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*Speaker: Honourable Wade Verge, MHA*

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

First of all, I would like to extend a welcome back to all Members of the House of Assembly – it is good to see you all again – and to also welcome to the public gallery today, I would like to make special mention of Mr. Earle McCurdy, the newly elected Leader of the New Democratic Party.

Welcome to the House of Assembly.

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

### Statements by Members

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today we have members' statements from the Member for the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair; the Member for the District of Kilbride; the Member for the District of Torngat Mountains; the Member for the District of Humber East; the Member for the District of Exploits; and the Member for the District of Baie Verte – Springdale.

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

**MS DEMPSTER:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to pay tribute to the life and legacy of a man who made his home in *Labrador by Choice*. Ben Powell Sr. was born in Carbonear in 1921. In 1936, he ventured to Labrador in search of a better life, and it was there he found his beloved wife, Effie, and together they raised ten children.

Ben was known as “a man of the North”; a trapper, fisherman, merchant, sawmill operator, a guide and an aspired writer, publishing nineteen books about life in the Big Land, or as he would call it, Canada's Last Frontier.

He was recognized as the founding father of Charlottetown in 1950. His lifelong dedication to coastal Labrador is marked by his passion for its rich culture and through his many accomplishments, including the establishment of educational and health facilities. In 1996, he

received the Order of Canada in recognition of his many contributions to shaping the history of coastal Labrador and beyond.

Uncle Ben, as he was affectionately known, passed away on February 6, 2015, just shy of his ninety-fourth birthday.

I ask all hon. members to join me in celebrating the remarkable life of Trapper Ben, a man to whom I owe much and will be forever proud to call my grandfather.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Kilbride.

**MR. DINN:** Mr. Speaker, I stand in this hon. House today to recognize Danielle Arbour, a fine young woman from the Goulds.

Danielle has Spina Bifida and Neurofibromatosis which limits her physically in many ways. Danielle, who is now nineteen years old, is a full-time student at the College of the North Atlantic with plans to enter nursing school in September 2015. She is also very involved in wheelchair sports, especially basketball.

Recently, Danielle was scouted by the PEI Wheelchair Basketball Team which competed in the Canada Winter Games last month in Prince George, BC, finishing in fourth place. Danielle was the only one from Atlantic Canada chosen for the Women's National under 25 Wheelchair Basketball Team which will compete in the World Championships in June 2015 in Beijing, China.

In 2011, Danielle was the Easter Seals Ambassador and from 2011-2013 she was the emcee for the Easter Seals Drop Zone. In 2012, she won the Spirit of Youth Scholarship Award at the Miss Achievement Pageant. In 2013-2014, she was the only female member of the Avalon Sled Dogs which won a gold medal in London, Ontario.

I ask all hon. members to join me in recognizing and praising the accomplishments of this fine young Newfoundlander and Labradorian.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Today I recognize the work of Jim Burton and Andrea Stack of Hope Air in helping provide air transportation to those who need travel for medical care but cannot afford it. Because of the good work of Hope Air, there has been an 88 per cent increase in the number of flights provided from 2013 to 2014 in this Province.

Last year, there were 1,151 people who received free flights. Across Canada, there were more than 9,450 flights provided during the last twelve months as a result of Hope Air. That is more than a flight an hour for each and every hour of the year, Mr. Speaker. More than 13.5 per cent of all of the flights in Canada were right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. This is clearly a testament to the hard work of Mr. Burton and the many partners of Hope Air.

I would also like to recognize the Rotary Club of St. John's Northwest who hold a gala evening every year with some of the proceeds going to Hope Air. This year's event was co-chaired by Jim Burton and Charlie Stacey, and had as guest speakers former Prime Ministers Jean Chrétien, Joe Clark, and former Premier Brian Tobin, as well as Maureen McTeer, and John and Jane Crosbie. Again, a testament of the hard work of Hope Air.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Humber East.

**MR. FLYNN:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer congratulations to David and Sarah Simmons of Pure Holsteins Ltd. in Little Rapids, being

named Atlantic Outstanding Young Farmers for 2015.

This award is an annual competition, sponsored by various farming interests throughout Canada and is based on the following criteria: progress in agriculture career; extent of soil, water and energy conservation practices; crop and/or livestock production history; financial and management practices; and contribution to the well-being of the community, province and nation.

The Simmons own and operate 100 cow dairy farm and have made tremendous increases in their production since 2011. Their commitment to making a living in this honourable occupation is a testament to their hard work and dedication. Days are usually long and always filled with tasks and chores. Their accomplishment is certainly proof that farming can indeed be a successful venture for young people. David and Sarah will, next month, compete at the national level in Alberta in November.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating David and Sarah Simmons as winners of the Atlantic Outstanding Young Farmers award for 2015.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Exploits.

**MR. FORSEY:** Mr. Speaker, on January 21, Russell Harvey of Botwood received his certificate for the successful completion of the Introduction to Networks Certification through the Cisco Academy. Created by educators for educators, Cisco Academy offers curriculum at no cost to the educational institutions such as the College of the North Atlantic.

Training is provided through a visualization and simulation tool that allows users to design, build, troubleshoot, and experiment with visual networks.

In Russell's words, "you've got an entire school years' worth of things to learn and four months to learn it."

Mr. Speaker, Russell has demonstrated to industry his personal drive to go beyond what is expected and pursue industry certification in an area that is in great demand.

I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Russell Harvey on receiving the industry-recognized Networks Certification through The Cisco Academy.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Baie Verte – Springdale.

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

From February 28 to March 7, it was the place to be! Family, friends and tourists flocked to the Baie Verte Peninsula to participate in the 2015 Third Annual Peninsula Shiver Soiree Festival.

Jam packed with amazing events and experiences, such as a snowshoe hike, family skate, gospel concert, family sliding, BBQ, dinner theatre, snowmobile races, hockey games and lots of food, the participants shook off the winter blues and experienced breathtaking, exhilarating moments.

In addition to promoting active, healthy living through recreational activities, the festival provided the opportunity for communities to foster goodwill and togetherness.

The organizing committee is to be applauded for such an outstanding job. Members include: Jennifer Whelan, chairperson; Molly Mitchel, event co-ordinator; Kira Rideout; Connie Clarke; Todd Parsons; Maud Noble; Lloyd Hayden; and Nancy Brown.

In addition, a big thank you to numerous volunteers, organizations, and the business community for their support. Simply put, without it, there would not be a festival.

It was a pleasure for me to participate in the opening ceremonies and my wife and I enjoyed thoroughly the snowmobile races on that cold, crisp day in Middle Arm.

I ask all hon. members to help me celebrate the festival's success.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

#### Statements by Ministers

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

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

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

I am pleased to rise in this hon. House to provide an update on how the provincial government is strengthening the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

On March 2, the provincial government received the ATIPPA review committee's report and immediately began reviewing and analyzing the report and its recommendations. We are extremely grateful for the calibre of work that we have received from the committee – and we know the next step now is for us to act on these recommendations and implement the legislative changes.

Mr. Speaker, feedback from the committee's extensive outreach informed their report. It contains a total of ninety recommendations of which all have been accepted, including sixty-seven which are legislative and twenty-three policy and procedural changes. The committee not only provided recommendations – but brand-new draft legislation.

We want people to benefit from these recommendations as quickly as possible, and we are taking immediate steps – just like we did last week by eliminating the \$5 application fee for access to information requests and updating the fee schedule. New actions we announced today include directing departments and the public to report all privacy breaches to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and the Office of Public Engagement, providing a toll-free helpline for municipal ATIPP co-ordinators, and protecting the identity of applicants during access to information requests.

Mr. Speaker, we take our obligations under the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* very seriously. After listening to concerns – including those from hon. members opposite, and to those of experienced journalists, some of whom are here with us today – we have been striving to find ways to improve access to information, transparency, and to provide information in accessible ways.

Democracy requires citizen involvement. We want to become a world leader in engaging citizens, providing the information needed to make decisions, and creating the best governance possible based on dialogue. I have every confidence that this review and its recommendations will provide residents the strongest possible framework in access to information and protection of privacy.

Mr. Speaker, as we continue to work together to ensure that government is open and transparent for residents, and as we take on the challenge of managing an ever-increasing volume of information, we will be leaders, not followers, and we will continue to listen, to learn, and to adjust the course.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I want to congratulate the ATIPPA review committee on the great work that they have done and the resulting legislation that has come out of the work that they have done. I was pleased to be able to present to the committee. Indeed, I will say it was a good experience for me. It was very thorough, very detailed, and the committee did a great piece of work – the commission did a great piece of work. The ninety recommendations, no doubt, seem to be groundbreaking in ensuring greater access to information for all people in our Province.

We are glad to see that government is accepting these recommendations and look forward to the debate here in the Legislature, but let's not forget that this is the same government, the same

twenty-nine members opposite, that forced closure in this House of Assembly back in the spring of 2012, which at the time was the longest filibuster in our history. The Premier, and I want to quote – there is one quote here. “We are not trying to put a lid or hide anything.” “It is a good piece of legislation...”. That was the same Premier back in June 11, 2012; these were his words.

Saying that you are being leaders in all of this, true listeners, people who were committed to openness and transparency in government, back in 2012 would have indeed been listening to the people in our Province. We are glad now that the commission's report has been accepted. We look forward to the debate and we look forward to an open and transparent government in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

I, too, thank the Premier for the advance copy of his statement, and want to recognize the wonderful work that was done by the review committee, but I have to say I was rather surprised to hear the Premier say that he was listening to the concerns raised by members from this floor. Mr. Speaker, all I have to say back to the Premier is that it is too bad he did not hear our concerns during the filibuster we led in 2012.

The Premier and the minister responsible for ATIPP – now responsible – were part of the government in 2012 that rammed Bill 29 through this House, ignoring the general outcry, which led to the amended ATIPP Act, which the statutory review committee had to dismantle and rewrite.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

The hon. the Minister of Aboriginal and Labrador Affairs.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House to pay tribute to a businessman and a former Minister of Labrador Affairs, Melvin Woodward, who passed away yesterday morning at the age of eighty-one.

Mr. Woodward was born on the Northern Peninsula in North Boat Harbour, but as a young man he made the move to Labrador because he saw great potential for Labrador. He was a successful entrepreneur who grew the Woodward Group of Companies from one truck in the 1960s to a business with \$750 million in sales.

He employed 800 people in the six companies, including Woodward's Oil Limited, Woodward's Limited, Coastal Shipping Limited, Woodward's Motors Limited, Labrador Marine Services, and Arctic Fuel Delivery. Mr. Woodward hired locally, and he treated his employees as if they were family.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Woodward was well-loved by all those who knew him, and those touched by his generosity and his contributions. My family, as I am sure many others, spoke in admiration of Mr. Woodward's beginnings and his success story, and we all looked up to him.

