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Speaker: Honourable Ross Wiseman, MHA

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Today, before we start the proceedings, I want to acknowledge some special guests in the gallery. Members may recall back in February we had the fiftieth Youth Parliament. Today we are joined by the Speaker of that Youth Parliament, Jamie Brace, together with the Deputy Speaker, Natalie Martin, and the Minister of Natural Resources, Alex Mason.

Welcome to our gallery.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: We will ask you to critique our performance today based on your experience back in February.

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we will have members' statements from the Member for the District of The Straits – White Bay North; the Member for the District of St. John's East; the Member for the District of St. John's South; the Member for the District of Burgeo – La Poile; the Member for the District of Cape St. Francis; and the Member for the District of Bonavista North.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to recognize two individuals who are part of the Grenfell legacy. Dr. William Fitzgerald and his wife Dr. Mary O'Keefe retired from Labrador-Grenfell Health in January after each practicing more than forty-five years within their field.

They met in medical school. Fitzgerald said: I wonder who would want to go North? O'Keefe, without hesitation said: I do. Four children and a home in St. Anthony was the beginning of

their unconditional service to the people of the North.

Both are highly-respected and admired for their work and community involvement. Dr. O'Keefe opened the only private practice in St. Anthony to expand the continuum of care, made regular visits to Labrador, and worked in pediatrics. Dr. Fitzgerald became the surgeon-in-chief at Curtis Memorial, served as President of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, and received the Order of Canada for his colorectal cancer-screening work.

Fitzgerald, though, seems most proud of his teaching medical students, residents and interns from Memorial and around the world, as he stated his love for teaching the next generation of physicians at St. Anthony.

I ask all members to congratulate Dr. Fitzgerald and Dr. O'Keefe on behalf of the Province and all the people they served.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations – and I hope those of every hon. member here – to an organization of which many of us are alumni.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Parliament wrapped up its fiftieth session here, in this House of Assembly on Saturday, February 8, this year. I can tell you it was, as usual, an excellent session.

Youth Parliament exists to educate youth about parliamentary debate, and to give them a chance to practice it. Mr. Speaker, anyone who sat in on one of those debates could tell you how well they do. At times, and I do not mind saying it, they could teach us something about parliamentary debate.

This year's Speaker, Mr. Jamie Brace, presided over lively and informed debate on electrical supply, fair elections, national military service and the Family Violence Intervention Court, which my colleague from St. John's Centre was gratified to see supported.

A lifetime achievement award was given to Simon Lono and five people including, I humbly point out myself, were named as Youth Parliament Senators.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Parliament on fifty great years, and to wish them many more to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to recognize the Newfoundland and Labrador thirteen and under female East Division Volleyball Champions for 2014.

The team is from St. John Bosco in Shea Heights. The Coach is Brittany Collins. The assistant coaches are Emma Stansbury and Emily Collins. The team members are: Ashley Collins, Lauryn English, Ilana Earles, Lindsey Benson, Madison Mercer, Brooklyn Bambrick, Gloria Walsh, Kaitlyn Breen, Brianna Hatcher, Winnie Druken, Faith Barnes, Hayley Earles, Mackenzie Power, Holly Cantwell and Toni Marie Vinnicombe.

I would like to congratulate the team on bringing home the gold. I ask all members to recognize the hard work and team spirit of the St. John Bosco volleyball team.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I rise today to recognize and congratulate Susanne Ingram on her retirement as Executive Director of the Gateway Status of Women Council.

In 1984, Susanne became the first co-ordinator of the women's centre, and held this position until 1990. From 1990 to 2000, she was a volunteer board member. In 2000, she returned as Executive Director.

Susanne has been a strong advocate, not only for women's rights but also for improved health care for our region. She volunteered with the Western Regional Health Board, Port aux Basques and Area Chamber of Commerce, Peaceful Communities Committee, Violence Prevention Initiative, sub-committees of the Town of Channel-Port aux Basques, and St. Paul's Church.

Susanne was honoured by her colleagues at the thirty-second Annual Bread and Roses Dinner on March 2. She ended the evening with a moving and inspirational review of her years at the centre. She said, "What a journey this has been, and what awesome people I have had the privilege and honour to work with."

Susanne and her husband, Hubert, have two children and three grandchildren. Since retiring, Susanne joined St. Paul's Church Choir and is enjoying time with her family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join with me in thanking Susanne Ingram for her selfless service to the women of our area and to wish her every happiness on her retirement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize a young man from my community of Flat Rock. Christopher Coady is a Grade 9 student at Holy Trinity. He is currently on the principal's list with a ninety-four average.

Christopher is fourteen years old and is currently the Atlantic Karate Champion in both the Kata and Kumite divisions. In January 2014, he competed in his first Karate National Championship where he took home gold in the Kumite division – and that is the fighting division.

Christopher is the first from this Province to win a gold medal at the Karate Canada National Championships. Christopher will now represent Canada in the Junior Pan American Championships in Lima, Peru in August as a member of the Junior National team. After that, he will compete in the Junior International Karate Championships in Las Vegas at the US Karate Open Championships.

Christopher has been a member of the Avalon Karate Club in Torbay since the age of six. We are very proud of this young man for his dedication and the time that he devotes to Karate, while maintaining such a high level of education. He is a role model to the young people in the area.

I want to ask all hon. members to join with me in wishing Christopher all the best in his future competitions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista North.

MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the ability today to stand here to recognize the accomplishments of the staff at Elaine's Grocery Store in Musgrave Harbour. Aside from their friendly greetings and efficient service to their customers

at Elaine's, the ladies have a passion for helping the local volunteer fire department.

In 2011, Elaine's initiated a weekly 50-50 draw among customers and residents at the convenience/grocery store. In a small community of approximately 1,000, and three short years later, Elaine's Grocery presented the Musgrave Harbour Volunteer Fire Department cheques to the value of \$65,000.

It may not seem like a major activity, but at Elaine's, Jacinta, Bernadine, Brittany, Judy, Verna, Doris, and April collectively have made a great impact on the volunteer department. Actions like these regularly go unnoticed, but they need to be recognized and they need to be applauded.

This is a phenomenal act of kindness that enables the purchase of equipment and necessary training for the very active local volunteer brigade. At their annual banquet, Chief Grant Pinsent regularly compliments these donors for their participation and loyal support.

I request that all hon. members join Chief Grant and I in saluting Elaine's Grocery and other such supportive groups around our Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this hon. House to provide an update on how the provincial government is supporting the communities and employees impacted by the idling of the Wabush Scully Iron Ore Mine in Labrador West.

When a town loses a major employer, it can have far-reaching and long-lasting impact on workers, families, and the whole community. It is unfortunate that Cliffs Natural Resources has idled its mining and processing operations in Wabush. I am certain it was a decision the company did not make lightly. Recognizing that people want to stay and work in Labrador, this government immediately began developing a co-ordinated and proactive approach to ease the impact on the region.

Premier Marshall, and many of our Cabinet colleagues, and I were on the ground in Labrador West in the days following the announcement. The MHA for the area and the Minister for Transportation and Works has been on the ground continually, Mr. Speaker, meeting with area mayors, unions, and community groups to offer our support and see how the provincial government could assist.

Additional staff from the Department of Advanced Education and Skills have been in the region offering information sessions and meeting individually with displaced workers to discuss supports and training options. A full employee and skills assessment inventory of the impacted workers has been compiled. This information is being used to tailor the services and support to the specific needs of the workers. Staff have also met with other employers to discuss current and planned hiring activities so individuals can be matched to new positions.

The College of the North Atlantic is fully engaged, and their President and Dean of Industrial Trades have been in Labrador West to assess needs and set out a plan to add or modify programs to support workers in their transition to new employment. I am pleased to report that last week seven displaced workers started training in the field of high-pressure welding. Other workers have already found jobs, and some have received wage subsidies to help complete apprenticeships and become journeypersons.

Mr. Speaker, Labrador remains a region of tremendous potential and we are optimistic that displaced mine workers will find other

employment. I have asked staff to ensure that the former Cliffs employees receive a timely response to retraining options, skills transfer, and funding availability. We remain committed to doing everything we can to help people get the training and assistance they need to find a job and establish successful careers in Lab West, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Mr. Speaker, the sudden idling of Wabush Mines by Cleveland Cliffs is a significant blow to Labrador West. Sixty per cent of the workers at Wabush Mines have less than ten years seniority, a very young workforce. This young workforce consists of people from all regions of Labrador who have moved here with their families to start a new career – many from my district, I might add.

Member of our caucus and staff, including our leader, visited Labrador West and met with both towns, unions, company officials and the Chamber of Commerce. We are pleased to see that IOC has made some moves to hire some of the displaced employees, but it will take more than IOC to compensate for the loss of over 400 unionized and non-unionized workers. Tradespeople need help in getting their block training in Lab West. It is great to see the College of the North Atlantic have stepped up to the plate.

Mr. Speaker, this government must ensure that the Wabush Mines asset remains intact and attractive to any new potential owner. The economy of Labrador West has gone through a significant growth stage causing housing and other costs to skyrocket. We must all ensure that nobody falls through the cracks and are left behind because of this setback.

The bridging period between the idling of Wabush Mines and the opening of any new

mining development will be crucial to retain the skilled workforce that is being affected. Training and skills upgrading is very important to ensure that this workforce is available for any new developer or, hopefully, a new owner of Wabush Mines.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I, too, thank the minister of an advance copy of his statement. I note the only numbers offered by the minister were for seven hires in high pressure welding. I am glad for those workers and their families, but they represent a minuscule percentage of the almost 500 workers who are laid off.

The minister's statement does not reflect the anguish families in Wabush are going through, which was expressed to me when I visited there last month. I certainly hope that all of the displaced workers find jobs in Labrador West, as they own homes in the area. If they are forced to move, they will be faced with selling homes on which they hold huge mortgages in an area with low demand because of the closing of the mine.

Mr. Speaker, I thank him for the statement, but his statement brings small comfort.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FRENCH: Mr. Speaker, Special Olympics Canada is dedicated to enriching the lives of Canadians with an intellectual disability through sport. For more than forty years, they have delivered a very important message – society is

enriched when everyone's talents and gifts are recognized.

In March 2016, Corner Brook will host the Special Olympics National Games – a first for our Province. The games will involve 1,000 athletes, coaches, and mission staff participating in seven sporting competitions: snowshoeing, curling, floor hockey, figure skating, speed skating, alpine skiing, and cross-country skiing. This is truly a great opportunity for our Province and our special Olympians, Mr. Speaker, and I was absolutely delighted to announce recently in Corner Brook that our government is providing \$500,000 to support these games in 2016.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FRENCH: Currently, there are more than 34,000 Special Olympic athletes in Canada. In our Province, Special Olympics Newfoundland and Labrador serves more than 600 people with intellectual disabilities and provides them with the opportunity to engage in many sporting activities that include provincial and Canada Games. Our government is proud to provide annual funding to help support Special Olympic programs and services. Their mandate helps us achieve one of the key objectives of our recreation and sport strategy, *Active, Healthy Newfoundland and Labrador* – to increase opportunities for participation, particularly for people in under-represented groups.

The Special Olympics organization encourages people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences to come together and share goals that foster personal growth. It also provides athletes and their families, coaches, volunteers, community groups, and corporate sponsors with a wonderful sense of involvement and achievement. This sense of achievement shines through on the face of every participant, from the first-time athlete participating in the roll of a bowling ball, to the seasoned athlete representing Canada at the Special Olympics International Games.

Mr. Speaker, I recently read a quote from Special Olympics Canada that has stayed with me, "Special Olympics is humanity's greatest

classroom, where lessons of ability, acceptance and inclusion are taught on the fields of competition by our greatest teachers – the athletes.”

I know I echo the sentiments of everyone here today when I say we are looking forward to the Special Olympics Canada Winter Games in Corner Brook in 2016.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. I, too, was at the announcement and I welcome the involvement of the government. I know the Member for Humber West is heavily involved also and I know the Premier is very enthused about having the Special Olympics come to Corner Brook in 2016. It is a great event for Special Olympians.

Mr. Speaker, in my past volunteer work, I was Chair of the Spinal Cord Injury Canada. One of the big things that we had as a group was inclusion. With the Special Olympics, this allows everybody to be included no matter what level. It brings great pride to a lot of the families, a lot of the athletes, and a lot of the coaches and trainers.

Congratulations to all the volunteers who are helping to put off this event in 2016. It is a huge endeavour. Congratulations to a lot of corporate sponsors that are out now, Mr. Speaker, and are jumping on to bring this in. I say congratulations to the government; it is money well spent. It is money that we are going to improve our society on.

I am speaking on behalf of the Member for Humber East and the Premier that we welcome all athletes from all across Canada to the Corner Brook, Bay of Islands region, Mr. Speaker. We

look to put off the best Special Olympic Games ever.

As a group, we all come together at certain times. This is one of the times that we support the government. We think it is great. I say congratulations and do whatever we can to make sure that these are prosperous and very enjoyable games, mainly for the athletes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. It is so wonderful that Corner Brook, in fact my town of birth, will host the national Special Olympics. I fully support the financial support of this great event that involves the whole community.

The sense of achievement and inclusion gained from sports carries over into other aspects of these participants' lives. People with intellectual disabilities also need adequate government support to live in decent, independent housing with appropriate supports, and have the opportunity to contribute to society through real, meaningful work opportunities.

I thank in advance all the sponsors and volunteers in Corner Brook and throughout the Province who are all working so hard to help make these games a success. The Special Olympics – bravo to all the athletes as they train in anticipation. I can hardly wait.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House of Assembly today to announce that *Respect Aging*,

a new training program under the provincial government's Violence Prevention Initiative, was unveiled at a recent provincial stakeholders' conference on the topic of prevention and violence against older persons.

Over the last four years, the Women's Policy Office, through the Violence Prevention Initiative, has worked in partnership with the Office for Aging and Seniors, a Provincial Advisory Committee of government and community representatives, and an Advisory Committee of Aboriginal governments and organizations to develop, deliver, and evaluate training and education materials to assist in the recognition, prevention, and intervention of violence against older persons in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, the *Respect Aging* training program is a comprehensive resource package for those who work in the area of violence prevention against older persons. Resources include a sixteen-module education participant manual, an accompanying trainer's guide, as well as a second trainer's guide for law enforcement agencies. PowerPoint slides have also been developed to accompany both training guides, and all resources are featured on a new Web site. These resources are available to those who work with older persons, as well as anyone in the public interested in the prevention of violence against older persons.

Since October 2013, the Violence Prevention Initiative has held train-the-trainer sessions with staff of the four regional health authorities, the RNC, and the RCMP in preparation for the unveiling of the program. A session for the Violence Prevention Initiative partners and stakeholders was held on Wednesday, March 19, after the program was unveiled. Additional training sessions are taking place with community partners and other audiences in the coming year.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage everyone to visit www.respectaging.ca to learn more about our new training program, and how each and every one of us can play a part in preventing all forms of violence against older persons. Older

persons, and all vulnerable populations in our society, Mr. Speaker, deserve to live in violence-free and safe communities.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. Seniors face their own vulnerabilities to violence. As in all populations, isolation plays a role in making one more vulnerable to being taken advantage of. We have read stories about seniors suffering financial abuse, as well as other types of abuse from strangers as well as those known to them. Helping stakeholders understand the particular vulnerabilities to violence that seniors face is key to preventing or at least mitigating violence.

I would go one step further than the minister, Mr. Speaker, in her statement that all vulnerable populations deserve to live in violence-free and safe communities. I feel everyone should be able to live without fear of violence.

Phase I of the Violence Prevention Initiative has concluded. When we asked for a copy of the evaluation report, we were denied, citing the infamous Bill 29. In this self-proclaimed, open and transparent government that committed to making every report public within thirty days of receiving it, we can only hope that this report will be made available in its entirety.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. Violence against the elderly is a

growing problem, especially among older women. I welcome the new training program, Respect Aging. It encourages people to report elder abuse to a social worker; however, most social workers are overworked with huge caseloads, and many communities do not even have social workers. In order for this program to work, the resources must be put in place in order to support it; otherwise it is just words on paper.

This government has been negligent in attending to some of the key determinants for health and safety for the elderly, especially affordable housing and a publicly funded and managed home care program. Without these, our elderly are increasingly vulnerable and at risk.

I thank the community committee, the Women's Policy, the Office for Aging, and all those departments that were involved in coming up with this strategy, and I thank them for their work and their dedication on this initiative.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Newfoundland Power's report on DarkNL, or the power outages in January, says that 80 per cent of the blackouts were caused by major electrical system disruptions, 15 per cent by rotating outages, and only 5 per cent due to the blizzard or stormy weather. That indicates that 95 per cent of the power outages during DarkNL were caused because of problems with Nalcor's system.

I ask the Premier: Do you agree that 95 per cent of DarkNL was Nalcor's fault and not caused by the stormy or cold weather in January?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, when we throw the switch, we expect the lights to come on. We expect the power to be there. Mr. Speaker, that responsibility, a huge responsibility, rests with Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, Newfoundland Power, and the Public Utilities Board.

