by region, initiative by initiative.”

- On the 22nd of February, the people living in the communities of Fogo, Joe Batt’s Arm-Barr’d Islands-Shoal Bay, Tilting, Seldom-Little Seldom, Stag Harbour, Island Harbour and Deep Bay and the centre of the island participated in the very first election in our history for the new Town of Fogo Island. Some thought the divisions were too great for that day to ever come, but the goodwill and practicality of the people of Fogo Island prevailed, and they have set a shining example for all of us.
- On the Southern Shore, the communities of St. Shott’s, Trepassey, Biscay Bay, Portugal Cove South, Renews-Cappahayden, Fermeuse, Port Kirwan, Aquaforte, Ferryland, Calvert,

Cape Broyle, Admiral's Cove, Brigus South, Burnt Cove-St. Michaels-Bauline East, Tors Cove, Mobile, Witless Bay and Bay Bulls have combined forces on a contract to collect and transport solid waste to Robin Hood Bay, allowing them to decommission their local dumpsites.

- On the Bonavista Peninsula, the communities of Lethbridge, Morley's Siding, Brooklyn, Charleston, Jamestown, Portland, Winter Brook and Sweet Bay have formed a local service district to deliver fire services to their residents.
- On the shores of Conception Bay, Clarke's Beach, Cupids, Makinsons, North River and South River have created the Bay de Grave Regional Fire Service to serve all the residents of these communities as one.
- Trinity Bay North and Little Catalina have entered willingly into an annexation agreement to create a single municipal council to deliver municipal services.

Each of these initiatives is unique in its own way, but all of them are improving services for residents and showing the difference cooperation can make. These are win-win situations in which nothing of value is sacrificed and much of value is gained. **Regional cooperation** will enable us to make great gains in addressing waste management challenges, providing

safe fire fighting services, securing safe drinking water systems and attracting the kind of investment that will keep our regions thriving in the decades ahead. Regional cooperation is at the heart of self-reliance.

"Neighbours helping neighbours" is the approach that enabled Newfoundland and Labrador's communities to survive for centuries against the greatest of odds in the toughest of circumstances. We have moved far beyond the toughest of circumstances, but the legacy of sharing and **volunteering** is a birthright that endures, and we wear it with pride. My Government's Volunteer and Non-Profit Secretariat held a Community Priorities Summit a year ago to identify new ways to foster resiliency in our communities and to seize the opportunities ahead. Emerging from that Summit is a Roadmap charting a course forward to new opportunities for sharing and celebrating who we are. A second summit will be held in a year to measure progress and refine priorities. To bolster the spirit of civic involvement in the coming year, My Government will continue to build on the very successful "Who Cares?" awareness campaign and the URock Awards and, with the Department of Education, will also honour a deserving student in each of our province's secondary schools with the High School Medal to celebrate the difference a student can make by volunteering.

Cooperation is also at the heart of the **Strategic Partnership** that has linked labour, business and government in our province to advance the economic and social interests of Newfoundland and

Labrador. Calling this process unparalleled anywhere else in North America, the Conference Board of Canada has lauded this partnership for developing cohesive policies and practices and building strong relationships.

Our Premier is wholly committed to **building teams** of people around her, embracing all regions, all sectors and all points of view that need to be considered as we map out the challenges we need to address. Cooperation is at the heart of our Premier's approach.

Cooperation should never be mistaken for capitulation. **My Government's first priority is the best interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.** The self-confidence and pride My Government has inspired among Newfoundlanders and Labradorians since 2003 is fueled by our collective determination to master our own destiny. On that, our Premier and My Government shall never compromise. At the same time, we also believe we can achieve more by pulling together than by pushing apart.

As My Government cooperates in building partnerships to achieve greater gains within the province, so too it is determined to **collaborate more effectively regionally and nationally within Confederation.** This approach is best demonstrated in Atlantic Canada by the power of joint action to promote green energy development. We believe the Government of Canada has a golden opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to national leadership

in green energy generation and integration by supporting the Lower Churchill development. To the Prime Minister, we extend this invitation to build and encourage him to invest in our power to grow.

As our new Premier stated in her inaugural speech, “[Changes of consequence] happen when **good people resolve to make things better**”. My Government has provided the conditions on which good people can build. It has reduced the public debt by a third, demonstrated an unwavering commitment to fiscal responsibility and earned the confidence of the bond markets in the process. It has made unprecedented investments in public infrastructure and fostered industrial growth. It has improved public services, cut red tape by a quarter and reduced personal income taxes to among the lowest levels in the region. It has provided a wide range of instruments and initiatives to help employers grow and employees get hired. It has cleared paths to opportunity, safeguarded the vulnerable and strengthened our health care system. This secure foundation is an invitation to individuals, businesses and communities throughout our province to join My Government in building a future of prosperity and self-reliance unprecedented in our history – a future truly befitting our incredible potential as people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

Estimates of expenditure will be laid before you in due course and you will be asked to grant supply to Her Majesty.

I invoke God's blessing upon you as you commence this new Session.

May Divine Providence guide you in your deliberation.