Mr. Woodward has been an important part of the community of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and believed strongly in giving back to his community. Mr. Woodward has always been supportive of our youth through sponsoring numerous sporting events, and he has supported countless other community events, including medical and environmental fundraisers as well.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Woodward's accomplishments were many. In addition to his service to the people of the Province as MHA and Minister of Labrador Affairs, Mr. Woodward, always generous in service to others, was also a founding member and head of the Labrador North Chamber of Commerce, a director for the Bank of Canada, a member of Memorial University's Board of Regents, as well as many other public and community service roles.

In 2003, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws Degree from MUN on his distinguished public service and outstanding contributions to the development of business and the economy of this Province.

Yesterday, Newfoundland and Labrador lost a valuable member of our society and an inspiration for many people, including me. Mr. Woodward was a true Labradorian whose legacy and accomplishments will live on in Labrador and, indeed, the whole Province.

He will be greatly missed by all who are fortunate to know him. I, along with all Members of this House of Assembly, send our condolences to Mr. Woodward's wife of fifty-seven years Sibyl, his three children, five grandchildren, and their families.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I want to thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. On behalf of the Official Opposition, I want to extend my sincere condolences to Mr. Woodward's wife, Sibyl, and their three children, Peter, Tana, and Mel Jr.

I personally know him. I have had the opportunity to meet and know Mr. Woodward for many years, both as a successful entrepreneur and a true humanitarian. I also had the opportunity to share some time with him and take advice on some other political situations in our Province too, I would say, Mr. Speaker.

Born in North Boat Harbour in 1933, Mel went of course to Happy Valley-Goose Bay in 1957. As he told the graduating class at Memorial in 2003, there was no doubt in his mind, and for all who knew him, he went there to make money. As the minister said, he did it by starting out with a single truck.

Both him and his wife Sibyl, they worked extremely hard in making a very successful business to the tune of some \$750 million and

some 800 employees currently. In many ways he is credited with re-establishing Newfoundland and Labrador. I can tell you, he was very keen in doing business in the North.

While he has been known to be successful in business, he is certainly widely known for the support of his community and our Province. It is my privilege to stand here today and recognize the great life of Mr. Mel Woodward, a true friend.

Rest in peace Mr. Woodward.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. I am honoured to be able to stand here on my own behalf and that of my caucus today in offering condolences to the family of the late Mel Woodward. He truly was an icon, not only in the Labrador business community, but the provincial business community as a whole, which I think was recognized by Memorial University.

His vision for the potential of Labrador, which drew him there, and his love of its people should not be forgotten. He became indeed a true Labradorian, and I hope his example serves as an inspiration to others for generations to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services.

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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House to recognize National Social Work Month – a time we honour those who have chosen to dedicate their lives to improving the quality of life in our cities, towns, and communities. Each year, the month of

March celebrates social workers across the country and the positive impact that they have on those they serve.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, more than 1,500 registered social workers practise in all regions of the Province in settings such as health care, senior care, foster care, adult and youth corrections, child protection, adoptions, child care, mental health and addictions, community-based centres, government departments and universities, along with private practices and consulting businesses.

The theme for this year's National Social Work Month is *Social Work: Profession of Choice* and was chosen to convey the personal commitment by social workers throughout the country to their profession, as well as highlight the many changes they help bring about for individuals and society as a whole.

Each day, in our Province, social workers endeavour to improve the safety and well-being of our residents, and their commitment and dedication deserves the focus that National Social Work Month places on their profession. I continue to witness first-hand, Mr. Speaker, the significance of their work throughout all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador. Oftentimes, their services are delivered in extremely challenging situations or under circumstances that require an extremely high level of professionalism and individual strength. That is why I want to personally extend my heartfelt gratitude to the many men and women who work tirelessly each and every day to provide guidance, protection, and support to our most vulnerable populations.

During the month of March, social workers will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities taking place throughout the Province such as professional development sessions and networking and career events to promote the social work profession.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in recognizing the many men and women in our Province who have chosen to dedicate their lives to this noble profession, and work every day to strengthen our families and communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. The theme of National Social Work Month 2015 is Social Work: Profession of Choice. The choice to pursue this selfless profession reflects an inherent desire to help others. We are indebted to their devotion to help foster well-being in our communities.

Social work is not easy work. Social workers pour their hearts, their souls, and much of their lives into their work. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, when the Premier floats an idea of privatizing certain parts of government, that includes social workers. So, I would call on the Premier to be very careful of his comments. They may be well-intended comments but if he is talking about privatizing some parts of government, then he is talking about the same 1,500 people that his minister is paying tribute to today.

Mr. Speaker, social workers are not miracle workers; consequently, they cannot do everything in every aspect of all of their clients. I would like to reiterate a recommendation of the Child and Youth Advocate that has been rejected by government, and that is that in child and youth services this government has taken a position that there should be one social worker per person and not vary the specialities, but I call on government to allow specialized care –

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

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I want to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. I want to thank our social workers, especially front-line workers who witness every day how poverty and gaps in services affect people's lives. Social workers do

a broad range of work: administrators, policymakers, councillors, and even politicians – I have a degree in social work.

At pre-Budget consultations, the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers once again identified several priorities: our housing crisis, the need to raise minimum wage, the need for renewal in primary health care delivery, the need to put social workers back in the schools because of high rates of mental health (inaudible) –

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

I remind the member her speaking time has expired.

**MS ROGERS:** Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral Questions.

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

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

I did not have you on the list.

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

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

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

Is the hon. Minister of Transportation and Works standing to give a Ministerial Statement?

**MR. BRAZIL:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

I could ask him a question too, if he would like.

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

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

I am pleased to rise today to inform my hon. colleagues about the latest milestones in the government's ferry vessel replacement efforts. This past Friday, I had the pleasure of joining

our Premier, the Member for the Isles of Notre Dame, officials and residents of the communities of Fogo Island and Change Islands to name the new ferry, the *MV Veteran*, which will arrive in the Province in fall 2015.

The *MV Veteran*, Mr. Speaker, will serve Fogo Island and Change Islands and is named in celebration of all Canadian men and women in uniform, past and present. This name reinforces the pillars outlined in *Honour 100*, which was launched in 2013 to commemorate the centennial anniversaries of the First World War and is organized into five pillars – anniversaries, education, legacy, outreach, and research and development.

I would also like to inform my hon. colleagues that the observation deck and two passenger lounges of the *MV Veteran* will be named in recognition of four notable individuals who have contributed to the communities of Fogo Island and Change Islands. These individuals are A.R. Scammell who was born on Change Islands and was a prominent figure in Newfoundland and Labrador's arts community; Captain Fred Chaffey and Captain Patrick Miller, who both operated the ferry service for Change Islands and Fogo Island; and Margaret Cobb, who worked as a nurse on the *Easter Seal* and later on Fogo Island for many years.

The *MV Veteran* is currently under construction at Damen Shipyards in Romania and its addition to the provincial fleet of ferries this coming fall will significantly improve our ability to deliver more reliable service to residents and businesses in Change Islands and Fogo Island. The new ferry will be a fourteen-knot, eighty-metre ice-class vessel with roll-on, roll-off capabilities, and will be able to carry 200 passengers and sixty vehicles.

The naming of the *MV Veteran*, Mr. Speaker, is not only a tribute to the service of Canadian men and women in uniform who serve our great country. It is also a celebration of Captains Chaffey and Miller, Mr. Scammell and Ms Cobb, who each made tremendous contributions to Fogo Island and Change Islands and this region of our Province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the hon. House to join me in recognizing their

contributions and the sacrifice of all women and men in service.

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 thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. We, in the Official Opposition, share in government's celebration of naming the Fogo-Change Islands ferry the *MV Veteran*. Veterans deserve that recognition and so do the notable individuals who have parts of that vessel named after them.

We share in the belief that the people of Fogo-Change Islands and Bell Island deserve new vessels and a reliable ferry service year-round. It is a milestone, but the people of Labrador deserve that same milestone. The people on the Straits of Labrador have seen trouble with their service and that trouble continues. There have been people stranded, and those people in that region of our Province deserve the same milestone announcement. They deserve the fifteen-year announcement that they have been waiting for and they have been calling out for. Hopefully, we will see the improvements to that service very soon.

We cannot control the ice conditions up there, Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt about it, but we do control the resources that we can provide to those people.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I would like to also thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement here today. Congratulations to all the residents of Fogo and Change Islands who will have a new boat in their midst; it was well deserved and hard earned

and came after years of asking government to address their needs.

As well, Mr. Speaker, it would have been nice to have an update from the minister on the status of the \$25 million tariff that this Province was forced to pay the federal government for the new boat because it was built in Romania. So perhaps he can stand here tomorrow and tell the people of this House what they are going to be doing with the \$25 million when they get it back from the federal government.

Thank you very much.

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

Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

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

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

Well, last year government delivered its Budget on March 27. The year before that it was March 26, but this year the Premier has not said when he will introduce his Budget.

I ask the Premier: When will this year's Budget be introduced to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

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

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

I thank the hon. member for his question on this. We know that it is on the minds of people. The Minister of Finance has said repeatedly that we would not be bringing down our Budget until after the federal government brings down their budget, which we do not have an exact date now but we know it is expected to be some time in the first or second week of April. Following that time we will bring down the provincial Budget.

In recent weeks, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance and other ministers in our government have been travelling throughout Newfoundland and Labrador consulting with the public, consulting with Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We have been encouraging people to participate in the consultative process, either in person or online, and we have been asking people to share their views on the Budget process that we are currently undertaking.

I can tell you it is a comprehensive process that has been undertaken, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to receiving and presenting that Budget in April.

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

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

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

Well, in other provinces, of course, we have had seven or eight right now. In Atlantic Canada, New Brunswick has already gone ahead and announced dates to the people. All we ask for is what the date will be when people would get the Budget, I say, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier has said recently that everything is on the table, but when he cut ministers last week one thing he did not do – he decided to keep with his five paid Parliamentary Secretaries.

I ask the Premier: Newfoundland and Labrador is the only Atlantic Province with paid Parliamentary Secretaries; why are you insisting and keeping those paid positions in place?

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

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

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

Yes, last week I did action to reduce the size of our Cabinet, and I would like to use the opportunity to thank outgoing ministers for service to Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank them for their service to the people of the Province, and to us as a government.

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, I want to take steps to reduce Cabinet, who oversees the departments and the operations, the delivery of services and programs to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I wanted to ensure that we did not make reductions or cuts that would have a negative impact on any of those programs or any of those services. I wanted to have confidence that the change in Cabinet that I made last week would not have an impact on the people of our Province.

With the cuts and reductions we made, and I announced last week, I still have that confidence that we are not reducing services, we are not reducing programs. Any further cuts, Mr. Speaker, I would not have the same confidence.