It is a tremendous responsibility to manage 15,000 kilometres of transmission line, hydro assets which include hydro, thermal, wind, diesel, gas, Mr. Speaker, and there are times when things go wrong like it did in January. It was very unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, it was a difficult time, but we all know that all of that is under clear review from the Public Utilities Board. Our government clearly supports that, Mr. Speaker.

There are reports being done and compiled by Newfoundland Power, Newfoundland Hydro, and the PUB. All of that will be looked at, and we look forward to the report, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Nalcor and government has said that unprecedented power demands were to blame for DarkNL; however, Newfoundland Power's report says that the power demand was only 2.2 per cent higher than their peak forecast during and commencing of the rolling blackouts.

I ask the Premier: Why did you leave people of Newfoundland and Labrador to believe that DarkNL was caused by unprecedented power demand when clearly this was not the case?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, it was obviously a difficult time in January and we are having a close look at that situation and certainly look forward to the PUB report. I think it has also been clear back in January, as it is clear with the recent reports that highlight there are a number of events, in many cases unrelated events, that contributed to this. Around all of that there are a lot of questions. We have questions. Once again, we are firmly committed to working with the PUB with what is needed.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, it is not about politics. This is about ensuring the people of the Province, the entire Province, has confidence in our utility system that it is reliable and dependable. That is what we are working towards.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I agree with the minister, it is not about politics, but 2.2 per cent is not an unprecedented amount. That is not a large enough increase to create this problem back in January. Part of the problem, however, started over a year ago in January 2013, and throughout the year Nalcor continued to miss deadlines for repairs to Holyrood, to Stephenville, and to Hardwoods.

I ask the Premier: When were you made aware that Nalcor was missing these deadlines and that these facilities were not available?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, the operations and the management of our utility system in this Province rests with Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, Newfoundland Power, and the Public Utilities Board. A series of events and an

unfortunate event in January, but again, I can only reiterate the fact that the entire system is under review. These kinds of questions are going to be asked, issues around scheduling and maintenance, and certainly issues around capital investments. Historically, where decisions made around capital investments, whether it comes from Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro or Newfoundland Power, and the decisions made around that as reflected by the Public Utilities Board, what kind of impact all of that may have, and recognizing fully our challenge here is to ensure we have reliability and balance that with the cost, which obviously the people of Newfoundland and Labrador have to pay for.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Clearly, in the press conference yesterday, Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro actually said that communications was a problem. Now, maybe I did not articulate the question well enough; maybe the minister did not hear it.

The question was: Were you aware that Nalcor was missing the deadlines on repairs to those facilities and that they were not going to be available? It is a clear question, I ask the minister.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: A clear answer, Mr. Speaker. The responsibility for the management, administration, certainly management of assets and decisions around utilities in this Province rests with Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, it rests with Newfoundland Power, and it rests with the Public Utilities Board.

The hon. member references communications. We are delighted with the reports that came out yesterday in the sense that the work has been done. They are taking a close at it. They recognize things need to change. There are recommendations coming out of that. We are looking forward to all of that information being collected by the Public Utilities Board and providing the Province, government, and particularly the key players in our utility system with some direction for the future so we can ensure that we have reliability and we have confidence in our utility system in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: The only thing that is clear about it is that the minister was not aware of it obviously.

Mr. Speaker, the Province-wide review of the ambulance system was completed by government last August, yet we know there have been no significant improvements to ambulance operations or the level of care that has been provided. Today we saw a group of paramedics gather on the steps of Confederation Building. We are hearing on a daily basis from ambulance operators and paramedics.

I ask the Premier: When are you finally going to take the concerns of ambulance operators seriously?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we always take the concerns of anyone who is involved in health care very, very seriously. That is especially true for ambulance operators as a result of the provincial Ambulance Review that had been done.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the process of that review we certainly learned of many deficiencies within our current ambulance program. We did consultations after the review was submitted to us in October, and we met with stakeholders to ensure they were happy with the recommendations that were coming forward. The result of that consultation was actually very positive.

I think ambulance operators, clients, and people who work in various departments of hospitals reported to us that they were encouraged by the recommendations that came forward. Our next process is to put in place and implementing –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will let you know how serious you are taking this; it is two years without a contract. Last year there were 462 red alerts at Eastern Health. That means 462 times that ambulances were not immediately available to respond to an emergency. More red alerts mean that response times will no longer be available for emergency services, and given in an emergency time is of the essence.

I ask the Premier: When will you take clear actions to eliminate red alerts?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, last year at Eastern Health they responded to 22,573 calls – or there were 22,573 calls. Ninety-eight per cent of those calls were answered immediately, which would indicate that for about 2 per cent of the calls they were not able to respond immediately.

Mr. Speaker, we need to understand that in terms of red alerts there are two classes. There is a red alert 1, which indicates a call has come in and no ambulance is available. There is a red alert 2, which indicates there has not been any call for an ambulance during that period when an ambulance may not have been there.

Mr. Speaker, what we do know is, and we have looked at the last two months – I hope I get an opportunity to continue on then.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

This morning's protest was about red alerts in Eastern Health, but no one is talking about the red alerts in the rural parts of the Province. If government's proposed new model goes through for private and community operators this will increase two and three-hour red alerts that already exist to even longer times.

I ask the minister: Are you willing to put patients in rural parts of the Province at greater risk with your proposal?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, just to continue on. What we know about the red alert 1 situation – which is the one I would be more concerned about when there is not an ambulance available – is that 80 per cent of the impact of those red alerts had to do with routine transfers; which begs the question that Fitch, when they did their review, posed to us as to the efficiency and how we are using ambulances in the Province, not just in Eastern Health but right throughout the Province, Mr. Speaker.

If we are finding that the majority of ambulance calls in that particular period related to non-emergent, non-urgent routine transfers, then we need to ask the question if we really ought to be using ambulances for transfers at all. That is what we are currently exploring, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I will ask the same question, because I obviously did not get an answer to that one.

If your proposed new model goes through, two and three-hour red alerts, emergency red alerts in rural areas are going to get even longer.

I ask you again: Are you willing to put patients in rural parts of the Province at greater risk with your proposed changes?

MR. SPEAKER: I ask the member to direct his question to the Chair the next time, please.

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the business of operating ambulances is a very complex issue and we are certainly not willing to put anyone at risk, certainly not somebody who requires the services of an ambulance. What we need to examine, however, is whether or not we are using ambulances properly. That is what Fitch & Associates exposed as they did the work around the Province.

Many times, Mr. Speaker, we have people being transferred as a result of needing dialysis. They are sitting up in the front seat of the ambulance, Mr. Speaker, to come for a dialysis treatment in certain areas. What we are examining now is

how we can better use ambulances throughout the Province.

The other aspect of what we are examining, Mr. Speaker, has to do with whether or not we can look at jurisdictional issues, because sometimes – I appreciate your nod, and I hope I get another question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, when we talk to ambulance operators they are telling us that government demands will reduce the level of service currently offered. The new service model will lead to a reduction in staff, compromise patient safety and care, and put emergency responders at a greater risk of fatigue.

I ask the Premier: Is reducing staffing levels the most effective way to improve ambulance operations in this Province?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the issues that he just outlined are the very issues that we are trying to address, particularly around fatigue. When we look at again the number of routine transfers that are happening, do we need that many people operating and transferring routinely? Is there a better way to transfer some of those particular patients when they are coming in for routine testing, routine services, and sometimes just for a visit with a doctor?

We are certainly trying to reduce the stress and the fatigue levels on the ambulance operators by seeing that we can have a much more efficient operation. We are also trying to reduce the number of night-time transfers, Mr. Speaker, so

that again those fatigue issues can be addressed and adequately addressed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, the minister maintains that the Humber Valley land use committee is not defunct. Documents tabled in the House yesterday confirm there have been no meetings booked since 2011, no payments to staff since 2011, the phone disconnected since 2011, and no rent paid since 2011. The minister's letter was sent to the defunct committee on February 27, 2014.

I ask the minister: How do you justify spending \$650,000 on a committee that became defunct because of your inaction?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, it is rather unfortunate that we have only been in the House a couple of weeks and I think this is the third, if not the fourth, time that the member opposite has asked me the same question.

Mr. Speaker, just last month this government provided a comprehensive response to the Chair of the Humber Valley regional planning authority outlining what needs to be done next to move the process forward. The Chair has reviewed that; he is working with the consultant that is involved, CBCL, to advance that work. We look forward to bringing in a modern regional plan for the whole Humber Valley region, and we remain committed to that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, the minister produced an e-mail from former committee Chair, Don Downer, suggesting that he has always been the Chair and that he never resigned from the committee. Yet, Mr. Downer told *The Western Star* in September of 2013 that he had vacated the position and moved on as Chair of the Western waste management authority. He never contacted them to correct this.

I ask the minister: Who is right? Is Mr. Downer suggesting that *The Western Star* got their facts wrong?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite provided factually incorrect information in this House earlier this week. He did it last week. He is doing it again today.

The Chair of the committee did not resign at any point in time. I even went as far as to provide written confirmation of that to the hon. member yesterday, and he still did not believe it.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot control what the hon. member reads or hears, but I can control my conduct in this hon. House and he should do the same.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I cannot control what Mr. Downer says to *The Western Star*.

Mr. Speaker, I have another question for the minister: Who are the current members of the Humber Valley land use committee and will you table the names in this hon. House today?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, we are going to work with all communities in the Humber Valley region to move this process forward. I would be happy to provide the information that the hon. member has requested.

We have had a recent municipal election. There are some vacancies on the committee, as I said previously in the House. The committee is still in place and we are going to continue to move the work forward. We have been in touch with Dr. Downer. He will be reaching to other members of the committee. We have provided a comprehensive response, the consultant is engaged, and whether the members opposite like it or not, progress is continuing, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, speaking of land use plans, the Northeast Avalon Regional Plan was first initiated in 2009 and was estimated to cost approximately \$500,000 to complete. We now know the plan also fell on the rails along the way.

I ask the minister: Will you table all documents related to the Northeast Avalon Regional Plan, including the total cost of the plan to date?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to table whatever documents the hon. member wishes; I just doubt that he is going to bother to read them.

Mr. Speaker, work has been progressing on the Northeast Avalon Regional Plan, as well. In fact, I have had several meetings with mayors from around the Northeast Avalon region and we have engaged Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador to assist with the work. The committee is meeting on a regular basis.

I am pleased with the progress, Mr. Speaker. It is a high priority for me. It is a high priority for this Department of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, it is an accepted fact that children who complete full-day kindergarten are better prepared for Grade 1 and go on to be more successful in school. Unfortunately, our students are deprived of this opportunity, as the minister continues to be indecisive on this issue.

I ask the minister: When will you act to correct this deficiency in our education system?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have stood in this House on several occasions and answered the question. I have said on many of those occasions that we continue to explore the possibility of introducing full-day kindergarten, and, Mr. Speaker, we are still continuing to explore that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, most provinces now offer full-day kindergarten, and this government can no longer deny that children and parents are better off with a full day of kindergarten rather than a half day.

Minister: Will you now act on the weight of evidence in favour of a full-day program, or will you simply still stand there and play kindergarten games?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I moved on from kindergarten about fifty-seven years ago – no, a little bit less than that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER: They did not teach math.

MR. JACKMAN: Math was not one of the strengths, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, look at our investment in education: the best student-teacher ratio of all the provinces in Canada; an increase in our per-capita budget totalled, overall, 61 per cent; our investment of \$4.3 million in zero to three. Research shows us where to put dollars. Mr. Speaker, we as a government have done that in education for certain.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, government has proven once again how out of touch it is with the business and community developers as it launched the Open Government Initiative. Open data should provide useable information that helps business and residents make informed decisions. Why then, are justice offences sorted by health authority?

I ask the minister of OPE to explain the rationale and admit that the Open Government Initiative is not focused on providing useable data.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, sixty-three countries around the world have signed onto the Open Government Partnership. One of the key pillars in our Open Government Initiative is open data. We have launched an open data portal, but I would point out to the hon. member, and I would

point out to others who are concerned as well, this is just a starting point.

What we launched last week was the beginning of a consultation process. We are going to engage the public over the next number of months to find out what kinds of data people would like to see available and what kind of formats they would like to see it available in. We want to hear from researchers, we want to hear from the business community, and we want to hear from the academic community so that our open data portal will ultimately be the best in the country.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, data has to be useful and reliable. The spatial maps in the Open Government portal show the St. Lunaire-Griquet public library as active, yet government closed it in December. It appears the government is not concerned with providing up-to-date information and it is set on taking books away from children and those who need it most.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister Responsible for OPE: Why are you sharing data that is out of date and unreliable, or has the Minister of Education had a change of heart?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, we are deeply committed to Open Government. We are deeply committed to building an open data portal as part of that strategy, and it is only one pillar in the strategy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They are clearly not interested in listening, which is not

much surprise. They were not interested in the answers to the first questions this afternoon; they are not interested in these ones either.

Mr. Speaker, the open data portal as it exists today is simply the starting point. We have taken the data sets that are already available, that were available prior to launching this initiative, and we have made them available in one particular place, through our open data portal. Over the next number of months we are going to go out and find out what kind of data the public would like to see available for research purposes, for academic purposes, for business purposes, and we look forward to that input.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile for a very quick question without preamble.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Health: What are your plans to address the growing epidemic of eating disorders and mental health issues in this Province?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, through the Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council we have within the department, we are constantly getting feedback with regard to the needs and the issues that are in community. We take that advice very seriously. We have moved forward with a number of initiatives already.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Two years ago government committed to working on a new five-year VLT strategy. Last year, the Finance Minister stated they were looking at policies of other provinces with regard to VLTs.

I ask the Premier: Will we see a new strategy this year?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this government takes VLTs and gambling very seriously. That is why in 2005 we announced our VLT action plan. At that time we had 2,700 VLTs in 600 locations. We have reduced that to 1,960 in 400 locations, which is a 26.9 per cent reduction.

We continue to work with ALC and the other provinces. In fact, I will be attending a meeting there of Atlantic Provinces in May of next month, so we will continue with that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I point out to the minister that they take it so seriously that last month Eastern Health eliminated the position of gambling addictions counsellor, creating less access to specialized treatment.

I ask the Premier: What happened to government's commitment to treating persons with gambling addictions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, within our overall plan around addictions and any other mental health issues that we have to address, there are over 950 people working within the Province. Of those people, we have people who work in terms of gambling, in terms of addictions issues, and in terms of general mental health.

We have fifty-nine outpatient counselling areas throughout the Province that are always available to help out. We work also in conjunction with any other groups that are doing outreach within the Province to provide assistance to them as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The June 2009 Gambling Prevalence Study shows there were close to 3,000 problem VLT gamblers in this Province.

I ask the Premier: Can he tell us what percentage of the estimated \$80 million annual VLT government revenue is made off the backs of addicted people?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have great programs in our Province for gambling and other addictions. In fact, 1 per cent of all revenue goes towards gambling programs. It is something we take

seriously. It is an issue that I will be speaking to my counterparts on next month. It is a serious issue, and it is one we are committed to working towards as we go forward.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I ask the minister: When are we going to see a Department of Health and Community Services official appointed to the Atlantic Lottery Corporation to ensure the welfare of people comes before VLT profits?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We do have representation on the ALC board. There is a representative there from our department. We certainly meet with the Department of Health and other departments involved when it comes to gambling and addictions on such serious issues.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: For clarification, Mr. Speaker, I think the minister said there is nobody from the Department of Health and Community Services on the board. Is that correct?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what I said was we do have a government representative on ALC that is a representative in the Department of Finance, and I also attend meetings as minister in government and sit around the Cabinet table and caucus table and speak to my colleagues on an as-needed basis.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Paramedics for Eastern Health need help; no call is ever routine. They say there is a shortage of paramedics and they require relief from a heavy workload.

What is government's plan to address the shortage of ambulance personnel in Eastern Health?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in the last few years Eastern Health has doubled the number of ambulances that they have on the road. They have doubled the number of paramedics that they have working at Eastern Health as well. Now there is a complement of fifty-one, Mr. Speaker. That, together with the thirteen ambulances they have on the road, I think shows the commitment that Eastern Health has to meeting the needs of the people in the region.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, we are going to be dealing with some severe aging problems

here in the near future and government is going to have to address that. The ambulance needs are going to go up.

Red alert events are when we find an ambulance is not available whenever the next call for service comes in. Any shortage of ambulance personnel is certainly indicative as a reason for a high number of red alert events.

How does government plan to address the red alert problem?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier in this Question Period, red alerts come in two different forms; those when there is a call for an ambulance and there is no ambulance available, and then sometimes when we have no ambulance available but there is no call.

We should also understand that in terms of red alert 1, when we looked at the period of time studied in Eastern Health, in the 87 per cent that I made reference to earlier, those red alert periods ranged from three seconds to a minute and forty-seven seconds, Mr. Speaker.

Having said that, we do not want to see any red alerts; we have engaged on a process that will help to see us through to that goal. One of the things that we are doing is we are looking around the jurisdictions. We triage first of all so that the most urgent case is called –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's East, for a quick question without preamble.

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, they have had the results of the ambulance review now for

several months, when will the government implement the recommendations?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are in the process now of analyzing all of the recommendations that have come in, as well as the information that we received from the stakeholders when we consulted them around those recommendations. The next process for us will be to do a cost analysis on the implementation of all of those recommendations, and then to put in place an implementation plan.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Buildings Accessibility Act, Bill 10.