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

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

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

What we are suggesting here is not the cuts, but the fact that the Parliamentary Secretaries are paid. In other Atlantic Provinces these are not paid positions, I say, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier is also floating the idea of privatizing aspects of our health care system.

I ask the Premier: Explain to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, what specifically are you considering when you say privatizing health care?

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

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

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

With regard to the commentary by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, when we make changes we have to be very careful in how we do that. I can tell you from my own experience that Parliamentary Secretaries in our Province – I cannot speak for other provinces and other governments and how they operate, but I can tell you in my government and in our Province,

Parliamentary Secretaries provide a very critical support and assistance to ministers in our government.

They are active in their departments. They play a very active role. They do important work, Mr. Speaker, on a regular basis. They are in the departments on a regular basis, very close to the ministers, and quite often spend less time in their own districts as a result of that.

We have made these adjustments last week, Mr. Speaker. I believe they are the right thing to do. I believe that it is incumbent upon me to take steps that are reflective of the other changes that I have taken in the House of Assembly, which are numerous, in reducing the seats and pension reform and so on.

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

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

**MR. BALL:** Yes, I guess Parliamentary Secretaries do play an active role in health care. Maybe it is the privatization of health care – that is maybe the job they are doing right now. I will go back and I will ask the Premier again, give him one more option or one more opportunity to answer the question.

You floated the idea about privatization of health care services. Will you specifically explain to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador what it is you are talking about, what it is you are considering privatizing?

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

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

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

I will set the facts correct and I will tell you exactly what happened. Mr. Speaker, in speaking engagements that I have participated in, I encouraged people of Newfoundland and Labrador to participate in the Budget consultation process. I threw out a number of statements, commentaries, and discussions that would be beneficial to have during that Budget consultation process.

One of those was the question about private business. What role does private business play in the delivery of programs and services in Newfoundland and Labrador? Is there a larger role or a different role that public service – private service, sorry, should provide?

If we look at currently what happens in Newfoundland and Labrador, we have numerous examples where there are partnerships of private business who participate in the delivery of programs and services throughout the Province, Mr. Speaker. What I said was, as part of the consultation process, let's have a discussion about that, and is there a bigger role.

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

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

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

I can remember the interview that the Premier did. One of the things he mentioned – and obviously there were other things on table. He was very clear in saying that everything is on the table. One of the things he did mention was long-term care.

I ask the Premier very pointedly, or maybe he can answer the question, yes or no: Are you considering privatizing any of the services within health care?

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

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

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

Again, to set the record straight, in the interview he is referring I was asked are there some current examples of what takes place now. I used long-term care as an example because right now there are private businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador that provide long-term care services to the people of our Province, Mr. Speaker.

There are dentists who provide services to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians as private businesses. There are doctors who provide services to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians

as private businesses. Your local family doctor is a private business, Mr. Speaker.

There are numerous examples where private business currently exists in health care, Mr. Speaker. The question again that came from my discussions and my commentary: Is there a larger role for private business? If there is, we should have that discussion.

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

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

**MR. BALL:** Well, thank you. It is the fact that we are going to have discussion which leads right into my next question.

On November 4, last year, Statoil began an eighteen-month drilling program in the Bay du Nord discovery. This program will finish in May 2016. The vice-president of Statoil said that they need information from the eighteen-month program before they can make a decision if indeed Bay du Nord can be developed. However, the Premier has mandated his minister to conclude a deal on this development in 2015, in the mandate letter.

I ask the Premier: Why are you mandating your minister to get a deal done in 2015 when Statoil even admits it will not even know if there can be a development until May 2016?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, it is very clear I think, if we look at our track record, our ability to work with big companies, big oil companies, our ability to lay out a plan and a vision to develop the offshore, to develop those resources for the benefit of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. My role as minister, and certainly the responsibility that the Premier has given me, is to ensure that I represent our government and continue to try and develop those resources for the benefits of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, regardless of what is in the mandate letter, we are engaged in a process with Statoil. To be clear, we will not do any deals at all that are not in the best interest of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We have started the process. We have resources. We want it developed. We want to benefit Newfoundland and Labrador, but we will only do it if it is right for the people, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Well, I guess the minister writes his own mandate, by the sounds of it. By mandating a deal with Statoil for 2015, the Premier severely weakens the Province's negotiating position. In negotiations, you never tell the other side you need a deal by a certain date. It is bad negotiating and it is bad management.

I ask the Premier: Why are you mandating a deal with Statoil in 2015, months before the drilling program even finishes?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I think it is important; the Opposition are always looking for information, they always want to know what we are doing and we share information with them, Mr. Speaker –

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** We let them know what we are doing, Mr. Speaker, and we want to let the people of the Province know that as we are in this fiscal challenge that we are in right now, there is a very bright future on the horizon and we have that mapped out through our Energy Plan, we have it mapped out with large companies, and with the seismic work we are doing there is tremendous prospectivity in the offshore.

By announcing that we are proceeding with discussions with Statoil, that is not saying we are going to do a bad deal. The people of the Province will remember the deal that we did with Hebron when the Premier of the day stood up and said forget it, we are not doing it. It is not in the best interest of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you today, when we will send a message to Statoil, if it is not in the best interest of Newfoundland and Labrador, there will be no deal.

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

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

**MR. BALL:** I thank the minister – I am not so sure if he was part of the discussions around Abitibi either.

Speaking of letting the people know, Mr. Speaker, the oil industry has been asking for a generic royalty regime for years. We understand government is now working on one.

Speaking about, as the minister just said, letting the people know, I ask the Premier: Have you developed a new generic royalty regime and, if so, when will you make it public?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, then there are other times I guess when you look at their wanting information and their concern about business, yet they stand up and then they want information that could in fact jeopardize any opportunity we have for a good deal for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I will say to the member opposite, you can look at our Energy Plan, the full detailed document, where we reference the generic royalty regime that have helped I guess plant the seed and develop our offshore to this point; but I can tell you there is tremendous prospectivity, there are tremendous opportunities out there, and we have always said when we develop this industry to a

point where we are ready to even seek more and more benefits for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, we will develop a generic royalty that makes sense for future growth and future opportunity.

We are doing that, Mr. Speaker. When it is ready, when we can make it public, we certainly will.

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

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

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

There is concern in the Province that government's deal with Statoil will be weak on local benefits. People are concerned about that. So I will remind the Premier of the importance of local benefits and jobs to the people of this Province, especially given the loss of 7,600 full-time jobs in our Province in the last year alone.

I ask the Premier: What are you doing to protect local benefits and jobs with the Statoil deal?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** I say to the Leader of the Opposition, we do not need any reminders about ensuring that the benefits of these opportunities come to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We can go back to the Liberal deal when they were going to develop Muskrat Falls and all the benefits were going to go to Quebec. Mr. Speaker, we have a history in this Province. We can go back to Churchill Falls and where the benefits go.

Mr. Speaker, our government is not going to make deals that do not benefit Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We have benefits agreements, and we are always looking for ways to improve those benefits agreements. We work with the industry, Mr. Speaker, we work with NOIA, and we are committed to do so.

I appreciate the fact they want more benefits, and that is our commitment as well, Mr.

Speaker. Make no mistake about it, as we work with Statoil and other companies interested in coming to this Province, we will make deals, we will work with industry, and we will ensure that we have work right here for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters.

**MS C. BENNETT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Stats Canada has reported the Province has lost 7,600 full-time jobs in the last year. In fact, despite predictions of job growth by this government, there are 10,000 fewer jobs today than two years ago. These are not just numbers; they are people. People of the Province are worried.

I ask the Premier: How did you manage to spend \$20 billion of oil royalties and not create sustainable job growth to get more people working in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** I am always delighted when the member opposite stands and talks about how much money we have actually spent, because it clearly gives us an opportunity to talk about how we have spent that money, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** We just heard the minister stand and say that we will develop our resources for the benefit of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. So ask the thousands of people who have benefited from the significant investment we have made in poverty reduction whether or not that was money worthwhile spending, Mr. Speaker.

Look at the people who have benefited from the tremendous investment we have made in the

freeze on tuition at Memorial and the College of the North Atlantic. Would they say there was a benefit from that expenditure?

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** Again, Mr. Speaker, that is money that came from the development of natural resources, critical investments we have made in social programs, and significant investments we have made in infrastructure.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters.

**MS C. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, there is a bit of theme here today; it seems the Premier will not get on his feet and talk about jobs, but last week on Twitter the Premier said our Province will be okay. We are in our sixteenth consecutive month of job losses. This sixteen-month drop in job losses is tied for the third longest period of job losses since 1975.

I ask the Premier: What specifically has this government achieved in utilizing large-scale projects to create sustainable job growth to get more people working in our Province?

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** The member took advantage of the opportunity to attend a couple of the pre-Budget consultations – did not contribute anything, I might add, but had a chance to attend and listen. She would have seen very clearly an overview that was done during the introduction of those consultations that mapped out and showed the people of Newfoundland and Labrador the progression that we have made, the successive year-over-year progression we have made towards developing our resources, creating employment, enhancing the economic opportunities for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

From 2003 to 2014 are many indicators – depending on how you look at it, Mr. Speaker, it does not matter what indicator we look at – of

how we have shown progressive growth over that period of time. Compared to the rest of the country, we have led the Nation in many economic indicators in growth and prosperity.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Trinity – Bay de Verde.

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

Mr. Speaker, according to its activity plan, government's Business Investment Corporation makes and manages investments for the purpose of creating employment opportunities for the people of the Province.

I ask the minister: How many jobs are being created by the corporation's investments, and where?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Business.

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

**MR. KING:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the opportunity to speak to our investment in business and to the plan that we have been following for the last eight or ten years to diversify the economy in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I say to the member that the investments we made are across multiple sectors, the tourism sector, in particular. I am proud to say that on our Vision 2020, the path forward that was developed, a shared vision with the industry stakeholders, that we are more than half way there. It is now more than a billion-dollar industry.

We continue to invest in the tourism industry. We have invested significantly in the film industry, Mr. Speaker. *Republic of Doyle* is a shining example of the success story that we see in this Province as a result of an investment by our Province.

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

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

**MR. KING:** We invest in the ocean tech industry, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. KING:** I hear the member heckling. They are absolutely stable jobs. They support the oil and gas industry, with more than 500 businesses affected by the oil and gas industry that our government has developed and invested in.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Trinity – Bay de Verde.

**MR. CROCKER:** I did not hear any numbers in the minister's reply.

Mr. Speaker, on March 31, 2014, the investment portfolio of government's Business Investment Corporation consisted of \$22.5 million in loans. The most recent audit reveals \$11.5 million are past due.

I ask the minister: How much of taxpayers' money has been written off as bad debt?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development.

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

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

I just want to respond to some of the hecklers from across the way who were criticizing the investment in the *Republic of Doyle*. I say to members opposite, the *Republic of Doyle* put Newfoundland and Labrador on the world stage in our ability to compete in the film industry.