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

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

MS JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will move the following motion: that the House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government, the Budget Speech.

Mr. Speaker, I also give notice that I will move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply to consider a resolution for the granting of Supply to Her Majesty, Bill 11.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act, Bill 9.

Thank you.

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

MS SULLIVAN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend Various Acts Of The Province Respecting The Publication Of A Summary Of A Decision Or Order Of An Adjudication Tribunal, Bill 8.

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Health Professions Act, Bill 7.

MR. SPEAKER: Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS play-based full-day kindergarten has been proven to give children a stronger start in school and in life; and

WHEREAS a full day of learning early in life can help improve children's reading, writing, and math skills, and provide them with a strong foundation for future learning; and

WHEREAS full-day kindergarten provides opportunities for children to socialize with others and develop their academic and social skills necessary for future success; and

WHEREAS children in full-day kindergarten programs are able to remain in familiar surroundings with staff and friends all day rather than moving between different locations; and

WHEREAS full-day kindergarten makes the transition to Grade 1 easier for both parents and children; and

WHEREAS a province that invests in full-day kindergarten is seeing a return on investment in terms of better school achievement and fewer students at risk of falling through the cracks;

WHEREUPON the undersigned petition the House of Assembly to urge the government to introduce a full-day kindergarten program for children and families in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, currently, most kindergarten aged children in Canada attend a full day program rather than the half day one that we continue to offer in this Province. In some provinces, such as Ontario, there is actually a full-day program for four year olds. So a full-day, government funded, education program that is play based for four year olds, and one for five year olds as well.

If you look around the rest of North America – if you look in the United States, for example, we have over 75 per cent, or upwards of 75 per cent of children who are kindergarten age in the US now attend a full day program with play base curriculum.

There was an interesting story today in the *Washington Post* that talked about the problems associated with a half-day program. We talked

about a lot of those here. The response from the government last year, instead of a full-day kindergarten program was the Lullaby nappies. I can barely pronounce it, but basically, Lullaby blankets. They printed 6,000 lullabies on blankets and sent it out to people. I do not know if it was a practical joke or seriously intended to impact early learning, but it was a poor substitution for what most of the developed Western world have really adopted as standard practice.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the residents in Western Newfoundland concerning the new regional hospital in Corner Brook.

WHEREAS we wish to raise concerns regarding recent delays of the construction of the new hospital in Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador.

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the government to commit to the planning and construction of a new hospital in Corner Brook as previously committed to and in a timely manner as originally announced without further delay or changes.

Mr. Speaker, this is a petition that I was asked to present by all the residents from Western Newfoundland. There are people here from Pasadena, Corner Brook, Mount Moriah, Frenchman's Cove, and all throughout the whole Western region.

This hospital had been first committed in 2007. Now we understand the construction of the main hospital may start in 2016, as confirmed by the government, that they are now going to go for RFPs. Mr. Speaker, this has been a major concern for a lot of people in Western

Newfoundland and Corner Brook, asking what was going to be put in the new hospital.

One of the proposals now is to cut the ultrasound units from six to three. Mr. Speaker, we hear government people say – and I am not going to make this political today, I am just going to speak the facts. We hear people say we are going to have a mobile unit to cover it. Under the freedom of information, Mr. Speaker, I went and asked for the number of patients who are inpatients and the number who are outpatients for the ultrasounds.

I say to the Premier, I will share it with you. The number of patients this machine is supposed to cover for outpatients is – 90 per cent of all ultrasounds are outpatients. It is 10 per cent who are inpatients. This machine is supposed to cover the other 40 per cent to 50 per cent in the decrease in the number.

Also, the machine itself is not of the same quality of a standard machine with the mobile unit. Mr. Speaker, this is major concern. When you hear officials from the government, mainly the minister, out saying we have a mobile unit, yet 90 per cent who come from outside the hospital will never be able to use this unit because they are outpatients. It is just a minor detail.

The recommended time right now is 147 days for an ultrasound. The possibility – and this is coming from the experts – of going up to 350 days for an ultrasound, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, and I will present a petition every day I can.

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS in the past, the Town of Conception Bay South has provided space for the Conception Bay South Public Library, but will not be providing space for the library in its new town hall building; and

WHEREAS losing the provincial library means one of the fastest growing communities in the Province, with a population of 25,000, will no longer have public library service; and

WHEREAS the library is more than just books, it is an open community space for Internet access, online lending, children's reading programs, and community events and services which improve literacy levels, provide access to information, stimulate creativity and innovation, and foster the development of strong communities; and

WHEREAS the Town of Conception Bay South has expressed interest in cost-sharing a new site for the Conception Bay South Public Library;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to provide the necessary resources to retain the public library in Conception Bay South.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I was up on my feet the other day talking about this issue again as expressed by the residents of Gander who were concerned about losing libraries. In this particular case, we have signatories from the Town of Paradise, Topsail, St. John's, and there are some people from CBS who have also signed this petition.

As a matter of fact, the majority of the signatures here are from residents of CBS who were – well, my phone rang once or twice – quite surprised, actually, by the reaction from government as regards this petition as it was presented the other day, even though it was from Gander. Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, with their signatures on it, they expressing their view again, and it gives me pleasure to stand and talk about the issue.

Mr. Speaker, at the same time, there are certain facts about libraries that we should all know. We should all remember the fact that government laid off a lot of librarians last year in the last Budget. We know the Budget is coming up again, of course, on Thursday. At the same time, just remember, to the people of the Province, we only have nine librarians that are left to operate the services – the essential services, I say – of ninety-six libraries left in the Province.

The Canadian Library Association gives us a really startling fact when it comes to the use of libraries in Newfoundland and Labrador. They say that about 25 per cent of the population of Newfoundland and Labrador have a close tie with libraries, and each one on average borrows about fifteen different objects, different books, for example, from libraries as a resource that is readily available to people's fingertips.

I just want to make government aware that besides that, they can also turn libraries into something a little bit better: a centre for business excellence, for example, for smaller communities. Again, Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in presenting this petition and hopefully government will listen.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

WHEREAS the Family Violence Intervention Court provided a comprehensive approach to domestic violence in a court setting that fully understood and dealt with the complex issues of domestic violence; and

WHEREAS domestic violence continues to be one of the most serious issues facing our Province today, and the cost of the impact of domestic violence is great both economically and in human suffering; and

WHEREAS the Family Violence Intervention Court was welcomed and endorsed by all aspects of the justice system, including the police, the courts, prosecutors, defence counsel, Child, Youth and Family Services, as well as victims, offenders, community agencies, and women's groups; and

WHEREAS the recidivism rate for offenders going through the court was 10 per cent compared to 40 per cent for those who did not; and

WHEREAS the budget for the court was only 0.2 per cent of the entire budget of the Department of Justice;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to reinstate the Family Violence Intervention Court.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have, yet again, petition after petition. I have more up in my office; there are more coming in. I am sure probably that people on the other side of the House are tired of hearing me stand up and talk about the Family Violence Intervention Court.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS ROGERS: As I stand again today, I am wondering: What else is there to say about it? We have said it all. I have said it all again and again and again.

I know that the Premier and the Minister of Justice have said that they are listening to the people of the Province. Well, only two weeks

ago a lot of people from women's organizations, organizations that develop programs and deliver programs on rehabilitation around the issue of domestic violence, gathered on the steps of Confederation Building asking the Premier, asking the Minister of Justice, to come out and speak to them.

They did not. Perhaps they were busy; perhaps they were not available. They are begging the Minister of Justice and they are begging the Premier to listen to them about a program that was so incredibly successful, that is vital to the safety of the women and children of this Province who are victims of domestic violence.

Mr. Speaker, both the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and the Minister of Justice have talked about –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the member her time has expired.

MS ROGERS: Already?

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS there is a waste recovery facility being proposed by Eastern Waste Management in the Peak Pond-Reids Pond area; and

WHEREAS such a site will drastically impact the pond and general area in a negative way from an environmental perspective; and

WHEREAS there are many species of wildlife that will be negatively impacted by such a site, such as moose, rabbits, loons, ducks, Canada geese; and

WHEREAS such a site will be result in litter and strong odours in the general area; and

WHEREAS there are a significant number of cabins and permanent homes in the Peak Pond-Reids Pond area which will be negatively impacted by the site; and

WHEREAS Eastern Waste Management has many sites available to them for such a facility, including former dump sites in the area;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call up on the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to intercede in the matter and advise Eastern Waste Management to withdraw this proposal and find a more suitable location for this waste recovery facility.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I presented this yesterday, I think it was, and I am doing so again today. It is interesting because, originally, this started out with people who were living at Peak Pond-Reids Pond, cabin owners. That is certainly how I got involved initially, because there were a number of residents from Mount Pearl who actually own properties in those areas.

Since that time, this has really taken off. We are seeing a lot of concerns from people in the entire Whitbourne area: Whitbourne, Blaketown, New Harbour, South Dildo, and so on. I actually started off with one petition; I think we have at least a dozen of them now because there are people expressing a lot of concern about this.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately this was something which was put forward by Eastern Waste Management, and I think we all recognize and agree and support the fact that there is a requirement to have a waste transfer facility for bulk garbage and so on. We have eight others across the Province; this would be the final one. The location here is the issue. There are industrial sites already in the general area, former dump sites and so on, which would certainly be much more appropriate.

Interestingly, the site they are actually picking or proposing is actually a piece of private property and they want to actually expropriate it from someone when we have all kinds of Crown lands –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The member's time is expired.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will be speaking about it again in the future.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, a petition to the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS there is no cellphone service in the Town of Trout River, which is an enclave community in Gros Morne National Park; and

WHEREAS visitors to Gros Morne National Park, more than 100,000 annually, expect to communicate by cellphone when they visit the park; and

WHEREAS cellphone service has become a very important aspect of everyday living for residents; and

WHEREAS cellphone service is an essential safety tool for visitors and residents; and

WHEREAS cellphone service is essential for business development;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to partner with the private sector to extend cellphone coverage throughout Gros Morne National Park and the enclave community of Trout River.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the petitions keep coming from Trout River, keep coming from Trout River, and keep coming from Trout River, but you still cannot use cellphones in Trout River. The thought that a community such as Trout River is going to be without cellphone service for the foreseeable future is just unacceptable.

I was listening a few days ago to the government making an announcement on a 911 service, as I mentioned previously. A 911 service would be a great step forward for our Province. Clearly, it is an important safety feature and people expect to be able to use 911 service.

In the introduction, the minister referred to people being able to use cellphones to dial 911 when they had emergencies. We heard today of questions in the House to do with ambulance and ambulance services, and whether there were red alerts on ambulances if they are unable to attend because of a shortage of ambulances or ambulances already in use.

Imagine, Mr. Speaker, the situation where you are in a community of more than 600 people, with a number of businesses, regular tourist trade, and what is facing you from the time you leave Trout River until you get into the Bonne Bay area is besides leaving Trout River, you have to travel all the way through Trout River Gulch which is a world historic site – that is the part of Gros Morne National Park that makes it a world historic site. It is the type of geology which has formed the tablelands which causes that. People from all over the world come to see this and they cannot use their cellphone.

Mr. Speaker, it would not be a very substantial investment for government not to pay for the cellphones, not to install the cellphones, but to partner with the private sector to make it worthwhile for the private sector to introduce cellphone service into the Town of Trout River.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS most communities in the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair do not have adequate broadband service; and

WHEREAS residents, businesses, students, nurses, and teachers heavily rely on the Internet to conduct their work and cannot afford to wait until 2016 to access a potential plan in partnership with the Muskrat Falls development; and

WHEREAS there are a number of world-class tourism sites in the region, including UNESCO site at Red Bay, Battle Harbour Historic Site, and the Mealy Mountains National Park;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to work with the appropriate agencies to provide adequate broadband service to the communities along the Labrador Coast.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have been up a number of times on this very important issue, and I will continue to do so. We know that in the Speech from the Throne we heard that 95 per cent of the communities are connected, and we are asking for a list of the remaining 5 per cent that are not.

I can tell you that in my district of twenty-two communities in Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, we have ten communities that are maxed out at capacity and we have a number of communities that are not connected. This is causing very serious issues in 2014, in a day of connectivity and media that people rely on it. We have these

historic sites that I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, Red Bay – we hope we will see a huge influx of traffic this summer with tourists coming in, and here is the community on a dial-up service, and they have been lobbying for a long time to get Internet.

Mr. Speaker, we have businesses that are really, really frustrated. In large communities like L'Anse-au-Loup, there are days that they cannot even get the Interac to work because the Internet is so slow in their community. We have students who are trying to study and cannot do online classes, and the money that it is saving them, being able to stay in their own communities and do the online courses.

Health: People living on the Coast of Labrador – I raise petitions on a regular basis about the medical transportation program. Well, there are a number of services, if Internet was in place, that they could avail of right from their home communities, going into their clinic, sitting in front of a TV screen and being able to meet with their specialist here in St. John's. These types of services are not available to them, so government investment there would actually save tremendously. What is happening now, with these services not available because the Internet is not there, is some of these patients are travelling and then they are claiming the money back through the medical transportation program.

I will continue to petition on behalf of the people of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair to ensure that adequate broadband is put into the area.

Thank you.

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

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

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

WHEREAS hundreds of residents of the South Coast of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, including residents of the communities of La Poile, Ramea, Grey River, François, Rencontre East, Pool's Cove, Bay L'Argent, South East Bight, Gaultois, McCallum, and Hermitage use the provincial ferry system on a regular basis for work, medical, educational, and social reasons; and

WHEREAS the provincial ferry system is the main source of transportation for these communities; and

WHEREAS most of the ferries are old, have ongoing mechanical problems, and are constantly being taken out of service and replaced with older vessels; and

WHEREAS government, as part of its provincial ferry strategy, agreed to replace the ferry servicing these communities and awarded a design contract to Fleetway on January 11, 2011 for five new ferries for same; and

WHEREAS the residents and users of these communities are still waiting for these new vessels;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to finalize the design and begin construction of the new vessels for residents of the South Coast.

Mr. Speaker, this is a petition that I have entered on numerous occasions in this House. Again, being the representative for a district where I have my own ferry runs, I have done my best to advocate on their behalf. You hear from these people when the ferry goes down. It is troubling when you have to make alternate arrangements, when you have a late ferry, when you are stuck in your community for days.

I will not get into the cellphone aspect of this, but I have had communities go down where there is no transportation in or out, no cellphone service, and I have done my best. Some of these people say it is funny government did come

down and sat down and talked about the design, and that was a few years back, and they have never heard anything since. That is the problem: There was a conversation, but there has been no meaningful follow-up.

What has been really interesting, though, is that I put this petition out and the number of people who are coming to me from outside my district, from other districts, government districts, saying: Will you go in the House and put this petition in? Because we have not seen any action.

Actually, as I came in here on Sunday, I had a call from a community on the South Coast, not in my district, but I said: Not a problem; I will be happy to stand up and put this petition in on your behalf so that government will get this done.

I know the minister's department told me before Christmas: Do not worry; the minister is coming out early in the new year with something on this. Well, we are in spring now, and I have not heard anything yet. I am waiting for it.

I am going to give the minister the benefit. I am hoping that he is going to announce something soon. Who knows? Maybe I should stay tuned for Thursday. We will see what comes up, but again I am going to stand and continue on behalf of the Official Opposition to raise ferry concerns for members of the District of Burgeo – La Poile and members of any district whose constituents want to call me to make sure that that issue is heard.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice and ask leave to introduce Motion 1, the bill entitled, An Act To Amend The City

Of Corner Brook Act, The City Of Mount Pearl Act, The City Of St. John's Act And The Municipalities Act, 1999, Bill 6, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs, and I ask that the said bill be now read the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The City Of Corner Brook Act, The City Of Mount Pearl Act, The City Of St. John's Act And The Municipalities Act, 1999, and that the said bill be now read a first time

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 6 and that the said bill be now read a first time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The City Of Corner Brook Act, The City Of Mount Pearl Act, The City Of St. John's Act And The Municipalities Act, 1999", carried. (Bill 6)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The City Of Corner Brook Act, The City Of Mount Pearl Act, The City Of St. John's Act And The Municipalities Act, 1999. (Bill 6)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill is now read a first time.

When shall the bill be read a second time?

MR. KING: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 6 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. the Premier, that the House resolve itself now into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 2 respecting the granting of Interim Supply to Her Majesty.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that the House do now resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 2 respecting the granting of Interim Supply to Her Majesty and that I do now leave the Chair.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Verge): Order, please!

Committee of the Whole will resume consideration of Bill 2, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money.

The hon. the Member for Port de Grave.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am very pleased to speak to this bill today, Mr. Chair, Bill 2, Interim Supply, and maybe just for the information of the people watching from home, what Interim Supply is. Basically, Interim Supply is the granting of monies for government for approximately three months so they can operate while the Budget is being debated. We go through this process every year of granting Interim Supply. Interim Supply is

roughly \$2.1 billion for government to operate over the next three months.

For the people at home, we are debating today Interim Supply. When you are debating a money bill of any kind in this House, it allows members the opportunity to stand up and speak to any topic they desire. They can talk to their own district, they can talk to a piece of legislation, or they can bring up a concern. Basically, it gives members some freedom to talk about anything they want to talk about here in this House today.

Like always, it is a great privilege to stand here and represent the fine people in the District of Port de Grave. The District of Port de Grave put their faith in me in 2011. It is always great to get in this House and speak on their behalf.

The first thing I want to do, too, I want to welcome our new colleague, the hon. the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace. I have worked with the hon. the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace when we were mayors in our neighbouring communities. I want to welcome him to this hon. House. I would like to wish you the best of luck, but not too much luck there hon. member. It is great to see you and congratulations.

The last little while, Mr. Chair, if you have been listening, the Opposition has gone day-to-day and basically it has talked about the fact that this government has not taken the time to listen, and they are not out there talking to the people and all the rest. I want to just kind of rebut that a little bit.

This past weekend, Mr. Chair, we were in my district. It started on Friday. I was very pleased on Friday morning; the first thing I did was go into a school in my district at Holy Redeemer. It is a K-9 school in Spaniards Bay. I went in and spoke to the Grade 9 and Grade 3 classes. They are doing topics in their social studies on government.

I went in and I had the great opportunity to spend a full period with our Grade 9 students talking about government, how government

works, and how important it is to get involved in your community and maybe aspire to sit in this hon. House one day. Mr. Chair, it is amazing what you will hear back from those children and what they want and what they know. When you listen to those children, they have some great ideas.

Then, Mr. Chair, I went into a Grade 3 class, two Grade 3 classes combined. They have a great sense of being involved in their community, being involved in the Province, and wanting the Province to do better. They ask you some great questions. We have been doing this for a number of years. In my previous role you would go into Grade 3 classrooms and you would have a wonderful time.

These Grade 3s ask you some very important questions. Do you like your job? Why do you get involved? Why should I get involved in my community? You know, Mr. Chair, they are our future. We need to go in and talk to them about government and politicians being good people. It is good work we do, it is important work that we do. They will get a better understanding of why we are here sitting in this House. We invite them to come and spend some time with us, see Question Period. Mr. Chair, that was a great experience on Friday morning.

Then, Mr. Chair, I had the great privilege to welcome the Minister of Transportation and Works. We went with town officials in the Town of Bay Roberts. We have a very busy piece of road, Route 60 – Route 70, I am sorry, through –

AN HON. MEMBER: Route 60 is mine.

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Route 66 just looked at me to say Route 60. Anyway, it is Route 70, Mr. Chair. It is the main highway through the Town of Bay Roberts and it is a business district. There are some real challenges along that highway. We have 20,000 vehicles a day that goes along the main business district in the Town of Bay Roberts. This was a follow-up meeting that the minister had with town officials in the town. He came personally to look at it.

Mr. Chair, while we were there, one of the things that happened, we were out on the road, it was raining, pouring rain actually when we were looking at a certain intersection, a very busy intersection. We have four businesses on one side, three businesses on the other, and we have nine entrances. It is a real challenge. It is a hazard. We have had people hurt at that intersection and many accidents.

Mr. Chair, the minister came out and met and saw and wanted to know the concerns and see the concerns firsthand of what the Town of Bay Roberts officials were talking about. Mr. Chair, that wasn't the only thing. The Minister of Transportation and Works also wanted to hear some of the concerns I had as a member in the other part of the district.

Mr. Chair, like all of us in this hon. House, we have concerns over our roads and our infrastructure. We need to improve our infrastructure. I have been very, very pleased that over the last two years we have paved over eight kilometres of road, eight kilometres of Route 60 in Cranes Road in Island Cove. That really does me proud, and we have improved the infrastructure. We have also improved ditching and drainage so our pavement does not wash out. We had some severe areas along that roadway, as well. These are things that the Minister of Transportation and Works came and listened, and was concerned and heard the concerns of the people.

Then, Mr. Chair, on Saturday I had the privilege to welcome the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. This weekend was a special weekend in my district, Mr. Chair. This was the fisherpersons' weekend and, basically, the blessing of the fleet. I was very pleased to have the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture with me on Saturday morning as we went to the fisherpersons' breakfast in Port de Grave. There were over 160 people at this meeting – 160 people involved in the fishing industry.

The Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture was there. He took the time to listen, Mr. Chair. Not only did we speak with harvesters during that visit, we took the time to go to the local harbour

authority. We went to the local harbour authority and we talked about some of the things and some of the concerns – we have over sixty boats, sixty harvesters, in Port de Grave harbour and the Minister of Fisheries took the time with the local harbour authority and discuss some of the concerns.

We talked about CETA; we talked about a new water supply. They need a new saltwater supply for the unloading of boats and unloading of catch and how that will improve quality. The Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture took the time to do that.

Mr. Chair, I am leading into the important part of this. Not only that, the Minister of Fisheries was also kind enough – there was a breakfast at the Port de Grave fire department. We went there as well, Mr. Chair, and we met with the local volunteer fire department and we discussed their issues and concerns. We discussed their issues and concerns about Port de Grave.

Sometimes when we stand in this House, Mr. Chair, we think that it is only the Opposition listening to people. We think that they are the only people listening, but this happens on a regular basis. We are all hon. members in this House, we are all out there talking to our constituents, we are all out there meeting with different groups, and we are all out there listening. We are listening because they have things that are important to us as a government, to us as a Province, and we need to listen better. This government has been listening and, contrary to popular belief, we have ministers on the ground listening all the time.

Again, we are out there, we are talking to people; we are talking to people every day. I can say without hesitation this goes on just about every weekend in my district. Just about every weekend, I am out there talking to our constituents.

Mr. Chair, the Opposition wants you to believe that is not the case. They want to make the people believe out there in television land that we are not listening. There is nothing further from the truth. We are all out there listening.

Mr. Chair, when we go out and we listen and we make change and we make policy change, the first thing the Opposition wants to do is criticize us. It is a natural occurrence. When you go out and you listen to people, you cannot make a change like that. You have to take time, you have to talk to people, and you have to do the change in the right way. I am proud to say that we are effecting change. We are effecting change and effecting it in a very positive way.

My time is just about up, but I just want to say, once again, I want to thank the Minister of Transportation and Works and the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture for coming to my district and listening to the people.

In closing, we have had many benefits; we have had many regional and economic benefits from this government. I am proud to say we have assisted the people, and the business community in Port de Grave are proud to say that they have benefited from it.

Seeing my time is up, I will take my seat.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is certainly a pleasure to have another opportunity to stand in this hon. House and say a few words. As I said the first time I spoke in this session, I am certainly intending on acknowledging when good things are happening, but I am not going to criticize for the sake of being critical.

I think it is important to note that when members of the Opposition raise legitimate concerns that are being presented to them by the people – that is who we are all here to serve – when people raise legitimate concerns and the Opposition asks questions, or questions decisions of government, or does not necessarily paint this bright, rosy picture that everything is perfect and does not stand up actually thanking the government and thanking the minister because

they actually put down some asphalt, or thanking the minister because they invested in health care, or thanking the minister because they invested in education, or thanking the minister because they invested in fisheries – I think, Mr. Chair, we all recognize that government is charged with the task of taking the tax dollars, which all of us contribute.

We go to work, we earn money, we pay taxes, we pay income tax, we pay sales tax, we pay gas tax, we pay fees for various things, and all that money goes into the government coffers. I think there is an expectation from the taxpayer that government is going to take that money and invest in all those things.

I do not know that we necessarily have to get into this mode of patting ourselves on the back for actually spending the money that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are paying. It is not like the government is writing the cheque with their own personal bank account – going into their bank account and writing a personal cheque to pave someone's road, or writing a personal cheque to pay for a health care centre, or writing a personal cheque to upgrade a school. So, they are only really doing what they were elected to do; we all are.

That being said, Mr. Chair, as I indicated, as members of the Opposition we have a role over here to certainly acknowledge when government makes wise decisions, but also to question some of the decisions that are being made, particularly when it is having a negative impact on our districts and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in general.

Mr. Chair, one of the issues that I think we certainly all have that occurred back in January was DarkNL, as it was referred to. Some people referred to it as a crisis or not a crisis. I believe in the Throne Speech it was referred, "The disruptions for some were particularly significant." So it was a particularly significant disruption.

Mr. Chair, that was an issue a number of people have concerns about. There were a number of people certainly in my district, in the City of

Mount Pearl, in the City of St. John's, and all throughout the Province, people I spoke to in my district, people I spoke to around the metro area, as I said before, family members, and friends I have around Newfoundland and Labrador. All members, I think, received those calls and heard those concerns. As a result, one of the things we want to know on the Opposition side, for sure, is what went wrong and what can we do to make sure it does not happen again?

It is interesting. I saw an article in the media this morning. I believe it was on VOXM. In that particular article it was quoting Mr. Martin of Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro. It was interesting, Mr. Martin's comments as quoted in VOXM. It says, "Martin acknowledges that they have to restore public confidence in the electrical system" – no kidding – "however, he says they are doing all the right things. It's just that they have to do some things better." They are doing everything right, but they need to do it better, so it is kind of a contradiction in terms.

In terms of some of the things they said they have to do, he has indicated they have to add 100 megawatts of power for the Avalon. They have indicated they have to overhaul the gas turbines at Stephenville and at Hardwoods. They have indicated they have to keep more spare components in circulation. They have to replace their 230 breakers, and they are going to give ratepayers more than a few hours' notice if there are more blackouts.

Mr. Chair, I have to say, although they are doing everything right, they have listed all of these issues that have to be addressed. If we look at the issue, for example, of overhauling the gas turbines at Stephenville and Hardwoods, now one would have to ask, why is it that after we have had DarkNL the non-crisis – after that has happened now we realize we have to overhaul the turbines at Stephenville and Hardwoods, particularly given we are doing everything right. To me the question that would come to my mind is why wasn't it done to begin with?

I found it really strange at the time when it happened, they were talking about I believe it was the fuel lines to both of those gas turbines

that basically busted or whatever that had to be repaired and so on. That happened at both Stephenville and Hardwoods. You would have to ask the question, well gee whiz, so that is what happened. You have to overhaul it now, why didn't you overhaul it last year? Why didn't you overhaul it the year before last or the year before that? What maintenance was being done in the past that caused that to happen?

Then we look at, we have to replace 230 breakers. Not one breaker, not ten, not fifteen; 230 breakers have to be replaced.

AN HON. MEMBER: It sounds like it is broken.

MR. LANE: Yes, it sounds like the breaker is broken to me. We have to replace them all. We are talking about all these things. You would have to ask yourself: How did it get to that state of disrepair to begin with?

I have to believe in my own heart and mind here we have professional people, employees, who are working for Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro. They know what they are doing I am sure. How could we get to a point where there would be this much maintenance, that is now all of a sudden required even though we were doing everything right? Why do we have all this maintenance that is all of a sudden required?

Wouldn't somebody who is working there, an employee on the ground who has his papers, he is a millwright, an electrician, or whatever the particular trade might be. One would think those people would know that these turbines would have to be overhauled. They would know that these breakers would have to be replaced. They would know there were issues. They would know maintenance would have to be done, which leads me then to ask a question.

Well, assuming these people know what they are doing, I certainly believe they do, then perhaps they were given direction not to do it. That is some of the questions that come to mind. Maybe they were given direction not to do it. Why would they have been given direction not to do it?

I had a person who sort of raised the issue with me and said; Well, it is kind of like if I am going to buy a brand new car, and I have an old car, then I let the maintenance go because I am going to get a new car in the spring anyway. If something goes wrong, I do not really need to do that. If something else goes wrong, I can get by with that. I think it is a case of decisions being made.

I believe we are in a situation where somebody got caught with their pants down. That is what happened, they got caught with their pants down. I know the members across the way do not want to hear that. The members across the way do not want to hear that. I know it is embarrassing. I understand that they would be embarrassed. I can see there are a lot of red faces over there, but, Mr. Chair, these are important questions. These are important questions that have to be asked, and I will continue to ask these questions, as will the rest of my colleagues on this side of the House, because that is our role.

CHAIR: Order, please!

The member's time for speaking has expired.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: I recognize the hon. Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS PERRY: It is a pleasure for me to rise in the House today and speak to this very important bill which will keep the affairs of the Province underway as we debate the Budget, which will be coming down on Thursday. It is something that we are all certainly looking forward to. It is going to be another great year for Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Chair.

I wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to speak on this money bill about the District of Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune and some of the fantastic things that have been underway and the

investments we have made over the last six years down in my region, which are really making a difference, Mr. Chair, in the lives of people and in the communities in my rural remote area that I serve. I certainly feel very privileged and honoured to serve them.

We have challenges, Mr. Chair, many challenges. I assure my residents that they are challenges I will continue to work on until we have them all solved successfully to the satisfaction of our communities.

Let's start out and take a look back at what has happened in the last few years. We had one community youth network, Mr. Chair, when I started back in 2007. It was, and still is an absolutely super facility that we have in the Coast of Bays region, but being so geographically dispersed it was a challenge for us to get our young children from the other communities down over the road to this centre. We have expanded the centres, Mr. Chair, to each of our sub regions. We now have one in Harbour Breton. We have one in Bay d'Espoir, and we have one in Pool's Cove. I thank the ministers for their support in recognizing the geographic challenges we have and putting these facilities in place.

These facilities work, Mr. Chair, because of the fantastic volunteers we have on the ground in our communities, and the youth themselves who participate. They actually serve on the board of directors. They participate in the planning activities. They engage seniors in what they do. They are doing recreation activities. They are doing Internet activities, absolutely phenomenal facilities. Anybody who is ever visiting down our way, I would certainly encourage them to take the time and drop in to see them.

Health care, too, Mr. Chair, has come quite a ways in the last six years. I remember when I started my first year; my phone did not stop ringing in the wintertime. During the months of January, February and March it was a real challenge for us to get physicians to my isolated communities. I am so happy, Mr. Chair, to report that problem has improved significantly in my region. We see a vast difference.

Still, weather poses a challenge from time to time, but for the most part we see a huge improvement in that regard. I am so honoured that each and every single one of the clinics and health care facilities in my entire district has seen some type of improvement in terms of the physical location. Privacy has been improved. Services have been improved for both the employees and the residents who use these facilities.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS PERRY: Certainly, one of our biggest highlights – and I was really pleased last Saturday when I went home for the weekend to join with the Joint Mayors of the region and we toured the dialysis facility which is going to be opening later in May. What a facility it is, Mr. Chair. It has the capacity for up to twenty-four users.

Anyone who is really looking for an idyllic place to live, Harbour Breton is a wonderful place to consider for dialysis services. In addition to the dialysis facility that is in place, we are seeing the private sector step up. They are building new facilities because they recognize there will be people who will need to reside in Harbour Breton as a result of being dialysis patients.

There is whole new area of our region which is being built up, new housing areas. It is phenomenal to see, Mr. Chair. We have also done a significant investment in affordable housing, both in Bay d'Espoir and in the Harbour Breton area. We are hoping to see that continue and expand throughout the region.

Another thing that we are really, really pleased to have seen happen, through the investments and strategic governance of this government, are the MOG increases. What a difference they are making in my communities. Each and every single one of my small, rural, remote communities who really do struggle with their tax basis to provide the types of services and amenities that people look for are really, really appreciative of the doubling of MOGs that we have seen in my region.

One community, in particular, has seen close to a 200 per cent increase.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS PERRY: So our fire services are better. We are buying new equipment, Mr. Chair. We are retaining our staff. It is absolutely wonderful, and we look forward to continuing to working with the minister to continue to see improvements in our communities.

We, of course, have seen investments in fire trucks in the region and new bunker suits. So we are very, very supportive of the department.

AN HON. MEMBER: More to come.

MS PERRY: More to come, absolutely.

Now, we are getting to the roadwork. We will save the best for last here, I say to the Member for the District of Exploits. It is all really good.

Recreation grants: They are making such a big difference, whether it is \$1,000 or \$15,000, whether it is buying a new score clock for the arena or expanding on a playground in the region. These recreation grants are making a difference to the children of our communities, and the adults, as well, most certainly. In Harbour Breton, we have seen a daycare facility initiated and expanded through the investment of this government, Mr. Chair.

In terms of industry, with the new CETA, I am really excited about the potential that our fishery has for the future. In my region, Mr. Chair, the main employers are the fishery, aquaculture, and hydroelectricity. Those three employers have enabled us to sustain a population base of about 6,500. I believe, that with continued investment in these sectors, we may even see that population increase. I am really proud that we do have one community, Conne River, which does, through every census, see an increase in its population. For a rural, remote area we are so very proud of that, Mr. Chair.

What are some of our most recent investments in aquaculture? Overall, we have the new fish

health facility that was built in St. Alban's, over \$7 million, state of the art, and one of the best in North America. I am really proud of that facility, Mr. Chair. We have a new hatchery built in the area. We have new fish plants being built.

We have some challenges at the moment with respect to our fish plants. I can assure my residents that it is my goal, and that of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, and that of the mayors in our communities, that we will see these fish plants fully operational in the very near future, Mr. Chair. Plans are underway.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS PERRY: We have seen investment, of course, in wharves in Hermitage and Harbour Breton. Most recently, \$3.9 million was announced to upgrade the wharf facility in Milltown, and another \$2 million for a new biosecure net washing facility.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS PERRY: So, the Coast of Bays certainly has great potential.