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

**MR. KING:** We make no apologies for that investment and for the doors that have opened up. Further, Mr. Speaker, if I might continue, the member wants to know about where we have invested. More than 1,000 jobs created in the aquaculture industry –

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

**MR. KING:** – that several members across the way argued and fought against, and still do, Mr. Speaker, as a policy of the Liberal Party that they are against aquaculture development. I say this government continues to invest in the Coast of Bays region in particular, and we will continue to do so.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Trinity – Bay de Verde.

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, I will read my question one more time. On March 31, 2014, the investment portfolio of the government's Business Investment Corporation consisted of \$22.5 million in loans. The most recent audit reveals \$11.5 million, or 50 per cent-plus are past due.

I ask the minister: How much of taxpayers' money has been written off as bad debt?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development.

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

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

I encourage the member to keep it coming because I love talking about rural diversification. Ninety-eight per cent of the Province is now connected by broadband connectivity, Mr. Speaker, which has allowed the growth and development of small and medium-sized enterprises in this Province.

Our government has chosen to invest in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. We have invested in the technology sector, Mr. Speaker, I say. The technology industry association in this Province recognized the support of the Newfoundland government and the vision that we have shown over the last five years to grow the technology industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, we invest in the wild fish industry. We have invested in technology in fish plants,

which has created sustainable jobs for the long term in the industry. We have done that because we have shown a vision of where we want to lead this Province into the future, unlike members opposite who seem to be wavering all over the place with no particular vision as to where they want to go.

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

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

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

The minister obviously does not know the answer. I will see if I can get a better result this time.

The CBC is running a series called DaycareDebt, which exposes this government's failed legacy on early learning and child care. Parents in this Province either pay the second most expensive child care fees in Canada or they are forced to quit their jobs because child care is not accessible to them.

I ask the minister responsible: How much revenue is our Province losing out on by forcing these parents out of the workforce?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing as important as child care to this government in terms of making sure that we are putting in place a strategy with programs and services that will see to it that the parents of these children are able to find affordable, sufficient, quality child care.

Mr. Speaker, we are investing \$42.5 million as part of a ten-year strategy, and we are in year three of that strategy. We have developed a number of initiatives to help us achieve the results that we need and want to achieve in this Province. Mr. Speaker, we have made great strides in doing that.

We have seen accolades from various other sectors that have told us that the improvements we are making have been noted across this country as leadership improvements.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. KIRBY:** Mr. Speaker, that is two ministers in a row who do not know how deep the fiscal hole they are digging is, Mr. Speaker.

A national report, *It's Time for Preschool*, shows that most provinces in this country release an annual progress report on early learning and care in those provinces. Newfoundland and Labrador is not amongst those provinces, so an annual status report on the progress of child care in this Province is something that should be a priority for this government.

I ask the minister: When will you release a progress report on early learning and child care in this Province?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I make no attempt to hide anything in terms of what we are doing around early childhood education and early childhood learning. It is an area where, as I have just pointed out, we have in fact achieved great growth in Newfoundland and Labrador and we will continue to do so.

One of the areas in which we have, again, been noted for as showing leadership has to do with governance and moving early learning into the Department of Education, Mr. Speaker; a vision of our Premier that has allowed us to look at the sequencing of education from early days, from birth right on up through the education system, Mr. Speaker.

We are seeing results from having the synergies of all of our staff working together, and I anticipate we will see more results from that.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, the current Minister of Justice was the minister who cut the Family Violence Intervention Court in 2013. In December 2014, the Premier gave the former Minister of Justice, Judy Manning, the mandate to reconsider the court Province-wide.

I ask the minister, the same minister who cut the court in the first place: Do you have the same mandate to bring back the court Province-wide?

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

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

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

My mandate is not a lot different than the entire government's mandate, is to help participate in a budget process that will see us making wise choices in the best interest of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. As I have said on many occasions in this House of Assembly, the family violence court was a decision that was taken by me as the minister at a point in time. I was very clear on record in Hansard on multiple occasions that it was about making the wisest use of the funds that we had available in the Department of Justice.

Directly to the member's question, the family violence court will be considered as part of the Department of Justice's submission into the budget process. There are many other initiatives we will be looking to support as well: the investment in policing services with the RNC and RCMP, for example, and maintenance and equipment. That will be considered as part of those submissions.

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

The Premier says everything is on the table with the upcoming Budget, yet today his Deputy Premier spoke of new staff needed for implementing the new ATIPP legislation.

I ask the Premier: Will he assure us upcoming Budget cuts will not undermine the statutory review committee's recommendations which cost this Province \$1.1 million?

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

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

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

We have said quite clearly, and publicly as well, that we would accept all the recommendations and implement all of the recommendations, legislative and also policy recommendations. We recognize it is going to take additional staff to ensure that implementation takes place, Mr. Speaker, but I can clearly say to this hon. House here again today that we fully, fully accept the report done by the ATIPP panel. We thank them for their recommendations and we are going to fully implement all of those recommendations, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

The Minister Responsible for Public Engagement says his new ATIPP legislation will be the best in the country, yet he praised Bill 29 with equal enthusiasm in 2012.

I ask the minister, as I told him that very same day in 2012: Why did you think you could fool people with legislation found to be as odious as that bill has proven to be?

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, we have been quite clear as a government, and I have been quite clear in my position and have been all along, that we make decisions and we take steps that we feel are in the best interest, but we also have to be willing to listen to what people have to say. We have listened to the Opposition. We have listened to the general public.

We laid out a process to review not just Bill 29, but our entire ATIPP legislation, to do a full and comprehensive review. We committed to implementing all the recommendations as a result of that review, Mr. Speaker, and we stand by that – we stand by that. We want to have the best legislation possible. We have gone down through a process which we believe and I believe is going to create that, that we will have the best legislation anywhere in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

I ask the Premier then: Will he assure this House that they will get it right this time and the legislation will be able to be implemented when proclaimed?

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, the minister laid out this morning the plan that he is currently leading in the response to the report that we have all recently received. We are going to bring legislation to the House of Assembly here this spring. We are going to debate the legislation. We are going to pass the legislation, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, and then we are going to move in having the best access to information and protection of privacy legislation anywhere in Canada.

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

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

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

This government has promised a new funding formula for municipalities in this coming Budget. Given that the Premier has said that everything is on the table when it comes to his reference about cuts to programs, is the new funding arrangement going to be scrapped even though it was promised?

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, in 2013 we entered into an arrangement with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador, and all municipalities of Newfoundland and Labrador, let's look at our fiscal arrangement and look at a new way forward in regard to that. We had sixteen months of very good consultations with a wide range of stakeholders. We have accumulated all that information, recommendations were adopted by MNL last fall at their AGM, and we have gone through a process – obviously, that is part of the Budget process. We have made a commitment. We would certainly do what we can in terms of the fiscal arrangement.

Last Friday I met with the Executive Director of MNL. We are in close consultation with him. We will move it forward, and at the point and time of the Budget we will announce what that will be, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** Mr. Speaker, the assurance from this government of coming cuts has municipalities in doubt about funding for such things as basic water and sewer infrastructure.

Is a cut to Municipal Operating Grants going to be on the table?

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

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Mr. Speaker, if you go back and look at the investments this government has made in municipal infrastructure, in MOGs over the past number of years, in 2008 we were the government that brought in the new funding ratios, that have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

It was this government that changed the MOG formula just a couple of years to see 80 per cent of municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador see an increase in their MOGs. It was our government that has invested in Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador. We will continue to do that within our fiscal capacity, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The time for Question Period has expired.

Before we proceed with the rest of the routine business of the day, I would like to ask members if they would like to join with me in honouring and recognizing – the Member for Bonavista North is not here today. We do not usually refer to the presence of people in the House of Assembly but given this, we have all lost people who have been close to us. When you lose a child, I think it is something that tugs at everybody's heart strings.

I would like to give everybody an opportunity, if you wish, to stand in a moment of silence and to remember Jeremy and to send our best wishes and prayers to Mr. Cross and his family.

[Moment of silence.]

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

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

### Notices of Motion

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Finance.

**MR. WISEMAN:** Mr. Speaker, I 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 Interim Supply to Her Majesty, Bill 44.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale.

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

I give notice that I will move the following private member's resolution, seconded by the Member for Bonavista South:

WHEREAS the Northern shrimp fishery is an extremely important fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS both the inshore and offshore sectors have a history in this fishery, and are both important drivers of economic activity in the Province; and

WHEREAS the inshore sector, adjacent to the Northern shrimp resource, has been involved in the fishery since 1997 and was given permanent status in 2007; and

WHEREAS the application of the Last in, First Out (LIFO) policy in the face of quota cuts has had an extremely disproportionate impact on the inshore sector; and

WHEREAS Last In, First Out (LIFO) policy is a policy which is only applied to the Northern shrimp fishery; and

WHEREAS continued application by the Government of Canada of the LIFO policy for Northern shrimp will result in widespread economic ruin for hundreds of rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador and the thousands of our people who earn their living from the Northern shrimp resource;

BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly urges the Government of Canada to discontinue the LIFO policy and replace the allocation policy for Northern shrimp with a new sharing arrangement that is fair to both valued fleets.

Thank you.

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

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

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

As per Standing Order 63, I give notice that the motion just read by the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale shall be the private member's motion to be debated here tomorrow, Wednesday, Private Members' Day.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

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

Happy St. Patrick's Day.

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Provide The Public With Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy, Bill 45.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

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

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Provincial Court Act, 1991, Bill 43.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

**MS ROGERS:** 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, it has been about two years now since the current Minister of Justice had decided to cut funding to the Family Violence Intervention Court. Again, it is shameful, absolutely shameful. We do know the court was

doing the work that it was supposed to do, that it was an effective court.

Mr. Speaker, there were all kinds of reasons – the government flip-flopped on its reasons for cutting the court, but we do know it was one of the most effective tools in dealing with the root causes of domestic violence. Now one of the things that government said is because it did not serve the whole Province.

Well, Mr. Speaker, drug court, which is an effective court right now, is only situated in St. John's. They did not cut drug court, nor should they cut drug court. It is a very effective program in dealing with the social and economic issues of violence and issues for people – pardon me, Mr. Speaker, I meant mental health court. We know that mental health court is a very important tool in our justice system, as was the Family Violence Intervention Court.

I have asked this government a number of times, have they done an assessment as to the impact on the whole justice system, on the whole court system by having cut the Family Violence Intervention Court. So far we have not received any information about that.

Mr. Speaker, again, the Premier issued his mandate letter to the Minister of Justice, the past Minister of Justice, about the Family Violence Intervention Court saying: In consultation with stakeholders, I expect you to explore and propose for consideration possible models for providing Family Violence Intervention Court throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Speaker, we know that that is possible.

Thank you very much.

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

I remind the member her speaking time has expired.

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

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

To the hon. House of Assembly in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned

residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS government has a responsibility to ensure that Internet access is broadly available so people have a right to be able to access the Internet in order to exercise and enjoy their rights to freedom of expression and opinion and other fundamental human rights; and

WHEREAS the Town of Goose Cove still remains without broadband services; and

WHEREAS residents rely on Internet services for education, business, communication, and social activity; and

WHEREAS wireless and wired technologies exist to provide broadband services to rural communities to replace slower dial-up service;

We the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge government to assist providers to ensure the Town of Goose Cove is in receipt of broadband Internet services in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I will certainly acknowledge there have been great strides made in finding ways to cover broadband Internet across Newfoundland and Labrador, but there are still significant gaps when you have towns like Goose Cove, which is just eight kilometres from St. Anthony, the largest economic centre on the Great Northern Peninsula, and they not have access. It limits the opportunity the town has to attract new business revenue, to grow and create opportunities so that it has more self-sufficiency and less reliance on government funding, and that it can create new opportunities for their residents, for their youth in terms of education and in terms of commerce.

It just makes sense to look at providing a town like Goose Cove, that is so close to another municipality that has so much business and commerce activity, providing that extra tool would create new opportunities, as it would for Bide Arm, which is now part of the Town of Roddickton – Bide Arm.

I have presented a petition like this, similarly, and I will continue to do so because it is a good investment and it can create significant opportunities for our rural communities. If we are not investing and advancing telecommunications networks then we are failing the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. HILLIER:** 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 Route 2 on the Conception Bay South Bypass Road is the second busiest highway in the Province; and

WHEREAS we must ensure the safety of the residents who use the access road, especially when driving at night; and

WHEREAS brush clearing can reduce the risk to drivers from the local moose population;

We the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge the government to allocate funding to include brush clearing for the Manuels Access Road.

Mr. Speaker, this is a petition that I brought forward last fall. I was told at the time that I had missed two tender calls for brush clearing for this year and that if we stand by we might get on the list for tenders for next year.

There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker; I have run across the list of nine contracts which have been let for brush clearing throughout the Province for this year. For instance, Route 410, Baie Verte Highway, fifty hectares. As the Member for Baie Verte would say, check it off, that is a Tory district. Route 2, Pitts Memorial Drive, TCH to Kilbride, Topsail District to Kilbride, a Tory district. Route 80, Hant's Harbour to Brownsdale, twenty-three hectares. Trinity –

Bay de Verde, just missed the by-election, it was a Tory district then. Route 220, Fortune to Point May, twelve hectares; Grand Bank District, a Tory district.

Mr. Speaker, I guess if we go down through this, I have nine contracts for brush clearing, all of them in government districts. One of two things must be happening, Mr. Speaker: either Liberal districts do not have any trees, Liberal districts do not have any moose, Liberal districts do not have any highways, or this is pure political patronage.

Mr. Speaker, now that I know the system I am working within, I will ask the minister: When all the Tory districts have their brush cut, could they reserve a little spot for me in Conception Bay South?

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** 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 Tordon 101 contains the chemicals 2,4-D and picloram; and

WHEREAS the chemical picloram is a known cancer-causing carcinogen; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has banned the cosmetic use of the pesticide 2,4-D; and

WHEREAS safer alternatives are available to the provincial government for brush clearance such as manual labour, alternative competitive seeding methods, and/or the mechanical removal of brush; and

WHEREAS the provincial government is responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of its citizens;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to cease the use of chemicals covered under its own cosmetic pesticide ban and begin using safer methods of brush clearance that will not place citizens in harm's way.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I will start off my comments on this one by simply saying that if you look outside the windows right now it hardly seems prudent to be spraying chemicals, but the simple fact is this is budget time, and budget time brings forth the time when government has to bring forth a lot of things for pause for thought. One of the things they have been talking about is saving money. One of the things they talk about is using the foresight and having long-term planning in place in order to save that money.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when you are talking about dumping cancer-causing chemicals into our environment, we could be saving money by using alternative methods to prevent conditions in some of the people of this Province. We know there are alternative competitive seeding methods, for example, that can be used; but, at the same time as saying that, we can also create green jobs at the same time when it comes to brush clearing.

So we know government does have alternatives. I know it is also in the mandate, for example, from the Minister of Transportation, that he will be made to put together a plan for road maintenance, for example. We know that is in his mandate letter. I would expect that the minister would pay attention to the use of chemicals in harming our environment and try to stay away from the use of chemicals and use the alternative methods that would be designed more to preserve human health rather than to jeopardize it.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of St. John's and other areas who signed this petition, I

present this to the House of Assembly for consideration.

Thank you very much.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace.

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

**MR. SLADE:** 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 on average, there are over 700 moose-vehicle accidents in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador each year; and

WHEREAS approximately 10 per cent of those accidents result in serious injury or fatality; and

WHEREAS moose-vehicle accident mitigation measures like moose fencing, brush cutting, and hunting quotas have reduced accidents in other provinces, in particular, New Brunswick;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to increase moose-vehicle accident mitigation measures, including moose fencing, brush cutting, and increasing quotas, and to provide financial assistance to those most seriously injured as the result of said collisions.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I had a gentleman call me and ask me to present this petition on their behalf. These people are from the Whitbourne area. I will tell you, it is quite a story actually. This gentleman was a wildlife officer. He worked for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Unfortunately, he came in contact with a moose one day and now he sits as a paraplegic. Of course, we know that moose-vehicle accidents in some cases kill people. We know in a lot of

cases they maim people, which is what happened in this case here.

Mr. Speaker, I think the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador should be doing more. We just went through the process of these moose lights, they call them, or whatever the case may be – satellites. Anyway, it did not work. It sat there on the Province's highway for a long time and it simply did not work. What it basically did was give people false hope.

We need to do so much better for the residents of our Province to make sure that we are doing everything that we can possibly do so that we do not have to deal with those situations. Like I said, that gentleman there was a wildlife officer. We just need to do more, and I understand that the government had a moose strategy paper on the move. I do not know if that is going to be released or was it released, because I am not aware it was released, a moose strategy.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I just want to present this petition on behalf of anyone who has ever come in contact with a moose out there. On that note I will sit down, but you can rest assured there will be more coming.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Humber East.

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

WHEREAS the 2009 Throne Speech clearly states the government has provided free textbooks to students; and

WHEREAS this is an investment in education; and

WHEREAS unfortunately, students attending independently funded schools have been deprived of equal access to this assistance; and

WHEREAS the Department of Education is perceived to show discrimination towards

parents who exercise a choice of schooling for their child; and

WHEREAS all schools operate under the guidelines of the Schools Act;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, beginning immediately, to ask the Department of Education to provide free textbooks to all students who attend any school that follows the requirements of the Schools Act, 1997 (amended) Chapter S-12.2.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This is dated February 20, 2015.

Mr. Speaker, very quickly, since I have been elected, I have had the opportunity to meet with a number of –

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

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

**MR. FLYNN:** – people in the district who were quite concerned with this. As a matter of fact, there were eight put forward with 255 names on it. I am asking the minister to take time to sit down with these people and see if you could work out a deal that these kids are not penalized based upon the choice that their parents made for them. Right now it is pretty discriminatory. They are not allowed to participate in a competitive drama festival and so on, and I really think the minister should be involved.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**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 Southwest Coast of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, including residents of the communities of Margaree, Fox Roost, Isle aux Morts, Burnt Islands, Rose Blanche-Harbour Le Cou, Diamond Cove and La Poile, use Route 470 on a regular basis for work, medical, educational, and social reasons; and

WHEREAS there is no cellphone coverage on Route 470; and

WHEREAS residents and users of Route 470 require cellphone coverage to ensure their safety and communication abilities; and

WHEREAS the Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development recently announced significant funding to improve broadband services in rural Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS the residents and users of Route 470 feel that the department should also invest in cellphone coverage for rural Newfoundland and Labrador;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to support the users of Route 470 in their request to obtain cellphone coverage.

Mr. Speaker, I have been entering these petitions ever since I got into this House of Assembly and they concern two routes, Route 470 and Route 480. It has just been in the news this morning that on Route 480 we had a situation that thankfully turned out to be positive when we had two vehicles stuck overnight on the Burgeo road, one of them for up to twenty-four hours, stuck there because of weather conditions.

The first thing I want to do is throw a bouquet to the Department of Transportation and Works and the ground search and rescue. The work that they did to rescue these people was exemplary and they should be recognized for such, for putting their lives at risk, and we appreciate that.

Going back to the issue at hand, we had a situation where the rescue attempt was hampered because you cannot talk to anybody

on that 150 kilometres stretch of road and you cannot talk to anybody on this road on Route 470. We had the same situation last year, a huge storm; Transportation and Works had to take their equipment off the road and you cannot talk to people. You have people sleeping in their car in minus 20 overnight and they cannot call anybody. It is 2015 and we have not seen anything.

I am going to give the minister an opportunity to hopefully address this during the session of the House, whether it is Wi-Fi coverage, whether it is the possibility of new technology to expand the service – and it is not just here in my district; it is in a lot of districts on both sides of this House. I am hearing today that we are very lucky that these individuals got out alive. A lot of this could have been avoided if you could actually make that phone call. It is not acceptable in this day and age. We need to do something and work together to make this happen.

The previous minister did not do anything, would not answer any questions, so I am going to give this minister the opportunity and let's see it happen hopefully sooner rather than later.

Again, thank you to those workers who made this rescue happen, including the RCMP.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that we move to Orders of the Day.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that we move to Orders of the Day.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

**Orders of the Day**

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

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

Earlier today, under Notices of Motion, the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board gave notice of his intent to bring forth a motion on debate for Interim Supply. I would like to ask leave of the House to introduce that motion today and start debate thereafter.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Leave?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Leave.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The minister has leave.

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

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

I wish to inform the House that I have received a message from His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All rise.

As Administrator of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, I transmit a request to appropriate sums required for the Public Service of the Province for the year ending 31 March 2016, by way of Interim Supply and in accordance with the provisions of sections 54 and 90 of the Constitution Act, 1867, I recommend this request to the House of Assembly.

Sgd.: \_\_\_\_\_

Administrator Justice J. Derek Green

Please be seated.

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

**MR. WISEMAN:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. the Government House Leader, that the message together with the bill be referred to the Committee of Supply.

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

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

All those in favour, ‘aye’.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

**Committee of the Whole on Supply**

**CHAIR (Littlejohn):** Order, please!

We are considering the related resolution that Bill 44, 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, 2016 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

**Resolution**

“That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2016 the sum of \$2,784,047,800.”

**CHAIR:** Shall the resolution carry?

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

By way of background, before we get into debate and some commentary on the substance of the bill, I want to provide some introductory comments about what Interim Supply really is.