I am hoping one of the events that I am really looking forward to attending in the near future will be the opening of a new community centre in English Harbour West. That will be used by all community groups – the youth, the seniors, the ACW, the Lions Club – a benefit for certainly everyone living in the communities of St. Jacques-Coomb's Cove and all of Fortune Bay, including Pool's Cove and Belleoram for sure, Mr. Chair.

In St. Alban's, one of the challenges we have had for quite some time, actually, has been our water. We have had a very aging water system, and for years and years and years we tried to get the investment that was required to improve that situation, but to no avail. I am so proud that this government has invested and we are addressing that need.

Right now, the water has been improved so far from what we call the out long shore part of my community right in through to the post office. This year, Mr. Chair, the community has applied for phase three, and we are looking forward to what the Budget will bring for us to look at completing that. We are upgrading the sewage and lift stations as well.

The roads, Mr. Chair, in many of my communities have taken a beating, as have most of our communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. As we complete the water upgrades, the roads will be next. In the meantime, I am so, so pleased – and I am going to run out of time, so I have to get this out – twenty-seven kilometres, Mr. Chair, of paving from Harbour Breton to Hermitage has been announced for my district.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER: How many?

MS PERRY: Twenty-seven, Mr. Chair – twenty-seven.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS PERRY: In addition to that twenty-seven, Mr. Chair, we are seeing another nine kilometres that will be completed on the Bay d'Espoir Highway itself, servicing all 6,500 residents.

Mr. Chair, this investment will take place over the course of the next two years. I am so pleased to have delivered on this commitment, and I look forward to working with my communities and delivering on much, much more in the years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is a pleasure again to rise to talk to Interim Supply. I just heard the previous speaker talking about roads and highways, Mr. Chair, and it is certainly good to see improvements all across that side, but I will just to reference the Trans-Labrador Highway on the South Coast where nothing is being done. The minister seems to have forgotten all about Southern Labrador.

Mr. Chair, I would like to go a few places today, if I may. Yesterday, I had the pleasure, along with the leader of our party, to tour the Cougar search and rescue facilities here in St. John's. I was very much impressed with the whole search and rescue mandate they have as well as the facilities they have, including a helicopter that is on standby with a full crew complement ready to go in twenty minutes or less.

It certainly leaves something to be desired for search and rescue in the rest of our Province, but it is understandable when you are working for major oil companies or you are working for the taxpayers of the country there is a difference. I would recommend anyone in this hon. House to tour that facility and to look at the technology that is available and the resources that can be applied to search and rescue.

The reason I mention that, Mr. Chair, is because every day I listen to my colleagues present petitions to this hon. House with regard to cellphone capability and Internet capability. I have presented many a petition in previous sessions that is relative to what everyone is asking for. I was glad to hear the government side commend themselves and pat themselves on the back for having 95 per cent installation of cellphone service, but I am looking forward to the day when we can have cellphone capability in every area of our Province.

I would like to bring everyone's attention to Northern Labrador where there is no such thing as cellphone capability. I know the community of Natuashish had worked on their own, Mr. Chair, and it is intermittent, but they have taken their own initiative in Northern Labrador, something this government has failed to do.

When you look at the height of cellphone towers, Mr. Chair, the height certainly dictates the range of cellphone capability. I know Aliant has microwave towers that extend from Lab West to Goose Bay, all the way up to Nain, to bring telephone capability and Internet capability.

In most communities, the range of overlap between communities is forty miles or less. The reason I say this, Mr. Chair, is because when we were looking for young Burton Winters a couple of years ago we went through his personal belongings and one thing we hauled out of his pocket was a BlackBerry. He had a BlackBerry in his pocket that he could have accessed. He could have saved himself by calling someone. The only thing was, Mr. Chair, we do not have cellphone capability.

I have brought this up in the House many times. Is it because we are rural that we are last on the list? I do not think it works that way. I think this government has to realize that, Mr. Chair, because rural parts of this Province are still part of this Province. I wish the government would recognize that.

I would like to talk about Internet capability, Mr. Chair. I brought it to the attention of the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs that we are maxed out on Internet. There can be no more room for expansion. New businesses that are coming into Nunatsiavut, Natuashish, Mr. Chair, and there is a lot of it, do not have the capability for Internet.

The Member of Parliament for Labrador, Mr. Chair, cannot get Internet. I think it is disgraceful in this day and age that this government can come up and pat itself on the back but not be able to offer broadband to all areas of this Province, Mr. Chair.

This past winter was one of the first winters we did not have power interruptions in Labrador. I always make the joke, Mr. Chair, when it comes to DarkNL, this year it was Dark N. The L still had lights on this winter. It was the first year, I think in the last five years, that we did not have any major power outages. Now the people on

the Island portion of our great Province know what we live with on an annual basis, and it is not pretty when you have a winter like we did. Up in our area temperatures vary between minus thirty-five and minus forty-five degrees with a wind chill factor of minus forty-nine to minus fifty-five degrees, which leads me to my next point, Mr. Chair.

We talk about education and the need to have safe schools, and schools that can accommodate our students so we can deliver the best education possible. The standard for Labrador, in terms of children going to school, is minus forty-five degrees. At minus forty-five degrees a student does not have to go out and wait for a bus to pick them up. They do not have to go out, it is too cold.

In Nain, at minus forty-four degrees it is okay for a kindergarten kid to walk 1.4 kilometres to school. It is okay. I know there are a lot of tough people up there, Mr. Chair, but we do have to have standards and we do have to make exceptions.

I know the Minister Responsible for Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs has been contacted by members of the Nunatsiavut Government and asked what plans can be made. The Minister Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs has yet to get back to an Aboriginal minister in our Province. I look forward to the day when he can stand up and talk about his good relationship with the Nunatsiavut Government and see it in the action rather than the comments, because up our way we like to see action. Comments do not buy it.

Mr. Chair, just a few issues that I was happy to rise and talk about tonight. I certainly look forward to parts of Labrador being included in the Budget that is coming down. When you look at the resources and the revenue that our portion of our great Province contributes to the Treasury, we would certainly like to see some benefits from that. As the Minister of AES would say, I will stand in my place and ensure that that happens.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is indeed an honour to stand in this House today to talk about Interim Supply. First of all, I would like to acknowledge today I had the privilege of listening to Open Line. The former Liberal Premier was on. I was glad to hear he was recovering from his heart surgery. He was in good spirits, and he was getting out speaking about issues in this Province.

I found it funny though, because he had acknowledged the candidate for the Waterford Valley PC election coming up. He found it funny that that individual was running on a platform of what our Premier Marshall is doing for this government, and the new policies and procedures and programs that we are investing in. I find it funny because when we went around this past weekend with Mr. Breen and knocked on doors, we got such a positive response about what we are doing and what we are investing in as a government.

People talked about Muskrat Falls. It was overwhelming what they said. The intent and the purpose and the process and the response we got was, get it done. It is too important to the people of this Province. It is too valuable a resource to put on the backburner. We need to move it forward. It is something we need. It is something that will put us on the world stage that gives us a leadership role in extra economic development.

Again, one of the candidates running against us wants it. She wanted it from day one. She continues to want it. This Administration wants it, but not only do we want it, we are going to make it happen. It is going to happen with this Administration.

I did have the privilege of working with the former Premier in a different life, when two of

us were not in politics. He was with the NTA and I was a young civil servant, and I thought we shared the same vision. The vision then was about our economic growth here, about investing in people's needs. That is what I have seen this Administration do.

I did not hear that today from the former Premier. I was a bit disappointed but I understand he has been out of touch a little bit. Hopefully, he will pay attention to this by-election. He will see exactly what we stand for and he will see exactly what we are going to invest for the people of this Province. I would hope he is watching the Budget come Thursday. The Budget brings down and reflects exactly what people want. What it is that we have heard from them, how we have engaged them, and how we are going to move that process forward.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: I had one of the media members contact me and ask: What was the response at the doors? I did not mind saying I was pleasantly surprised that people were open-minded and understood when we make some harsh decisions that they are based on the best interest of the people here in the Province.

They also understood that some of the decisions we made may not have been exactly what they wanted. We were open enough to go back and reflect on that and see what it is we could do to make it better. See what it is we could do to reflect exactly what their needs are and how we can invest the dollar to get the best bang to make sure that these people, the people in this Province who need it, be it the most vulnerable, be it those who have a future here in this Province, those who want to take from a business point of view and invest back in to help everybody in this Province, and we have managed to do that.

We have heard over on this side of the House – every time one of our members speaks here about how very passionate they are about their districts, how passionate they are about the people of this Province and wanting to invest. Sometimes we get criticized because we stand

up here and we talk about the great investments in our districts, but we are not that self-serving that it is just about our districts. We are proud of the work we have done with our colleagues.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. BRAZIL: We are proud of being able to sell the need for the people that we serve but we also look at the bigger picture. We look at health care on a big picture. We look at education on a bigger picture. We look at affordable education. We look at infrastructure. We look at all the factors here that have an influence.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: I was extremely impressed with my colleagues here in the last couple of days, Baie Verte – Springdale and Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune, how passionately they talk about getting things done in their district and listening to people so that things could move forward. That is an attribute on this side of the House for all of our members here.

Everything we do here is a work in progress because not everything can be done overnight. We have talked about being fiscally responsible, but everybody over here has lobbied for their districts and wants to make sure their people receive what is in the best interests of their districts and moves for economic improvement, while at the same time realizing that all of this Province has to be served. All of the programs and services we do here, be it the Minister of Health when she notes investments in dialysis, investments in cancer treatment, or investments in our drug dispensing programs – all of the things we do there is a testament to making sure people in all parts of this Province have access to proper education, proper health care, and proper infrastructure.

Unfortunately, I have to do this. I am going to apologize upfront. It is not the first time I have apologized in this House and it probably will not be the last time. I want to apologize because I have to outline some of the investments in my district, and I apologize because I feel like maybe I got more than my fair share. Fair enough, that is fine. I am not greedy. Hopefully, then, those who need some other things, they can be invested, be it a PC district, an NDP district, or a Liberal district.

I am just going to outline some of the things in this past year that have been invested in my district, and they are all good investments. They see the potential for economic growth and they see the need for people to be able to move forward and have inclusion and a stake in their own futures.

Sixty-million dollars into a ferry service, a massive ferry, bigger than anybody would have hoped for, because it is a cliché: build it and they will come. Economic development for Portugal Cove-St. Phillips and Bell Island hinges around a massive tourism industry. It also hinges around affordable transportation and reliable transportation for people on Bell Island being able to get to St. John's or the Northeast Avalon where there is a vibrant economic community and there is a job market here they can access. They are no longer reliant on social programs from the government, a real big positive thing there.

Two schools, Mr. Chair, at \$25 million each, a junior high school in Portugal Cove-St. Phillips and an elementary school in Paradise, all positive things as part of our investment here.

We will be cutting a ribbon on two arenas later this fall in Paradise. Myself, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services had a major stake in working with the town council of Paradise and the residents there to make this a reality for those people.

One (inaudible) water treatment centres for Bell Island being constructed as we speak to make sure the people have affordable, safe drinking

water, another part of our infrastructure for making sure our citizens have all the amenities they need in any community.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Four million dollars in infrastructure structure money, just in the community of Portugal Cove-St. Phillips, to make sure we have proper roads and that we have proper water and sewer systems there; another \$1 million on Bell Island just to look at the water treatment centre over there and how we can improve that.

I might add, too, and it will be announced in the next few days, Newfoundland Power are investing \$15 million in Bell Island alone with a new cable centre over there. They know what we are doing as a government, and the infrastructure we are putting into this region, is going to improve the ability to sell Bell Island as a place where people can invest when it comes to construction.

Mr. Chair, I also want to talk about some of the important things. I thought about, what would I speak about today? I opened the paper; four key things jumped right out at me. One, Muskrat Falls oversight – and the minister talked about how important this project is to us, but more importantly how we protect the investment of the people of this Province. That is who owns it, Mr. Chair; the people of this Province own that project. We want to make sure that everything that we do is in the best interest of the project, but in the best interest of the people who are serving it and if they can maximize the revenue from that type of project.

We know, at the end of the day, not only will we have affordable electricity, reliable electricity and electricity that we can rely on ourselves, but we will also have a revenue stream that will go into education, health care, infrastructure and all of these positive things. The oversight is to make sure our investment and the investment of the people of this Province is protected, very much so.

Also, the next article we saw there: the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General talking about investing in our legal system. It is very important. We realize that we need to protect society, but we also need to make sure that people have access to proper legal services and that is what we have done. We were complimented by the Chairman of the legal aid society for saying this is a good investment, it is going in the right direction, and that we need to continue to support the services in this Province, very much so. There are a lot of accolades coming from the legal profession because we went out and listened to people. We asked them, the expertise – if we are doing something right, tell us to continue that so we do not change it. If we are doing something wrong, tell us how we can improve it and give us the insight to do it and we will come back and find ways of doing it. We have done that again.

A particular one that is close to me, the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services outlined better residential care and programming for youth, particularly youth at risk. In my career as a civil servant for twenty-five years, one of the things that I was partly responsible for but had a lot of input in was youth at risk programs. I have to admit here that when I looked at the partners, particularly with the private sector out here and the not-for-profit agencies, we have by far the best – I cannot say in this country any more – in the world. I have had the privilege of travelling different areas, looking at different programs.

The partnerships that we have developed here guarantee that not only do we get a tenfold return on our investment, but that we get by far the best services for the individuals out there. The people we are dealing with here are those at risk. We cannot jeopardize the need for those people to be included, to make sure that they get a proper start in life, and that we support them in whatever may need to be done.

To do that we need to have the proper services, and we have funded that. To do that, you have to have the resources. When we partner with those specialists out there and those agencies that have as their primary objective the inclusion

of young people at risk and also making sure that those young people have a fresh start in life, then I know, as a government, and I know as a sitting MHA, and I know as my colleagues on this side of the House, we are doing exactly what we were elected, and we will continue to do that for the people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Order, please!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I was not sure if you could see me or not there; I could not see you.

I am happy to get an opportunity to stand and to once again raise some concerns that I have been hearing from people not just here in my own district and in this region, but throughout the Province, issues that came up and continue to come up, but especially while I was travelling around in February to listen to people.

They certainly had a lot of concerns and questions about what happened in January in this Province. Of course, none of us have a lot of answers to give them yet, and I am certainly hoping that the review that is being done by the PUB – the Public Utilities Board – is going to give them some answers. For people living in a Province in Canada to lose power the way we lost it, to have the rolling blackouts first and then to lose our power the way it happened, people really questioned: Where are we living? Are we really living in a developed country? Isn't this Province part of what would be considered a developed country, a country that has resources, a Province that has resources?

There are many countries in the world where rolling blackouts are part of who they are, simply because they do not have the resources and they do not have a system that can maintain

who they are as a country, but we do have it here. We do have the resources, and we can make things work. People do have a question: Why did it happen?

I cannot give that answer today, but I really do not think that what Nalcor did yesterday gives them answers either. I think what Nalcor did yesterday was create even more questions for people. People are starting to say: Why is it that we did not have what we needed in terms of backup gas turbines? Why is it that breakers broke down? Why is it that the Holyrood Generating Station did not have what it needed when we had the crisis in January? Why is it that the whole system just could not meet our needs in a cold winter?

All we heard from Nalcor yesterday was a recognition that things had to be done but not admitting to people that the reason we had the rolling blackouts and the reason we had the crisis we had, and the reason that DarkNL happened was because there was a lack of planning around how to meet the energy needs of people in this Province. It is not because they did not know that there was going to be a problem.

Less than two years ago, the then Minister of Natural Resources pointed out that by 2015 we were going to be into issues with energy and we were going to end up having brownouts, I think that was the word he used here in the House of Assembly at the time.

MR. MURPHY: Yes.

MS MICHAEL: Brownouts, and he gave that information based on a report that MHI had done when it was doing its reports for Nalcor around Muskrat Falls. They gave logical reasons why the brownout was going to happen, but, Mr. Chair, what I would like to point out is that Nalcor could have done planning to avoid those brownouts. Instead of being so focused on Muskrat Falls, as Nalcor and this government are, they kept looking at the future, but the future that was ten or fifteen years down the road instead of the future that was only two or three years away, and to expect people in this

Province to be satisfied that brownouts have to happen and we have to go around almost being afraid to turn on a light switch.

I heard one of the ministers earlier today say that when we turn on a light switch we expect to get power. Yes, we certainly do, but we were going around feeling guilty in January for turning on a light switch because we were afraid that maybe somebody else was going to end up not having power because we had turned on one light switch too many. That is in a developed country, which sometimes feels like a developing country. One does not feel like one is in a country that has what it needs for the people when you cannot even count on having your power.

What Nalcor has to say to people is we neglected you. This government has to say we neglected you. We neglected your needs. We neglected to plan for the interim.