Each year the government, this House, this Legislature approves a Budget presented by government and that Budget covers the period

running from April 1 to March 31 of each year. That is our fiscal year. So government today has the permission of this House to continue spending money until March 31, 2015. That expenditure was laid out in the Estimates last year when we debated the Budget in this House.

The Estimates lay out what each department is allowed to spend in each expense category identified in the Estimates. This Legislature gave government the authority to keep spending according to those Estimates, according to the vote that was taken in this House. That gives government the permission to continue to spend up to March 31, 2015.

This is now the middle of March. So what would happen legally is come March 31 government would no longer have permission to continue spending money. They could not continue to pay their employees. They could not continue to provide Income Support payments to individuals who are in receipt of Income Support.

Basically, the business of government would shut down. We no longer would have the authority of this House to spend money, to commit money, to engage in contractual obligations, to issue tenders, to do anything at all. Any action the government would take that would cost money would become illegal if we do not get permission to continue on with business as usual and have some level of authority to spend money.

Every year government will come to the House of Assembly with what is called an Interim Supply Bill. They will ask this Legislature to approve sums of money in various categories that will allow each department of government to continue to operate to the end of June. So what Interim Supply does is ask the House to approve a sum of money to allow government to continue to function and operate to the end of June. Between now and the end of June government will introduce its full Budget. A full Supply Budget will be introduced in the House, and when we do, we will recognize that we have already dealt with some portion of it.

Today I am introducing a bill to the House and asking this House of Assembly to approve – and let me read for you, Mr. Chair, let me read for

you clause 2. This is the Interim Supply for 2015-2016 fiscal year. It says, let me read, “From and out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund there may be issued by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board sums not exceeding \$2,784,047,800 and the sums so issued shall be paid and applied by the individual Heads of Expenditure in respect of the financial year...” beginning April 1, 2015 and ending “March 31, 2016 towards defraying the charges and expenses of the Public Service of Newfoundland and Labrador as set out in the Schedule.”

Mr. Chair, if you go to the second page of the bill there is a Schedule and it lays out the Heads of Expenditure. It starts out with the Consolidated Fund Services, it runs to Executive Council, and continues to identify all of the heads of expenditures. When we table the Budget in the House we will have a document called the Estimates. The Estimates document lays out the heads of expenditures and each of those heads of expenditures have an allocation. The House will decide that this head of expenditure is allowed to spend this much money over the course of the next fiscal year.

What we have in this Schedule is a listing of all of those Heads of Expenditure. For example, in the Department of Transportation and Works we are asking that this Interim Supply Bill include an amount of \$479,513,300. That is the amount this House has been asked to give permission to the Department of Transportation and Works for them to spend over the course of the next three months as we debate and deal with the full budget.

Each department is listed – I am sorry, let me correct myself again. Each Head of Expenditure is listed in the Schedule. All the dollar amounts are assigned by the Head of Expenditure, and the total on the bottom is a reflection of what I just said a moment ago, which is \$2,784,047,800.

Mr. Chair, as I said a moment ago, that happens every year. Every year the House will be asked to consider an Interim Supply, a pretty normal and natural practice. Over the course of the next number of days, members of the House will get up and talk about this year’s Budget and talk about the Interim Supply. You are going to hear, I suspect, Mr. Chair, all kinds of

commentaries. In the House of Assembly, certain bills come towards the House.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. WISEMAN:** When they do, the Chair of Committees, the Deputy Chair of Committees, and the Speaker will frequently remind members to be relevant to the bill; but in this instance here, over the course of the next few days, you are going to hear a lot of stories being told, you are going to hear a lot of discussions about any number of things that may not have anything to do at all with finances – nothing to do at all with finances.

In fact, I suspect, over the next number of days – I am talking about \$2 billion here, over \$2 billion. Over the next three or four days, I doubt very much if 5 per cent of the commentary that we will hear will have anything to do with money. There will be a lot of discussion about a variety of things. Some of it might be politics and some of it might be about posturing for the upcoming provincial election sometime in 2015.

So this is an opportunity for members to get up, and particularly from the Opposition – what we will be hearing over the next number of days is a berating of government's decisions, a berating of government's expenditures. Everything that government may have done wrong in the last ten years you will hear paraded out over the next few days, but one thing will be missing.

What will be missing from the Opposition is their solutions to any of the problems. We will hear a lot of moaning about what is wrong. We will hear a lot of criticism about what government may have done wrong, but we will hear very little – although I did say we will hear a lot of campaign posturing, but we will hear very little about policy.

Very few times will members of the Opposition get up and say do you know what I think the government should do next year in improving our fiscal position, or what should government do – we will get lots of asks. They will get up and they will list off all the things that they would like to do. I would be interested in hearing a lot of that because members of the

Opposition attended many of the pre-Budget consultations, sat and wrote a lot of notes, did not contribute anything to the conversation at all.

So, as of today, the people of this Province, and the government as a result of its pre-Budget consultations, have no idea at all what the Opposition parties would like to see, would like to do, or any thoughts that they have on how the Province should manage its finances.

I do not think that is going to change very much in the next few days as we debate Interim Supply. We are still not going to gain that kind of insight at all, but we will hear a lot of criticism. So I am just forewarning the House and forewarning the people who may want to tune in and listen to the debate over the next number of days of what they may see.

Always remember, despite what you might be hearing, there is a bill before the House that is asking the House to approve Interim Supply which allows, fundamentally, government to continue to do the business of the people of the Province and allow departments to continue to provide programs and services and have the authority to pay for those programs and services.

When we look at this amount of money here, the schedule talks about \$2,784,000,000. Each department is listed here. When we start talking about Advanced Education and Skills or we start talking about the Department of Education, we are going to be talking about money that is necessary to allow us to continue to make the strategic investments in poverty reduction, for example. Both those departments, together with others, but both those departments in particular have a big piece of their work that they do which contributes towards our Poverty Reduction Strategy. In the absence of having the funding approved to allow them to continue to do that, we would not be able to, as a government, continue to do the great work that we do on behalf of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and the people who live here.

So when the Department of Education looks at their \$316 million – \$316,708,000 that is in this Interim Supply – that allows the Department of Education to continue to provide free textbooks. That allows them to have an ability to continue

to fund the elimination of all fees that students pay in this Province. It was not all that many years ago that students who went to school in Newfoundland and Labrador had a number of fees associated with it. The members of this House can recall, no doubt, as their children went to school in September they came home after the first day with a list of all the things you needed to bring now the second day and, by the way, bring in your cheque for this much because here are the fees. You need a fee for this, a fee for something else, and by the way, you have four or five books you have to buy and here is how much they cost. So when you come back the second day, bring back the money.

Now, that was a normal thing to do in Newfoundland and Labrador. I think as parents we all did it. We all did that. What happened, though, is we recognized as a government that that was not fair and was not equitable. To many people that was a tremendous financial burden on many families in Newfoundland and Labrador. So we made a conscious decision that we were no longer going to charge those fees.

When people sit in this House and they debate Interim Supply, for example, recognize that what you are doing is you are allowing the Department of Education to continue to do the things that they do, continue to invest the money in the development of children in this Province, and allow them to supply and provide for the elimination of school fees. It allows them to provide for free textbooks. So recognize that when you are standing in the House over the next few days, debating this bill, and you are talking about a variety of things, reflect for a few moments, though, on what this bill is really about and what this money is used for. I just use that as an illustration. On the other side, that is a social program, a social investment.

The hon. Government House Leader in his department here is asking that we would provide an initial \$46,302,000 to allow his department to continue to invest strategically in the kinds of initiatives that he supports, as he talks about creating a support for business diversification, looking at how we can actually invest strategically in key business enterprise and key sectors of our economy to create greater economic prosperity, to create more employment. That is the reason that department

is set up. It is not just so that he can have a large group of staff there to develop policy and to provide advice to government; his department is a key department in driving economic development and economic activity in Newfoundland and Labrador.

So when you are standing in the House and debating Interim Supply over the next few days and you are looking at \$46 million going to his department and you wonder why we are doing that, the reason simply is that we need as a government, we need as a Province, to continue to make strategic investments in economic diversification, supporting companies, supporting business as they grow and prosper and create employment opportunities for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. That is the kind of decision that you are going to be making in the next number of days as you debate Interim Supply.

I could go down through every single one of these heads of expenditure here and give you an example of the kinds of things that each of those departments will be doing with their Interim Supply that you, hopefully, by next week, will vote in this House to give permission for us to continue to operate as a government.

I wanted to provide those introductory comments for the members of the House, but also for members of the general public as they start to listen over the next few days about a debate that may seem kind of strange on times, rambling on a variety of topics; but, clearly, it is about Interim Supply and giving government the permission to continue to operate, giving various departments in government the permission to continue to provide services and provide programs to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and, at the end of the day, have permission to pay for and taking us to the end of June.

Mr. Chair, my time has now expired, but I look forward to, over the next few days, continuing to contribute to this debate. No doubt, I will have an opportunity to respond to many people opposite as they raise issues that may or may not be on topic, may or may not be accurate, I say, Mr. Chair, but thank you for the time to make my comments.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Before I get into the debate, it was mentioned by the Speaker about the Member for Bonavista North and his family going through a very tough time. Jeremy was a son who the member spoke about very fondly in this House on many occasions. He spoke about taking him moose hunting.

I spoke to the member last night and the member and the family are comfortable. They did the best they could for their son. They are very appreciative of all the calls they got from the House of Assembly. I on this side also, like all the House, would just like to pass on our condolences to the family and say to Eli, you were a very proud father as you should be.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Chair, I am going to speak on Interim Supply. The minister just gave us a little roundabout. I would just like to ask the minister one question: Where is the \$1 million it cost to show that Bill 29 was a complete disaster by that government?

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Where in this Interim Supply is the \$1 million of wasted money, Mr. Chair? One million dollars wasted because now you have to come out and say what you did was wrong.

Mr. Chair, I always said when you bring in something that was supposed to be open and you have to force closure just to get it through the House of Assembly, you know it is a problem. This report vilifies the government, which they should have. It shows that the people of the Province and everybody who was against this Bill 29 all across Canada were right, that this was not opening up the government but closing it, Mr. Chair.

I am glad that it was done. I would love to see in Interim Supply where it is a waste of another \$1 million just to say we told you so.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** How much?

**MR. JOYCE:** One million dollars.

Mr. Chair, as we go through and we debate now on these issues, we have a major deficit. We have a major deficit in this Province. It is mismanagement. I honestly feel that it is mismanagement.

Mr. Chair, I just wanted to give you a little quote because what is said over on the West Coast is not always brought over on the East Coast. You want to look at mismanagement. I would love for anybody on the opposite side, anybody in the government, to stand up and justify this.

Here is a quote that was made a little over a year ago when I was kicking up about the hospital, fighting for radiation in the hospital. It was the former Minister of Finance who said this a little over a year ago, the former Premier: We are flush in cash; we have \$2 billion in cash.