As much as I do not believe that Muskrat Falls is the way to go, that if this government determined, as it did, they were going to put Muskrat Falls in place, then they should also have determined what was going to happen in the interim. Rolling blackouts was not what people wanted to happen in the interim. I think that is the message this government received. I think that is the message Nalcor received. I do think they thought they were going to get away with saying to people: let's conserve, rolling blackouts can help out, only at times when we have special needs, we know you will all co-operate. People said no, that is not the way to go.

That is why we had Nalcor yesterday announcing, for example – and this is an important one – that they will be adding additional power generation in Holyrood in the form of another gas turbine. That was something they were going to do two years ago and they reneged on and gambled on. That is the part that really upsets people. They really feel that government gambled and Nalcor gambled.

Nalcor gambled when it decided not to put money into the gas turbine for Holyrood. They found out in January that people are not going to be satisfied to be going around unable to live what is considered a normal life in our society. They have had to go back on what they tried to do, which was not put any money into a new gas turbine, which they now recognize is absolutely essential in order for people to have energy at all times, even at peak times.

We should not be feeling guilty because of peak times. If this government wanted to, Mr. Chair, it could put in place energy conservation practices. If they are not needed in ten years' time and are needed now, they should be put into place. For example, instead of saying to people you can put your dishwasher on 10:00 o'clock at night, or put your dryer on 10:00 o'clock at night, just do not say that to them, give people an incentive for doing it.

There are programs in other provinces, for example, where you get a break on your energy bill if you do choose to use big items – like your dishwasher, or your dryer, or your clothes washer as far as that goes – at a time which is not a peak time, but put an incentive in there. Government could do that. Maybe in ten years' time we may not need it, I do not know, but we need it now.

They are talking energy conservation but they will not put any incentives in place to help people do it, to give people an incentive to do it. It is absolutely wonderful to have energy conservation. They have forgotten it. Nalcor has totally forgotten that energy conservation is in its mandate. That is totally gone out the window and that is what we need to bring back.

Let's bring it in now. Let's up the number of households that can apply for retrofitting. Let's go back to the 1,000 that we have, which was brought down to 500. Is that what we are going to see in this Budget? I would hope so.

If we are going to deal with the present needs and the present peak times, one way is to do the things that Nalcor says it is going to do. They are going to replace old breakers. They are

going to bring in the gas turbine. They are going to look at how they maintain and operate their gas turbines. That is fine, but let's also bring incentives for energy conservation as a way of life on a daily basis instead of something we just do in an emergency situation.

Put in the incentives to allow that to happen and then we will feel assured. People will feel a bit more secure. Right now, while it is fine Nalcor made its announcements yesterday, people still need to feel more security that energy will always be there when they put their finger to that light switch.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, as always, it is great when we get opportunity to be in this House and to debate, particularly today as we take a look at the Interim Supply bill, which is so important to the work we do in this Province.

Before I get started on a few comments I do want to make, I certainly want to welcome the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace. We have not had a chance to have much of a chat yet, but I am sure we will over the next period of time. Welcome, Sir. This is quite an honourable place to be and I am sure you will find that as well. There is nothing more rewarding than working for the people in your district and working for the good of the Province as a whole. I am sure you will find that to be a very rewarding experience for you as well.

Mr. Chair, within the short time frame I have to speak this afternoon, I am always torn as to whether I talk about my district when it comes to talking about Interim Supply and the monies that we spend or whether I talk about my Department of Health and Community Services. I think I

finally settled on wanting to talk about a little bit of both.

I want to start with the wonderful District of Grand Falls-Windsor – Buchans, which I have had the privilege of representing now for almost seven years. It is a district I have been extremely proud of. It has endured some pretty rough times over the last few years, Mr. Chair, with the loss of the mill and, of course, more recently with the announcement around Teck Duck Pond. It has been extremely difficult in some situations, but the resilience of the people of the area is what has made a difference there, and the fact that we have worked with them, Mr. Chair. We have never left the side of the people of my district in the sense of being there to support, to listen, and to respond.

Mr. Chair, if I could just give a few examples of some work that we have done just over the last two or three years to sort of reinforce those points. In terms of health care – and that is the one that I know most thoroughly at this point in time – we have invested over \$30 million in the hospital in Grand Falls-Windsor, a hospital that serves a large portion of the people of the Province and was in need of many repairs.

We have in the hospital now a \$9 million pharmacy department that services the whole of the region, but more particularly certainly the hospital in Grand Falls-Windsor, the long-term care in Grand Falls-Windsor, and so on. It has equipment in there that the people who work in the pharmacy tell me one would not find east of Montreal. They are very happy with the improvements that we have made there, because we decided not to settle. We did not half do the project; this is a state-of-the-art pharmacy that exists now in the Central Newfoundland Regional Health Centre.

As well, I had the honour, just recently, of opening the operation rooms. Those ORs are again state-of-the-art; \$22 million we invested there. I heard from one of the surgeons as we were doing a tour of the ORs and she said to me: You have no idea what a difference it makes in terms of coming to work. When I can come to work where I have all of the tools that I need, in

a setting that I need, so that I can work to my optimum scope of practice, it makes coming to work an absolute joy. She went on to say that she had worked in several cities across this country. I know she named Ottawa, she named Fredericton, New Brunswick, she named a city out west, she named St. John's, and she said: The facilities here are the best that I have seen right across Canada in places that I have worked.

That is the commitment that we make. When we are doing a project, sometimes people complain, they say it takes us too long to get to it, it takes us too long to finally get it built, but particularly in health care, our commitment is to get it right, to make sure that we do the best job so that the people get the best service that they can and that they deserve.

Mr. Chair, our work around dialysis the hospital as well is ongoing. When I first saw the dialysis unit at the hospital I was nothing short of dismayed at what I found. We have committed now to ensuring that dialysis unit is brought up to par as well. I am really looking forward to being able to continue that conversation with you in the not too distant future.

If I might just move on to a couple of other things in the district when we talk about the addictions issues that we see right across this Province, it was identified that what we needed was a residential youth treatment centre for young people with addictions. We have built that now in Grand Falls-Windsor at a cost of \$12 million and it is second to none. I have had the chance of touring that facility with a couple of members. The former Minister of Transportation and Works, currently the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services, and I did a tour. It is a phenomenal, phenomenal place to work.

I have seen and spoken with some of the employees because they have all been hired now; they are training. We hope to open that facility in May. They are absolutely delighted with what they see there. We know that through that facility we are going to make a difference in the lives of those young people, in the lives of the families of those young people, and for the

overall good of the whole of the Province, Mr. Chair. It truly is. At some point in time I would like to be able to just describe the setting that we find in that centre and then its sister centre, which is in Paradise, which is the treatment centre for youth with complex mental health needs as well – two phenomenal services.

Mr. Chair, I would like to just point out a couple of other things. We have spent \$11.9 million on Exploits Valley High school. When they moved into that school what was found was an inadequate gym. They could not even host tournaments, particularly not volleyball, not basketball tournaments or anything of the like. Now they have what I again called a state-of-the-art gym. The Minister of Education and I toured that over the summer and it is a wonderful gym.

With the other services, with the other space now, we are moving forward to create a variety of other educational spaces as well as cafeteria space. All of that is, I would suggest, something that the people of the area are thankful for. Certainly I know from speaking to the students when I have had opportunity to visit with them they are thankful.

When I look further into my district and I talk on the Buchans area: \$424,000 this summer was announced for upgrades to the Buchans stadium; \$745,000 for electrical upgrades to Avoca Collegiate in Badger; when I look at the \$1.1 million that we have announced for the Exploits Valley Intermediate school. I could talk about the bridge work that we are doing, Mr. Chair. I can talk about other improvements that we have made in the millions of dollars to A.M. Guy Memorial Hospital in Buchans and, most recently, when they were able to get a bus so that people in the long-term care area were able to get out and were able to travel and were able to experience the outside; they are so excited about that.

When I think about the water supply issues that we have had in Badger, and they have been ongoing. Again, it takes a while to get the right system in place, but we are working forward and we are confident that is going to happen to this

summer for the people of Badger. We committed that this year we would ensure that we would not have any problems around losing the water supply as a result of the freezing that happens in the Province, with flooding, and so on in the area. We have been able to do that with some new equipment that we put in there, but this summer we hope to have the full fix in place, complete with the new water tank for that area.

In Buchans, if I go back up the road again, then we are looking at about \$144,000 that we announced there for renovations, and much needed renovations, for the swimming pool. Again, if I have heard anything in the Buchans area in terms of the importance of outdoor activity and recreational activity for our young people, it certainly was in the realm of that swimming pool. It is very important piece of infrastructure in the community and, for several years now, it has not been able to operate. I was really happy to have gone there with the former Minister of Municipal Affairs, this past summer, and to be able to make that announcement. It has made such a difference in the area, just in the overall excitement in the area.

Of course, I would be remiss if I did not mention MOGs, particularly in those three of my smaller communities in Millertown, Buchans, and Badger where they have seen increases in their operational grants that they are extremely happy with.

There are other things that I can talk about in terms of paving and bridge work. As I mention bridge work, I would be remiss, I think, if I did not mention one of the bridges that is not only important to the whole of the region of Central Newfoundland and Labrador, but is also important for the whole of the Province; and that is the Sir Robert Bond Bridge, which for all of the people who travel this Island from east to west, they need to use. So we have invested \$12 million there and we are really happy to see the results.

Mr. Chair, I hope I can come back and talk some more later on this afternoon.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Cartwright-L'Anse au Clair.

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am pleased to be able to stand here and speak for a few minutes about my district. I am just going into my second sitting in the House. I live in a beautiful part of the Province, but we certainly have lots of issues. The people elected me to be their voice and I am happy to stand every time I have an opportunity, address them, keep them in the forefront, and educate the people here in the House of Assembly on some of the issues in our district.

I have to go back to the member opposite's reference to campaigning out in Virginia Waters, so I would be remiss if I did not mention it as well. It was a stormy night and I was not dressed properly but the warm reception at the doors last night I can tell you certainly made up for the cold, stormy night, especially when you go to a door and they tell you they have been one colour all of their life and now this time they are changing. That was really rewarding, so we will continue to stay the course the way the polls are staying the course. That is a beautiful, nice, hot colour, for the member across the way.

In Labrador, there is a quote that I really like. I have referenced it here before and I will reference it again now: Sometimes to have true equity you have to have the unequal treatment of equals. In Labrador, Mr. Chair, it costs more to do business, but the government of this day, no matter what colour their stripe, have a moral and an ethical obligation to ensure the people of Labrador, like everywhere else in the Province, are treated as fairly and as equally as possible.

It always humours me when I would stand and raise an issue and someone can yell out: Sure, you are getting a new school. Is that anything the rest of the Province does not have? Someone says: Sure, you are getting a road. Is that anything exceptional that the rest of the

Province does not have? That is basic infrastructure. There are people around the Province complaining about the potholes and their old roads, and we are still trying to get the first road. We are trying to catch up all of the time.

I want to go down through a number of different sectors. I would be remiss if I did not start with transportation because I can tell you we have certainly had our fair share of transportation issues. It is really, really frustrating. I do not have time in the few minutes I have to share some of the stories, real life stories, the suffering and the hardship because of the transportation issues especially since 2014 came in.

It is very, very sad when you have people who depended on the ferry because they cannot fly because of serious ear conditions. You have people who need to move for dialysis assessment and things like that. I understand ice conditions. I understand you cannot do much about ice that is four feet thick, but when I talk to the Coast Guard they are saying: If you had a boat with a bit more horsepower and you had something with ice class. It really, really saddens you because what it tells me is that in the bad ice conditions the Coast Guard does not have much to work with in that old boat. It seems, Mr. Chair, that we are going to have wait until 2016 until we get any better. I am not sure what we are going to do in the meantime, but we will keep hammering it away.

When you see places like Change Islands, St. Brendan's, Fogo, and all these places, as soon as the ferry goes down they get an air service. Yet this government seems to think that driving 3,000 kilometres and through three provinces for the Aunt Nellies and the Uncle Johns, in the dead of winter and in the climate we live in, is an acceptable option. It absolutely is not, Mr. Chair.

I think in the meantime, while we are having all of these transportation woes, it is a good time for us to go back and revisit the fixed link because if we are cut off the way we are it is time for us to get back to the drawing board and say: Okay, is it better to go under the ice? Clearly we have a

huge issue. There are a lot of people impacted. We have about 20,000 people in Labrador who are impacted; then there is the Northern Peninsula and there is the Island.

What is going to happen sadly, Mr. Chair, is when Route 138 gets connected they are going to be scrambling to catch up and do the fixed link, whereas if there was any vision on the part of this government – it saddens me deeply that a subsea cable is going across the Strait of Belle Isle and it should be running through a tunnel. That is what you call poor planning and no vision.

I will be starting to petition for a fixed link. I know the former Premier called a pre-feasibility study. That study showed it would be a cost of about \$1.2 billion and it could be done over ten or eleven years. That is an eight-year-old study; I do not believe we can depend on the figures in that right now. We have people out there who have travelled to Norway, they have visited some of the 900 tunnels in Norway, and they are telling us that it can be done for less than \$500 million, so let us go back and look. I am calling on government, urging them, to call for a feasibility study. Let us look at the figures and let us see what is a viable option.

In the meantime, that is one part. The ferries are a big issue in the district, but then the roads. In the Labrador Straits, Route 510, seventy-six kilometres, we have thirty-five year old pavement. I have had people here in the House say to me before that roads are an issue everywhere. I guarantee you I have driven in places where people call it bad roads, but you have not seen bad roads until you come to my area.

Back in the spring when I was campaigning, I actually had members say to me: I wish some of the people complaining about roads in my area could come to your area and see what you are dealing with. You can only go so far with cold patch, and then it is a safety issue. It is just a miracle, as I have said before, that lives are not lost on this road.

I am happy to see the pavement for Red Bay going north to Goose Bay has been announced. We know it was six years on the Western side. In the meantime, I would urge the minister to ensure that some money for ongoing maintenance is in place while we are awaiting the pavement.

When we think about it, we have people commuting on that road every day for jobs, we have ambulances, and we do not have cell service. We do not have coverage like that if there is an accident, so we certainly need the road. I believe there is a responsibility that this government has to the safety of the traveling public, so I will continue to lobby for that.

Mr. Chair, the minister was talking about health. I want to draw attention to seniors. I recently heard someone say: Do not differentiate between your seniors because they live on a fixed income and they are all equal no matter where they live. That statement could not be further from the truth. If a senior is living in Mount Pearl and they need to see a specialist, they are going to get in their vehicle, spend \$3 in gas, go to the Health Sciences, and see their specialist.

If a senior in my area needs to see a specialist, they are going to get on a boat, they are going to be maybe fifty-two hours on the boat, then they are going to get to Corner Brook, and they might be stranded for eight or nine days. All in all, their trip has cost them several grand of money and communities are holding dart tournaments and things like that to offset the cost. I do not know where we would be without the generosity of our small communities stepping up to the plate.

Physiotherapy is one example of where we could have much better service in rural parts if there was a will on the part of government to make this happen. A physiotherapist is not a person who needs to travel with a lot of big equipment. Sadly, many times when I have gone into communities in my district, especially in Southeast, they say: Lisa, I travel to Blanc-Sablon to see a physiotherapist and by the time I get back the road is so bad I am off work for another two weeks. Guess who is paying the bill

when they are off work? The government is. I do not know why we do not have a physiotherapist coming down doing at least a monthly visit or every several weeks.

I am really happy to hear my colleague today ask a question on eating disorders. I did not hear an answer. I did not hear it touched. Eating disorders are a growing issue. I am hearing it. I am hearing it from parents. We are not educated. There is no information out there. I am hearing it from people at the Janeway saying this is a growing epidemic. I am hearing it from schools, from teachers saying we do not even know enough about what to watch for with the signs. Look at the money that is being spent, when if we put a little bit of money out in education and promotion up front, people would know the signs and you would get that early intervention.

Businesses in my district are paying some of the highest commercial rates in the Province. Yet, sadly when you have some businesses that want to look at alternative options on their own and want to introduce wind energy, Bill 61 came in giving Nalcor the monopoly and they cannot even do that. Then there is all of the red tape and the things they have to go through in addition.

Services in the small communities have been basically gutted over the last decade. I keep going back to the Employment Assistance Services offices because I know first-hand the value of the work. I had to take thirty resumes under my arm and sit down with Gilbert Bennett at Nalcor and try and sift through why my people who were qualified were not getting work because they did not have an employment office in the area to go to.

CHAIR (Littlejohn): Order, please!

MS DEMPSTER: It is very, very sad, Mr. Chair. I did have a whole bunch of others but I will save that for another time.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am really happy to have opportunity to stand and to continue to speak. As I said, the last time I spoke primarily about my district. This time I would like to take some time to talk about health care in general.

I just heard the member opposite talking about eating disorders and voicing some concern that perhaps there is not enough being done to address eating disorders. Mr. Chair, I could not agree more about the fact that this really is a complex medical and psychiatric illness, there is no question about that. It requires a very collaborative approach by many different health professionals in order to be able to adequately address the eating disorders that we have seen within our Province.