Why doesn't someone on the opposite side stand up and tell us where did the \$2 billion go? Where did it go? A little over a year, \$2 billion he was bragging, in cash, Mr. Chair. Where did it go? Why doesn't someone on the opposite side from government stand up and say was Tom Marshall telling the truth at the time? Well where did the money go? Here is a great opportunity, Mr. Chair.

Now we hear the members of government say, what would you do? I tell you what we would have done. We would have never allowed us to get ourselves in that situation, Mr. Chair. We would have been responsible. We would have stood up and we would have been honest with the people.

We look at Muskrat Falls. We had to go through Muskrat Falls. How much money is being spent? I ask you, Mr. Chair, how much money is being spent on Muskrat Falls? Can anybody in this House come out and say how much money is taken out of general revenues for Muskrat Falls?

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

**MR. JOYCE:** That is what is being spent. How much is being taken out of general revenues? There is not a person in government over there who can answer that question. They could not even answer us.

Look at it, Mr. Chair, here we are spending all this surplus and cash that apparently Tom Marshall said we had and we are going to give cheaper rates to Nova Scotia while taxpayers in this Province – we are talking about poverty reduction, the people who are on low income are going to subsidize the people in Nova Scotia because they are going to get lower rates. That is fiscal management. Mr. Chair, if you want to know why people are starting to lose confidence in this government, it is not hard to see.

Mr. Chair, I want to talk about the hospital in Corner Brook. I know I have stood up and talked about this hospital on many occasions. I talked about it on many occasions. I find it funny; the Minister of Health went out during the by-election in Humber East, stood up in the by-election, went out in the public – and if you knew how many people laughed at his comments – there is no delay in the hospital. We are on schedule. It was supposed to be built in 2012, functional in 2012. There is no delay. What is the big problem?

Mr. Chair, back then I pushed for radiation. I make no bones about it; I pushed hard for radiation. I took the concerns of the people who had cancer out on the West Coast, in Labrador, and the Northern Peninsula who had to drive across these roads no matter what the weather conditions were, had to find transportation, had to find accommodations in here, had to be away from their loved ones, had to go through cancer treatment here in St. John's, and I stood up for those people because it just was not right. I was vilified by this government. I was vilified. I did not know what I was talking about, Mr. Chair.

Here are some of the reasons that were given by the government at the time. Here are just a few of them: unproven model of singular radiation unit; radiation should be offered in the tertiary care facility; challenges with recruitment and retention of specialized staff; numbers do not justify the service. Plus, Mr. Chair, there were

some fictitious polls being done about how people would not use the services in Corner Brook.

Mr. Chair, when the report came out from Altus, do you know what it said? It is a necessity. It is a necessity in the new regional hospital. It took us another \$500,000 of government funds just to prove – and I have to give Tom Marshall the credit. I will tell you where Tom Marshall changed his mind, Mr. Chair. I do not mind saying this publicly. There was a centre over in Nova Scotia in Sydney. We were speaking to this guy who said yes, we had a single unit in Nova Scotia. After three or four years, the demand was so high we had to get a second unit.

I walked over to the Premier at the time, Tom Marshall, and I said Tom, not for me, phone this person. Tom Marshall on the weekend picked up the phone, phoned this person in Sydney, Nova Scotia. He said Premier, yes, we had a single unit. Tom Marshall came to me and said Eddie, I was told it could not be done; we will get a study done.

I have to give Tom Marshall credit for one thing, taking the information that I gave him and the people of Western Newfoundland were saying it all along and the Opposition – because I remember when myself and Dwight Ball and the Opposition stood up in Corner Brook and announced that we were going to put radiation in Corner Brook. The next day the government had a full list of press releases saying why we are just playing politics with it all.

Mr. Chair, Tom Marshall phoned this person and when the person came on, here was the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador who asked him these questions and Tom Marshall started this study. Not only are they going to put a radiation unit in there, not only are they going to put a radiation unit, the numbers that we supplied the government will support a second unit in 2025-2026 for the people of Western Newfoundland and Labrador.

This is why this Legislature is important. This is why when we want to talk about Interim Supply and we want to talk about budgets – and also in the report, I have some questions, Mr. Chair. In the report it says our hospital is going to be operational in 2019 because of the information

supplied by government. It is time for this government to be upfront with the people of Western Newfoundland and Labrador. The earliest construction that this hospital can be is 2016. In the report it says the hospital should be built by 2019. It is absolutely impossible, Mr. Chair. It is impossible.

It said by 2025-2026 we are going to need two units. There are going to be two bunkers put in there. Give them credit, there are going to be two bunkers put in the new hospital, Mr. Chair. By the time the hospital is up and functionally running, we will be close to needing a second radiation unit in the new hospital in Corner Brook, because this hospital will not be ready until 2021-2022, the absolute minimum, Mr. Chair.

I can go through a list of press releases that were sent out by government, Mr. Chair, but I am not going to do that. All I do is urge the government. If you are bringing in Interim Supply and you are bringing in a Budget, follow your commitment that was made in 2007, 2011, 2012, 2014, and again this year, that there will be funds put in there for the new hospital in Corner Brook. It is urgent, Mr. Chair, trust me. If anybody over here took a walk through the new regional hospital now you will see why at every opportunity I will speak about this new regional hospital.

Mr. Chair, before I sit down on the new hospital, I want to thank all of my colleagues for their support and the time they gave me in the House. So many times I know I was a bit forceful when I wanted to bring up this issue. I want to thank my colleagues for allowing me to do that. I have to say the action committee, Israel Hann, Gerald Parsons and all of them, they took it to another level. I just want to recognize them also, Mr. Chair.

I say to the Minister of Health, Mr. Chair, they are still waiting for the meeting that you were supposed to have with them back in November during the by-election. I know they called several times waiting for the meeting that you were supposed to have with them. Obviously, you forget now you made that commitment, but they are still waiting for the meeting.

They are still waiting for the functional plan that you were going to give them two weeks after that meeting. They are still waiting for that. So you can see how people become a bit cynical when the minister waltzes out there and tries to give a good song and dance during a by-election, knowing full well he is not going to follow through on it.

Mr. Chair, I just want to have a few words on that. I am going to speak on 911 for a second. This is another issue, and I know the new minister is going to be in on it. I am going to try to have a meeting with the new minister on this to explain some of the discrepancies of 911 across the Province. I will just give you an example with the St. John's Regional Fire Department as they break it up per call for fire departments and others. Mr. Chair, fire departments in St. John's pay an average of \$30 a call for dispatch – \$30.

For some reason this government is allowing the City of Corner Brook – two 911 operators, two dispatchers who are sitting down side by side, Mr. Chair. I just want people to picture this, two people sitting down. If a call comes in, the same two dispatchers will take the call. If you pay \$2,500 minimum, you will dispatch and you will take that call. If you do not pay the \$2,500 it goes to the next person, in the same one, and you just get call forwarding, but the two people who are sitting at the table for the 911 are paid by the seventy-five cents, are paid by the 911 corporation. They are paid.

I will just get back to Corner Brook, Mr. Chair. The Towns of York Harbour and Lark Harbour for dispatch for fire department, if they go through this – if this government allows their buddy Charles Pender and the city council to go through this here, the Towns of York Harbour and Lark Harbour will have to pay \$1,125 per call, per dispatch. They have two dispatches, now they have to pay \$2,500.

Here is what Neville Wheaton – I do not mind saying it because he said it publicly. Here is what Neville Wheaton said at public meetings. The former minister, Judy Manning, was at the meeting. Here is what he said. If you want to talk about a condescending attitude, and this government is allowing this. Here is what he said: we can charge them \$25 a call, we can

charge them \$30 a call. It is not worth the paperwork for the city to do so; we will charge them \$2,500. That is what Neville Wheaton said, the fire chief in the City of Corner Brook. That is what he said.

He is charging the Towns of York Harbour and Lark Harbour over \$1,100, \$1,225 a call, whatever it is. It is \$2,500 per town and over and above, Mr. Chair. How is that fair? I ask the minister, stand up on your feet here today and tell me how that is fair when a dispatch in here costs \$30 a call – stand up. The two people who are giving the calls are paid fully by the 911 corporation.

Guess what? Here is the kicker, Mr. Chair. Here is the absolute kicker on this. The money that is being charged for dispatch over in Corner Brook goes in the City of Corner Brook coffers. It does not go into the 911 corporation. If everybody from Goobies west wants 911, they all have to pay \$2,500. It goes in the City of Corner Brook while the taxpayers are paying seventy-five cents per phone who is paying for the two dispatchers. Is that correct?

How can you tell me that is a way to treat people? Here is an opportunity for the minister to stand up. Anything I am saying here today, stand up and deny it, Mr. Chair. Here is your opportunity. What I am saying is factually correct because the minister here is giving out –

**CHAIR:** I remind the hon. member his time has expired.

**MR. JOYCE:** – so much misinformation. I wanted the information here today.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** I remind the hon. member his time has expired.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Exploits.

**MR. FORSEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is always a pleasure to stand up in the House and be able to speak on some legislation or

Interim Supply, whatever the issue of the day is, Mr. Chair.

I would certainly like to pass along my condolences as well to the Member for Bonavista North, as well as everyone here in the House today.

Mr. Chair, I would like to touch on first the new Lands Act review that is proposed by our government and Municipal Affairs. This new act is very important to the people of the Province, especially out in Central Newfoundland, because we have so many different restrictions and interference by other agencies, Mr. Chair.

The department will now do a review of the Lands Act. It needs to be done. We will modernize the act and make the Crown lands application process simpler and more efficient. I know the people of the Province are welcoming this particular review. When the consultations are finished, then it will come back to the minister and come back to the department, and then it will come to the House, I am sure, for amendments to the legislation. The review will be led by consulting with a broad range of stakeholders, including municipalities, legal representatives, developers, as well as the general public.

A couple of quick facts on this particular review. The Department of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs are initiating this review to modernize and update the Lands Act. The Lands Act guides the management and administration of provincial Crown lands. Here is the key, the provincial Crown lands, Mr. Chair. We do have a lot of requests, a lot of applications submitted to the different regional offices for lands, whether it is for business, whether it is for residential, cabins, whatever the case may be, and there are always a lot of issues with regard to restrictions. The act is outdated, really, and needs to be modernized.

Consultations are being led by a review committee consisting of individuals with considerable knowledge, experience, and education in the areas of law, policy, and process improvement. When the consultations are completed, a What We Heard document will be released. Now this particular document will

be reviewed again by the department and, hopefully, the recommendations will be brought here to the Legislature and amendments will be made that are going to make it easier for the people of the Province when they are submitting applications to Crown Lands.