We need family physicians, psychiatrists, dieticians, psychologists, nurses, and social workers. There is a whole gamut of people we need to engage when we are looking at issues around treating eating disorders. We certainly recognize that, Mr. Chair. We have managed to put in place I think some very good supports at this point in time, but we recognize that it is not all done. It will take some time for us to get all of it done.

One of the things I really value though is the work done by the Eating Disorder Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador. It has done some tremendous work. I rely on them heavily as well for feedback, for information, for recommendations, suggestions and so on.

Mr. Chair, we do have a number of supports in place that I would just like to make sure the member opposite is aware of. The Adolescent Medicine program at the Janeway, for example, is for individuals up to eighteen years of age. This is an outpatient service. At the Janeway Psychiatry Unit we have two in-patient beds for those individuals who are medically stable enough to require admission so that they can be treated. We have to have the patients medically

stable enough for treatment of eating disorders as well. We also do admit, of course, medically unstable patients who suffer from eating disorders.

A psychologist in the mental health and addictions program provides services to adolescents transitioning from the medicine program into the adult mental health services program. That transition is really helpful in terms of that continuing support that is needed.

Of course, the HOPE program for individuals fifteen years and older is also available. They do some tremendous work on an outpatient basis, particularly, and there are about twelve beds that are seen at the HOPE program clinic right now. For individuals with an eating disorder who are over the age of eighteen, they certainly can be admitted as well to the Health Sciences psychiatry unit, or to a medicine unit, again, if they are medically unstable.

So, Mr. Chair, there are a number of initiatives that are ongoing around eating disorders, but in terms of EDFNL, the Eating Disorder Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, I continue to work with them and I certainly value all of their input and their support as we try to battle this very serious and very complex issue in our society today.

Mr. Chair, I want to speak a little bit about overall health care issues as opposed to specific issues. I want to talk about one of the things I think we tend to overlook, but that we have to look around health care, and that has to do with sustainability of the system. At this point in time we are spending close to \$3 billion a year on health care.

Now, Mr. Chair, I know I have said it in this House before but it bears repeating. That is 40 per cent of the Province's overall budget being spent on health care. We spend close to \$5,249 per person, well above the per capita spending anywhere else in this country. We have to find ways, Mr. Chair, to make sure that we spend smarter, that we spend more efficiently and effectively while still delivering the programs we continue to promote, while still delivering

the services that we do, and while ensuring that we have adequate staff on hand to deliver.

One of the things we sometimes forget is that the cost of health care is often found in the cost of the wages of those people who are working in health care; about 70 per cent of those costs, actually. So we are left then with trying to look at the other 30 per cent in terms of finding the efficiencies that we need to find.

I really want to commend the regional health authorities who have done some tremendous work over the last two years. Particularly following on the lead of Eastern Health around the benchmarking process and at finding ways to be leaner as a result of applying principles, best practices, things learned from other jurisdictions across the country, and in some cases right here in Newfoundland and Labrador, where there are some really good best practices that we can show to the rest of the country.

Overall, we are looking at about \$85 million they have identified that we can put to work smarter and more efficiently, Mr. Chair. That, I think, speaks tremendously to the collaborative work that was done because this was done not from a top down perspective, but by working with directors, managers, and people on the front line to say: How best can we deliver this particular service? How best can we ensure that patients are efficiently treated on another program and so on?

They have done that with no loss in service, with no loss in programs, and, Mr. Chair, with no layoffs either. That is, I think, in and of itself something that I consider to be very, very important in terms of the work we are doing.

I want to say to the people of the Province as well, we have one of the best track records in terms of being served by health care in the Province. I am not sure how many people know this, but I think it is important to tell everybody that 82 per cent of the residents of this Province have access to an emergency department within a thirty-minute drive; 82 per cent of the population.

Mr. Chair, 98 per cent of the residents of this Province have access to a community clinic within a thirty-minute drive. Those are pretty staggering statistics that I think point to the fact that we are doing some good work in health care.

When I quote those statistics, when I meet with my counterparts from across the country, they are often stunned by that. They often say to me, given your geography that is pretty impressive. We do not know how you are doing that.

Let's talk about that geography. We are talking about, for the landmass here with only 500,000 people, operating 179 health care centres, clinics, hospitals and long-term care facilities. It is not just a matter of the bricks and mortars and building all of that, it is also about the operational costs of those 179 facilities.

We have in this Province more physicians and registered nurses than we have ever had before. In fact, if we talk about registered nurses – and I heard my colleague from Bonavista, and I am not going to say north or south because I will be wrong. I did hear my colleague yesterday making reference to the fact that we have 54 per cent more registered nurses per population than the Canadian average. That is telling, Mr. Chair. That is saying something very important about the work we are doing here and the attention we give to ensuring that there is good and adequate service.

We have more dialysis services per population, more dialysis sites per population, than any other province in this country. It is not just that we have more dialysis sites, but more per population.

We have the shortest wait times in this Province for radiation therapy, for bypass surgery, for hip and knee replacement, and for cataract surgery. We need to take store of that, be proud of that, be confident in that and know that our health care system is working, that we have been listening, that we have identified problem areas, and that we have moved forward and addressed them. Are we saying that we have done it all? Of course, we are not; I do not know that

anybody is ever going to be able to say that in health care it is all done, but we are certainly listening and we are certainly moving forward.

We are talking about infrastructure improvements as well, Mr. Chair, such as hospitals, long-term care facilities, and so on. It is amazing. Since 2004, \$1.2 billion that we have invested in health care infrastructure in this Province; thirty-five facilities that have either been completed or in progress – pretty amazing stuff.

If I had the time – and I do not; I see my time is quickly running out – I could go down through a list of all of the services that we have provided or all of the infrastructure that we have provided in the Province over the last bit of time just to give you a sense of it. I hope that at some point in time I might get an opportunity to do that and perhaps to be able to talk about long-term care as well. Because I know there is always an interest in long-term care in this Province, where we currently invest \$600 million annually. Again we are seeing improvements, we still have some work to do, and we are committed to doing the work in all of those areas.

I thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to speak a second time here this afternoon.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will just stand to have a few words on Interim Supply and speak about some issues out in Corner Brook, Bay of Islands area.

Mr. Chair, in the last couple of weeks, I have been a bit tied down with the flu bug. Some people that I was speaking to understood that there were a few events that I could not make it to, but they understood because of that. There are a few issues that I promised them I would raise during Interim Supply.

Mr. Chair, I am just going to speak about a few issues concerning the Bay of Islands and Corner Brook area. This is what we are supposed to do. We are supposed to advocate on behalf of the people who elected us. I have always said that if the people elect you, you should try to advocate for what they feel, what they want, and this is the place to do it.

I just feel sometimes when you come up with some ideas or you come up with some suggestions or some concerns, it is almost like you are not allowed to bring up anything bad. You are not allowed to bring up if there is something not done. You are not allowed to bring up any issue whatsoever because, oh no, that is bad, the government may not like that or, oh no, we are doing all that. This is where we do this. This is not criticism on anybody. This is what you do when you are elected. You bring up the concerns of the people who elected you.

Mr. Chair, I will just bring up some concerns that they had. I use the roadwork in Bay of Islands. I said it before and I will say it again, even before when I was not here for four years, when the former member was there, hardly any work was done. This year alone, the former minister who is the Premier now, \$272 million of capital works not spent – committed to, but not spent. When you hear a Budget and say, oh, what a great Budget and what great announcements, but the actual spending of it, so people can have better water and so that people can have better roads, that is what we want to see.

When you raise that in the House of Assembly, you are not bad. You are not being somebody who is critical. You are raising the concerns on behalf of the people. When they hear these announcements, they expect these services.

Mr. Chair, I will just give you an example: the roadwork for Hughes Brook hill. It is a priority. Last year, I wrote the minister and the year before. It is getting to the points where the ruts are treacherous – they are actually treacherous.

Then when you look at some areas between Frenchmen's Cove and York Harbour this year,

they almost lost the road. They had to bring down the speed from eighty to thirty. They have to put signs up, Mr. Chair, on a regular basis. I am hoping that is going to be fixed.

John's Beach area, Mr. Chair, is another area where the road – and this is not the department's fault. It is just the way the road is built on this crevice and it is washing out underneath. It is not that the department may not know or they are not doing their work. There is nothing you can do, but we need it fixed. This is not a knock on any worker with the Department of Transportation and Works. This is not a knock on any minister or any official in here. It is just something that needs to be monitored and needs to be fixed.

You look at the road in McIver's, which has been like that for eight or nine years. I know the former member also went and tried to get it fixed, but could not get it fixed. I wrote at least eight, ten, or twelve letters on it, Mr. Chair, trying to get it fixed. The idea is to get it fixed.

When you hear about all of these announcements about the money is going to be spent, Mr. Chair, but not being spent, and you see all the road improvements, which are not being done, you have to question: Where is all the money? Now we find out from the minister it is not even being spent. These are the kinds of things you bring up here in the House of Assembly on their behalf.

I look at the water and sewer, Mr. Chair. That is another one. I know, for example, in Summerside I have been contacted by a couple of people lately, a good friend of mine who the sewer – there has been no money for water and sewer in the last number of years. There may be some from major projects, but there is none that has been spent I know in my way. I know in other areas of the Province it has not been spent.

When you sit down and see the announcement last year \$600,000, \$500,000, \$400,000 here, \$300,000 – and I understand the financial constraint. I understand all that too, Mr. Chair, but to have something significant to improve the lives of the people, you have to put the money

into this type of program. Irishtown is a prime example. Safe drinking water is a prime example. You hear it in Irishtown that they need money. They have a nice system, but they need to improve the booster at the chlorination station. What is it, \$100,000? Those are the kinds of things that we need to invest in it.

Sewer, Mr. Chair, in Frenchman's Cove, that was something that was committed to. I am going back five or six years when the former member was here and committed to it. It is still not done. These are the types of things that the people in Frenchman's Cove are saying: How can you go do a system, three-quarters finish it, commit to do it, yet not put the money through it?

Mr. Chair, this is where you raise these concerns. Lark Harbour and York Harbour are planning on amalgamating. They are hoping they are going to get some money for water and sewer to do their towns. When you hear that everything is hunky-dory from members opposite because they have to go and tow the party line and speak on their speaking notes, that is not always true, everything is not all hunky-dory.

By any means am I saying here, Mr. Chair, that there are not great things happening in this Province. Absolutely not, I would not say it, but it is not all hunky-dory. When you bring concerns up like that in the House of Assembly on behalf of the people, I am not a bad person for doing that; I am doing my job. I am doing what I was elected to do and I will continue to do it until the beautiful people from the Bay of Islands say: No, we do not want you.

Until then, if I get the concerns like I have here – and I see the Minister of Transportation and Works over there with his finger. I have to give the minister – last year when I called him about an emergency between York Harbour and Lark Harbour, the minister stood me in his office, he said: Ed, I cannot you guarantee anything but I will honestly try. I give the minister credit; he got it done. It was a major safety concern. I have to give him credit. He did not say I will do it, to get me out of his office; he said: I will try.

Those are the kinds of things that we have to work together to do and I acknowledge that kind of stuff, and the people in York Harbour and Lark Harbour – and I said it publicly about that, Mr. Chair. Those are the kinds of things we have to work together for the safety of the residents. Now, do not forget Hughes Brook hill either, I say to the minister.

The hospital in Corner Brook is something people know I have brought up on many occasions here in this House and throughout. Mr. Chair, people are saying: Well, why are you harping on the hospital? I will just give you background. This was announced in 2007 and was supposed to be completed in 2012 or 2013. Guess what? The design is not even approved yet. They are going out to RFPs now in 2014.

Mr. Chair, we look at some of the issues that have been raised. The ultrasound has been cut from six machines to three. Wait times now will go from 147 days up to 300 days for ultrasounds because there is going to be a mobile unit to take care of everybody, which is less than 10 per cent of the people who would ever be able to use the mobile unit and which does not have the same quality of a standard unit. They may have to go back and do the test, if something ever does show up. So those are the kinds of services, even in the hospital.

Mr. Chair, I said this from day one: what we need is an open and informed discussion on the hospital in Corner Brook. That is what we need. When I bring up concerns here in this House, they say, oh, you do not know what you are talking about, but we have yet to have a public meeting where someone can show me the information that I have – and I go through the information.

I am not here today to criticize, but I went through all the information, like a PET scanner costs \$40 million – not true. There are none in Canada; yes, there are some in Canada, radiation units, Mr. Chair. Then you start getting on to the numbers. The most telling thing I heard here was the Premier of the Province, the Member for Humber East, stood out in Corner Brook, he spoke, and he said: The people on the West

Coast should have the same level of care of the people on the East Coast. That is what he said.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JOYCE: Now, Mr. Chair, if the Premier of this Province is really committed to those words, speak to Dr. Desiree Dunn, the radiologist from Corner Brook who works with seniors, who works with end-of-life individuals, and who stated that she has patients whose end-of-life quality of life is lower than the people on the East Coast because they cannot get radiation in Corner Brook. They cannot travel to St. John's to get it. They are suffering at the end of life.

If the Premier of this Province is committed to his words, meet with Dr. Desiree Dunn and you will change your mind on a radiation unit in Corner Brook, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Lewisporte.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. VERGE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is certainly a pleasure of mine to be able to stand here in my place this afternoon to speak for ten minutes on Interim Supply. I do not often get the opportunity now to stand and speak in the House of Assembly. When I was first elected in 2007, I had lots of opportunity to speak on many pieces of legislation that were put before the House. Since becoming the Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees, the opportunity is not there the same because lots of times when there are opportunities to speak, I am usually presiding over the proceedings in the House.

I am thankful this afternoon that I do have these few minutes to, first of all, once again express my appreciation to the people of Lewisporte District, the people who elected me to serve in the House of Assembly as their representative and the people to whom I owe a great debt of

gratitude. I do not take my duties lightly. I realize I am here to represent them and that I shall never forget.

Mr. Chair, in 2007, I was first elected. I want to speak for a few minutes; I want to take a few minutes to talk a little bit about our current Premier. Before I do that, I also want to join with other members who have welcomed the new Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace and welcome him to the House.

We have a current by-election that is going to be happening in a while and members on the opposite side, the Liberals and the NDP, vie to have their candidate elected. We on the government side, members of the Conservative Party, also vie to have our candidate elected. During the process and leading up to the election, we work hard to have our candidate elected. Once the election is done, we accept the decision of the people. Whoever the people, of course, choose to sit in this House and represent them, we all welcome them. We are all here for the same purpose.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. VERGE: Back in 2007, Mr. Chair, is when I first decided I wanted to get involved in politics. One of the first things I did leading up to the election was I ended up over in Corner Brook for some sort of a meeting. While there, I was meeting some of the members of the then Progressive Conservation caucus, and one of the people I met was the Member for Humber East, the current Premier.

Right at the very beginning, I just had an informal discussion with him and I was really impressed with the demeanor in which he conducted himself. I had a side conversation with an older gentleman there who talked about their member. He also was expressing his impressions and his belief of what the Member for Humber East stood for.

Over the last six and a half years sitting in this House of Assembly, whether the current Premier held the post as the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Natural Resources, or the Minister of

Justice, I have come to appreciate him. I have come to respect him. I believe he is a man who believes the people and what the people think is what is most important. I believe he is a man who believes we must listen to what the people say, and while we cannot always deliver on everything the people ask for and while we cannot always do everything the people want us to do, we have an obligation to explain to the people we serve why it is we make decisions that we make and explain the types of responsibilities we have and also the types of fiscal restraints that sometimes prevent us from being able to deliver everything the people of the Province would like to see.

During my last six or seven years here in the House of Assembly I have come to respect our current Premier and I think I have learned from him. I could only aspire to be able to have the same type of reputation in my district that he has in this Province because wherever you go people talk about our current Premier, and this is not new. Over the last six years I have heard people talk about the tremendous respect they have for him.

I also want to thank him for stepping in, in this period in which we are a group seeking a new leader. I thank him for stepping in and not just stepping in and saying we are just going to idle by, but also bringing his vision for this Province and his vision for the way in which governments should run. He started out with that at the very beginning. When he was sworn in, in Government House, he said we are going to listen to the people.

One of the first things he did was he recognized that the people of the Province have been asking for some time and have been saying that our government needs to do something and have another look at the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Our current Premier said: Whatever it is or whatever we think, the people of the Province have said we need to have another look at this. So he first of all announced a review, proof that this man is serious and this man is listening to the people of the Province.

Then, from there, of course, he said: Well, one of the things we are going to do, we reneged for quite some time, and we have been planning to do it, but we have not been able to deliver on it, is the whistle-blower legislation. In the Throne Speech, we hear this is something this government plans to bring in this session of the House.

Now, last week, we are not just going to talk this; we are going to formalize it. The Minister of Municipal Affairs along with the Premier announced the whole Open Government Initiative, a whole new way of doing business. We want to follow the example of a lot of other countries that did this formal process, an Open Government Initiative.

I heard the Premier say in the news conference when he released that, one of the reporters asked him: Why now, and what will be the impact? The Premier said: As a Province, we want to be among the leaders in this country and in this world when it comes to openness, when it comes to listening to the people, when it comes to responding to what the people are asking us for, when it comes to the people having meaningful input into the way their government should be run.

I have heard over the last week or so since we announced that initiative, the Opposition have asked questions. I think in some way one could think they ask questions in a little bit of a lighthearted way when they are talking about that.

I go back to the whole premise of this. The whole idea is that we listen to the people, we respond to what they are asking us to do, we respect them, and if we cannot deliver on something we give them an explanation as to why we cannot.

Mr. Chair, I took up most of my time talking about that because I believe it is very important. Where we are going as a government over the next number of years, how we plan as a government to conduct ourselves, and how we plan to really connect with the people of this Province. We respect the people who put us

here. We appreciate the people who put us here. If we are going to stay here in the remaining government, then obviously we have to react to what the people of the Province are telling us we need to do.

I think that the course is set. I appreciate where we are going. I think it is good. I want to thank the Premier for leading us in that direction and not just now, his whole term in office. The whole way he has conducted himself has led us down the road to where we are now.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I am very happy to be able to stand and to speak to this Bill 11. I would like to focus a little bit on the whole issue of the legal aid review that was undertaken by Mr. John Roil on behalf of the Department of Justice.

I also would like to thank the deputy minister yesterday who gave us a thorough briefing. However, the briefing was, Mr. Chair, after the press conference, and after the press had asked us to respond to it. The briefing only came then and we got the report only then after all that had happened. One would hope in fact that it would happen the other way around, that we would see the report, get a briefing, go to the press conference and then be available to respond to the specifics in the report that Mr. Roil had provided. It was a very thorough report.

Also what I would like to do is I would like to thank the good folks who work at legal aid, who do an absolutely wonderful service on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I would also like to thank the staff solicitors at legal aid who work under perhaps some of the most difficult circumstances carrying large numbers of files, cases to represent – to ensure

that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador have access to justice.

What I would like to talk about is that whole issue of access to justice. Mr. Chair, if people cannot afford representation then there is no justice for them, because we know decisions affecting people's lives happen in our courthouses. Many people cannot afford that; or, what they end up doing is they remortgage their houses, or they take out loans in order to be able to have access to justice. That, in and of itself, Mr. Chair, does not sound like justice to me.

What I would like to do is read a paragraph from Mr. Roil's report. This paragraph actually is from a paper prepared by the Canadian Bar Association. It was prepared in April, 2013. It was a discussion paper called The Future Directions for Legal Aid Delivery. It speaks specifically about the issue of access to justice. It is talking about how we are looking at our legal aid services right across the country, and do they need renewal? Do they need regeneration? The issue of access to justice is a pressing issue among the legal community.

We have heard our own Chief Justice Green speak at least twice, giving keynote addresses before the Rotary Group here in St. John's talking specifically about this issue, about access to justice and the affordability of justice. It affects not only the people who need representation, it also affects our very own court and justice system. Because if people are self-representing, no matter how intelligent they must be, to self-represent is very, very difficult if you do not have a thorough understanding of the law. What happens then it affects the whole court procedure.

As well, he had pointed out at one point the issue of commercial law. People can no longer afford to go to court for commercial issues, many people cannot. What happens then is that if you do not have people going to court with commercial issues, then our commercial laws are not challenged. That means that our laws are not modernized.

This is an issue again that affects not only individuals who have to seek justice, whether it be individuals who have been charged of a criminal offence, and it affects their families as well, but it also affects the very essence of our judicial system. It affects how our lives are interpreted, how our laws are applied, and it affects the workings, the actual workings of our court system.

So what they said from the Canadian Bar Association's discussion paper, Future Directions for Legal Aid Delivery, "Regeneration and renewal requires more though than just meeting budgetary targets. Legal aid must be based on a solid understanding of the legal needs and daily realities of people living in poverty, so services address the real constraints that marginalized and disadvantaged people live with. A comprehensive policy approach to regenerating and renewing legal aid is required, to ensure that every innovation is directed to attaining a more principled vision of equal justice. Even small steps are important if they are consistently directed toward that common vision." The phrase I would particularly like to point out, Mr. Chair, is the phrase: "Regeneration and renewal requires more though than just meeting budgetary targets."

The interesting thing is that yesterday at the press conference our Minister of Justice said that he was basically given a situation – in terms of the cuts that he made to the Department of Justice last year. He said: I was given a fiscal situation to deal with. Yet, what we are hearing from the Canadian Bar Association is that decisions within our justice cannot be based solely on budgetary targets. That is what happened; we saw cuts that were made solely on the basis of budgetary restraints. What we saw was that it created chaos and confusion and it affected direct services within our justice system. It proved to be a real big problem.

What I would like to look at then, in terms of if justice is truly to be done, we have to ensure that everybody – everybody – has access to justice. I have read the report; I have read the recommendations. The minister said that he will

be following through on all of the recommendations of the report, but one of the areas that I find quite interesting is the whole area of the threshold of eligibility.

That has not been addressed. I have not heard from the Minister of Justice whether or not he is going to look at that, whether he is going to be looking at the threshold of eligibility for legal aid. What that means, Mr. Chair, for people who are watching is that imagine if you have a family member who has been charged with a criminal offence and you have a job, you have a few assets, but you are not eligible for legal aid. The eligibility threshold has not changed much at all in the past years. It means that the eligibility threshold has not kept up with the economic realities of people's lives, so they do not have access to justice. They cannot afford to go to court. What happens is they may end up remortgaging their house.

I know of very, very close friends of mine whose son was charged with a criminal offence, whose son has a mental health issue and has a criminal offence. They are not here in the Province. They have had to remortgage their house in order to get legal representation. The father has had to take on extra night work in order to be able to pay for legal representation. This is not access to justice; this is not equal access to justice.

I would hope that the minister would strongly consider listening to the people of the economic realities of people's lives to consider the whole issue of the eligibility thresholds for being eligible for the services of legal aid. This is something that Mr. Roil has recommended, not in a recommendation but he has highlighted it in his report, that it is something the government should look at because it is about the basic tenant of having access to justice.

Again, Mr. Chair, before I sit down – I see that my time is running out – I was very interested in what Mr. Nicholas Avis who is Chair of the board of legal aid, had to say: The money that is being committed, the new money that the minister announced yesterday that is being committed to legal aid, does not bring legal aid

anywhere beyond where they were just before the last cuts.

In fact, Mr. Chair, this was a big announcement as if this was a big landfall of money and that the justice system was really going to benefit from this.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MS ROGERS: Mr. Chair, all that it does is it brings legal aid back to the point where it was before the cuts were made.

CHAIR: I remind the hon. member her time has expired.

MS ROGERS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: Thank you.

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

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am very pleased to have an opportunity to finish where I started a few minutes ago. I only got about halfway through because, as I often say, we have lots of issues and not enough time to talk about them all.

I was just clueing up on the Employment Assistance Services and me, as a member, having to take my resumes in arm, go sit down and meet with Nalcor, and see why people in my area who were qualified were not getting the jobs. Sadly, the services they needed, the counsellors they needed to go to for this help, had been cut. They were removed.

Also, the zone boards – every time I go in the district, somebody reminds me of the huge loss now that we no longer have the people on the ground with the local knowledge doing the coordinated economic development. People who

have the expertise to help put proposals in the system that is going to bring benefit back to the region and ultimately generate money and pay for itself.

I have been really saddened that you are working with a government that when they are going to axe something, they believe that one-size-fits-all and they axe everything. There might have been other resources in place in more urban areas, but I can tell you in rural some of these services were playing a very, very vital role, Mr. Chair. Our small communities that are bleeding out are really feeling the loss tremendously.

Municipal Affairs: Municipalities is an area that I volunteered and spent a lot of my time. A really, really rewarding time but not easy. When you are in a small community and you have aging infrastructure in the ground and you have a shrinking tax base, you cannot balance your budget on the backs of people on fixed income. I believe that our government needs to be doing all they can to show support to the people who are willing to step up to the plate in those small communities and take on the leadership roles, Mr. Chair.

I am going to be very, very interested in seeing what the Budget holds in terms of 90-10s for the district. One of the first things I did after my election – because the municipalities are really close to my heart, I represented all the towns in Labrador on the provincial municipalities board. I was also a leader in the community where I lived for a long time. I have a tremendous amount of respect for the people who sit at those tables and deal with some of the challenges, and do it all for free just to try and bring some benefit into their communities.

One of the first things I did was pulled up a list of the money that was put into my district in the last decade. Last spring we did not have a member for three months. We were waiting far too long for the by-election to be called and we totally missed the boat on that, Mr. Chair. It is not right; we have many, many issues.

We have communities that are still waiting to get completed with their water and sewer. Can you imagine in 2014 we have communities still waiting to be fully connected to water and sewer, and communities that are desperately in need of fire trucks? I am anxious. I hope this year when the Budget comes out we are going to get double the money because we certainly missed the boat last year.

Mr. Chair, tourism: We have so much in tourism in our area. I mentioned it a number of times when I was petitioning. We have Battle Harbour, an escape back in time to when cod was king. We have Red Bay. We have Cartwright now; Cartwright is going to be the gateway to the Mealy Mountain Park. Beautiful, beautiful areas and people are coming from all over the world to get there. Mr. Chair, we need a tourism development officer to market that.

I remember taking a trip into Alaska on a cruise ship. One day, the captain was opening the helipad on deck five because there was ice ahead, and there was all this excitement. Hundreds of people were going and taking pictures of a piece of ice that was about the size of that table. After I got back from Alaska, I went on a little thirty-five foot cruiser up the North Coast into my colleague's district as far as Makkovik. There were about twenty icebergs around us all the time, dolphins going along, and I thought: We have so much tremendous potential.

I wish the minister right now would see the investment. You give a little, you go in and you partner with a community group, you do not have to pay the money for the overhead or the infrastructure, give some money for the human resources, and I guarantee you would get the return on the dollar for that.

I have to speak about youth, as the mom of a teenager and heavily involved in youth back in my district for many years. I liked something that Justin Trudeau said recently. Often we get up and we say we have to do this and that for our youth because they are the leaders of tomorrow. Justin said they are leading the way today. I believe that is why we have an

obligation to ensure our youth have the basic right to learn in an environment that is clean, dry, and free of mould. We also need to ensure there are resources and places put into the community for these youth to go and spend their evenings and weekends so they can participate in constructive activities. I believe when we have things like that in place for them, it can keep them from being deterred and going down a bad road.

At our annual Combined Councils meeting recently, it was really sad to see a young person get up and say: Can we access a school in our community that the heat has been kept on for a number of years; it is no use and we are living there; and can we use the gym? I do not know what the long-term plan is for these schools. I do not know who is paying the bill. Sadly, the answer came back that, no, they could not be used because of insurance issues and things like that.

In the community of St. Lewis, I have been lobbying hard for that community. I have come forward with a request for a family resource centre worker. They are the only community in my district, I believe, that has no access to family resource centre services. The work the program directors are doing is very, very valuable work. Not only are they serving the children from birth to twelve years, but also educating the parents on things like drug awareness and obesity. Once again, I have to say for a small amount of money, \$40,000 or \$60,000, the return you would get on that would just speak volumes for itself, Mr. Chair.

I raised the issue earlier. I said I was really delighted to see me colleague ask questions today about eating disorders. I know the minister got up after and talked about how complex it is. I believe we cannot pull back from something because it is complex. Right now in our country, we only have ten doctors who are specialized in dealing with this. Everybody you talk to is talking about the burn out and the critical piece there is for education around eating disorders. So I am happy to see my colleague, who is the critic, has raised this and I hope he will continue to do so.

Mr. Chair, my time is running out, but I want to quote a paragraph because we have a lot of issues and a lot of times you are made to feel like you are whining and you are always a little bit worse off. I just read a paragraph last night in a magazine and I am happy to table it, by the way, if anybody would like to see it. I want to tell you why it upsets us so much where I live with so many shortcomings. It is because of the resources and the things we see going out.

Here we are with an old boat that cannot move two feet without icebreaker assistance. Then you watch a documentary last week and there is a boat heading into Voisey's Bay; she is going like a hot knife through butter, cutting through that heavy ice up on the North Coast. Then people wonder why we do not have that. I read a paragraph and I thought this really summarizes why we are so frustrated.

“What part of the province is home to the Voisey's Bay nickel deposit? Where will Muskrat Falls hydro power be generated? Where, for that matter, is the Upper Churchill? Gull Island? Where is the iron ore rich Labrador Trough? (I know, that one was too easy.) Which part of the province has three newly-discovered oil and gas basins off its coast? And is perfectly situated as a gateway to Arctic developments? The conclusion is inescapable: a region that generates as much wealth and attracts as much investment as Labrador should not have to beg for anything.”

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS DEMPSTER: Mr. Chair, that is the reason why I feel our people deserve a voice. They elected me in June with a very healthy majority to be that voice and I will continue. It is a very, very humble honour to be elected, to be a servant of the public, and to bring their issues because really this is all about the people. It is not about what I want. It is not about my community. It is about serving your district as fairly as you can. Yes, we know there is not enough money to meet all the need, but it is about prioritizing, and sometimes a little investment can certainly go a long way.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, I would like to take this opportunity to conclude debate on Interim Supply and I would like to thank members on all sides of the House for their input over the last five days they have had to spend on Interim Supply. Certainly, Opposition raises concerns, and rightly so, and they have also provided me with a lengthy shopping list of items they have been looking for. I have been keeping track of your list. It is a lot longer than my grocery list, but they have a role to do and we certainly appreciate that.

It is also an opportunity for us on government side to highlight all of the positive activity going on in the Province. We heard a lot through Interim Supply on all we are doing when it comes to schools, post-secondary education, certainly health care, apprenticeships, and all of the great work being done there.

We have heard about municipal capital works and investments we have done in business. We have heard about all of the wonderful work going on in the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, and how so many people are coming to see our beautiful Province. We have heard about all of the road work and certainly the announcements in the last couple of weeks around pre-commitments around roads and municipal capital works.

We have heard a lot about violence prevention, how important that is, and certainly the motion that was passed here in the House. We also heard a lot around child care, children in care, and all the valuable work we are doing in the social sector on that side of things.

It certainly is an opportunity for us to highlight all of the positive activity going on. The

economy certainly is hot in the Province. We are better off now than we have been ever in our history. I already had an opportunity to go over all of the economic indicators to show the improvements over the last ten years when it comes to employment, the unemployment rate, weekly earnings, retail sales, and so on. We certainly look forward to more good news, Mr. Chair, in the days ahead with Budget 2014 coming down on Thursday.

Again, I want to thank members for their input. As I explained in the beginning, Interim Supply is an important bill because there are bills that have to be paid while we are taking the time to debate and pass the Budget motion. Of course, salaries need to be paid. We would like to get construction started on the roadwork and MCW. This is something people have been asking for and the construction industry has been asking for, for a long time. With such a short season here it is important to do that. We need to continue to make payments for child care, Income Support, and so on. That is why we are asking for approval to the tune of about \$2.8 billion in Interim Supply.

Mr. Chair, on that note I will end there, thank the members, and ask them to certainly support this bill so that all these payments can be made.

Thank you so much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

At this time I move that the Committee rise, report the resolution and Bill 2 carried without amendment.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader, I think we have a few we have to pass first.

MR. KING: Okay, let's do that.

CHAIR: You are ahead of yourself just a little, Mr. Government House Leader.

Okay, here we go.

MR. KING: (Inaudible) time.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 4 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 to 4 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 4 carried.

CLERK: The schedule.

CHAIR: Shall the schedule carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, schedule carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: WHEREAS it appears that the sums mentioned are required to defray certain expenses of the Public Service of Newfoundland and Labrador for the financial year ending March 31, 2015 and for other purposes relating to the public service.

CHAIR: Shall the preamble carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, preamble carried.

CLERK: An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The

Financial Year Ending March 31, 2015 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

CHAIR: Shall the long title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the bill without amendment, carried.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As my colleague from Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair said a few minutes ago, I will pick up where I left off.

I move that the Committee rise, and report the resolution on Bill 2 carried without amendment.

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

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

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

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

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

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

When shall the report be received?

MR. KING: Now, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

MR. KING: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, that the resolution be now read the first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

CLERK: "That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her

Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2015 the sum of \$2,829,892,500.”

On motion, resolution read a first time

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, that the resolution be now read the second time.

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

All those in favour, ‘aye’.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

CLERK: Second reading of the resolution.

On motion, resolution read a second time.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation, for leave to introduce the Interim Supply bill, Bill 2, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. Minister of Finance shall have leave to introduce Bill 2, the Interim Supply bill, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. Minister of Finance shall have leave to introduce the Interim Supply bill and that the said bill be now read a first time?

All those in favour, ‘aye’.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Finance to introduce a bill, “An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2015 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service”, carried. (Bill 2)

CLERK: A bill, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2015 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 2)

On motion, Bill 2 read a first time.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, once again seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation, that the Interim Supply bill be now read the second time.

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

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

All those in favour, ‘aye’.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

CLERK: Second reading of Bill 2.

On motion, Bill 2 read a second time.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation, that the Interim Supply bill be now read for the third time.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2015 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 2)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2015 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service", read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 2)

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank all members of the House for their contribution to debate on the Interim Supply bill.

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

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that this House do now adjourn.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

This House now stands adjourned until 2:00 p.m. tomorrow, being Private Members' Day.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 2:00 p.m.