Mr. Chair, just for a point of interest – and I know I have had calls at my office alone for information concerning this; there has been a lot of interest generated from this particular review. In Central Newfoundland, where I would probably be more affected in the District of Exploits and in the Central area, the review will meet there on Wednesday, March 25, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Mount Peyton Hotel in Grand Falls-Windsor. For anybody who is listening – and there are other dates, of course, in other places like Marystown, Harbour Breton, Corner Brook, St. Anthony, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador City, and St. John's. They are going to be held throughout the Province and everyone will get an opportunity to get their two cents worth in and the changes they would like to see, because we do run into a lot of issues with restrictions and the policies are probably fifty to sixty years old.

Out our way I know we have buffer zones, we have agricultural agency, Abitibi still has claims on some lands out there, Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, wildlife, environment – all these different agencies and departments have some interference probably with an application through Crown Lands. Hopefully when this is all done, it will make the process easier and simpler and, of course, it is what the people of the Province are looking for.

I just wanted to pass out the dates so that the people in the Province will know when the consultations are taking place – a very important piece of legislation.

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

**MR. FORSEY:** Mr. Chair, when you are speaking on Interim Supply, time goes fairly fast. What I wanted to say to the people out there – obviously, the Opposition are not listening and they refuse to listen. However, for the people in the audience out there, in listening land, this government and this Premier, I want to say, have been listening and that is why we

created different things. This minister created the seniors department and an all-party committee on mental health, House of Assembly reform, developed the Open Government Initiative, and this new Lands Act review. All of this stuff is what we have been doing as a government and our leader has been listening to what the people are looking for.

I had the opportunity to sit in on the Budget consultations with the Minister of Education, the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor – Buchans at the Mount Peyton. It is always a good exercise, Mr. Chair, when you do Budget consultations. I have always heard people say I am really glad you are doing this because we get an opportunity to speak on it and express our concerns, but do you know what actually – I know the Minister of Education can vouch for this. When we discussed the Budget and when we discussed where we have invested monies in education and health care, the response was: I would not want your job. Wasn't that the response, Minister? That was the response: I would not want your job. The Opposition makes it sound like it is pretty easy because they have not said where they would cut all these investments we have made in health care that is much appreciated by the people of the Province, Mr. Chair.

For argument's sake, this government, through health care, implementing the best practices and finding efficient but effective ways to deliver services, today there are more practising physicians and registered nurses than ever before in this Province's history.

Mr. Chair, we have been recognized for having the shorter wait times for radiation, bypass surgery, hip and knee replacement, and cataract surgery than any other province in Canada. Now, that did not just happen. That was not the little leprechaun that came over from Ireland and made this happen. This was –

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

**MR. FORSEY:** Oh, and this is St. Paddy's Day. Yes, I have a little bit of green on. That is all I could find this morning.

Mr. Chair, since 2004 the provincial government has invested nearly \$1.5 billion in health care infrastructure. I could talk about what we have

done throughout the Province, but I would just like to talk about what we have done in the Regional Health Centre in Central Newfoundland.

The last announcement that was made by our Member for Grand Falls-Windsor – Buchans, I happened to be there a couple of weeks ago when the announcement was made for more investment in the Regional Health Centre there. The money was going to be used for electrical and emergency power systems, laboratory equipment. Would we not invest in laboratory equipment? Diagnostic imaging – would we not do that? Nursing equipment including thirty-four replacement beds – and we are always talking about how we need beds and the importance of the beds. I know, I have been there in emergency. I have spent overnight there. I did not want to, but I had to and I was treated very well. Sometimes emergency gets busy, and like other people I had to stay out in the hallway that night. So perhaps we should not invest in health care and not even take people and put them in the hallways. Probably we should not spend the money there at all.

New ultrasound machine and upgrades to the CT scanner – this is the kind of money that was invested in the Regional Health Centre in Grand Falls. A couple of weeks ago the announcement was made, and I was proud to be there. I could go on and talk about our investment in health care. I could also talk about our diagnostic equipment and where we are to with dialysis machines. I always talk about that because it is near and dear to me. Or, I could touch on should we cut the money from our most vulnerable, like our seniors, and cut back on money in our Poverty Reduction Strategy? Probably we could cut all of that. Maybe that is what the Third Party wants us to do, not invest money in the poverty reduction.

Mr. Chair, I appreciate the time and hopefully I will get another opportunity to discuss some of the good things this government is doing.

Thank you.

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

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

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

It certainly is a pleasure to have an opportunity and speak for the first time on Bill 44, Interim Supply. As has been said, we really only have ten minutes. It is going to be a challenge, but I am looking forward to having more than one go at it.

Mr. Chair, it was interesting that the Minister of Finance sort of framed the discussion. I was listening to him intently and he described to us all what Interim Supply is all about, what it really means, providing funding now to get us through until June so the business of government can carry on. He kind of framed it up that members on this side would be taking the opportunity not to speak to Interim Supply but to criticize government and so on, and take political shots and so on.

Mr. Chair, really it is our role as Opposition members to ask questions. It is our role to point out inefficiencies, where they exist. It is our role to point out areas where things could be done perhaps a different way, to point out where money is being spent in departments and so on, yet we are not getting the results we should be getting. So that is really what our role is. I do not want people to be confused that somehow we are being off topic or off track and so on because really we are just performing the role of the Opposition, and that is what we are here to do.

I am sure that there is going to be lots of stuff said over on the other side and there will be members of government side who will stand up, as the member opposite just did, and talk about all the money that has been spent and the great investments that they have made and start saying should we cut health care, should we cut this, should we cut that.

We can get rhetoric certainly on all sides of the House, but my intent here today is to speak to some areas in my department and indicate – and it all ties into Interim Supply because we are talking about the expenditure of money in all the departments, so obviously if we are spending money in the department, then we want to see results for the money being spent.

Mr. Chair, when we talk about the Department of Service Newfoundland and Labrador, which is the department I have been following, critic for, shadowing, whatever you want to call it, part of the Interim Supply money will be to continue funding this particular department and a number of the things that this department would be responsible for and so on.

We talk about this money and we talk about the need for getting results. There have been a number of issues within the Department of Service NL that have been raised – I have raised them over the last year – that we are still not seeing action on for that money spent. Now, some of those things, unfortunately, have now been taken from Service NL because we have ministers here now who are responsible for all kinds of things that one might question whether or not the fit is right or it is not; for example, workers' compensation which was part of Service NL is now with Child, Youth and Family Services. I kind of fail to see that connection but be that as it may, that is where it is gone.

Under the former Department of Service NL, there were a number of issues which I have raised that we have not seen results. Some of those issues are, for example, prepaid funeral audits. That was a measure that was put in place to protect consumers who have paid for prepaid funerals to ensure that when the time comes and they need those funds that the money is there. There is supposed to be audits submitted every year. Of course, we found out last year that we only had about 50 per cent of the audits received which raises the question, okay, well the ones that were not received is everything fine with those companies, is everyone in compliance, are consumers being protected – never got that it was not being done.

Certainly we have had a number of issues raised with the workers' comp review division. We have a large number of injured workers in this Province depending upon that division to have their appeals heard on their claims and there are a lot of families and individuals impacted by timely decisions. Of course, we know we have not been receiving timely decisions. That was certainly part of the mandate letter that the Premier gave to the former Minister of Service NL, but it certainly was an issue long before it

was part of the mandate letter. Yet, we continue to see a long wait-list there and injured workers and their families suffering as a result of that inaction to get that cleared up.

We have a workers' comp stat review. We know that there are a number of issues being pointed out by the people in business as well as injured workers and so on around the concerns and issues they have with the workers' comp system. There was a stat review that was done I think it is over a year ago now. It went out for feedback and it has been with the former minister and now I guess with the new minister. We still have not seen any release from the department on that stat review in terms of any recommendations and any new legislation that we can expect to improve the lives of injured workers.

I have had meetings with the Marystown Shipyard Family Alliance. That is a group of workers who have been dealing with workers' comp now for the last number of years in trying to deal with the sickness and loss of loved ones as a result of exposures in the Marystown Shipyard. We still have not seen any improvements to how we deal with industrial disease in this Province, specifically with that group. There have been numerous attempts to meet with ministers and that has not happened.

We have issues with silica dust in Labrador, in Lab City. That has been an ongoing issue raised here numerous times. I know there is a silica study being done now; I think it is about two years late. It is now finally being done, but that has been an ongoing issue.

We have an issue with no safety inspectors in Lab West. There used to be three safety inspectors; it went down to one. For the last two to three years I believe we have been dealing with fly-in, fly-out safety inspectors for Lab West. It is a significant downgrade for sure and a concern for people in Lab West.

We know we have had issues with lack of safety inspections on fishing vessels. The CBC did a story on that last year about that. We know we had a fish processing safety sector council that was announced by this government, I think it is two if not three years ago. We had funding put aside for it and to date there still is no fish

processing safety sector council. It is still not established under the department.

The Fish Harvesting Safety Association, that was announced at the same time that the fish processing was announced, and I think it was two to three years later we finally now have the association up and running, doing good work, had their first meeting a few months back. I am glad to see that, but it took something like two to three years after it was announced before it happened.

Of course, blue zones – the issue has been raised here numerous times. I was very glad to see that the government finally sat down with COD-NL, which should have been done from day one, and they developed a new brochure and an awareness campaign to try to get blue zones the way they should be in businesses. Unfortunately, enforcement has been lacking, and we still have a number of government buildings, hospitals, schools, and so on that are still not up to standard in terms of blue zones.

Payday loan legislation – the only Province in the country that does not have payday loan legislation. It has been called for now in the House of Assembly for the last couple of years – certainly the Member for St. John's South and certainly I have – still no payday loan legislation, not hearing about it coming, was not part of the mandate letter for the department. So I guess we are not going to see that, and there are a lot of people being impacted.

Procurement legislation – procurement, that is another issue. That is another piece of legislation that died on the Order Paper about two years ago. Part of the mandate letter, do not know when we are going to see that legislation, but that is another issue. We have certainly seen the issues around public tendering, the exemption clause that has been used, and the issues the Auditor General has pointed out. Of course, the newest one, I met with the insurance industry, and now there is an issue they have around insurance audits, which I am going to raise as well.

So, tying in to Interim Supply, we are spending money, or allowing the continuation of spending money to continue on with these departments, but these departments have a mandate, and I

would suggest, based on this list, there are a lot of things that should be happening that are not happening, and that is a concern for us in the Opposition. I will continue to raise these issues. I look forward to another opportunity to speak.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

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

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

It is indeed an honour to stand here and talk about our process here through the Budget process and the interim funding, and the importance of maintaining services, maintaining the very diligent workforce we have in this Province, and guaranteeing that things move forward and we do not slow down what we are doing. Obviously we are going through a very integral, a very in-depth exercise here of assessing, exactly, our financial abilities to meet programs and services that we want to implement for the people of this great Province.

We are also reviewing exactly how we get the best bang for our dollar, and that means talking with stakeholders. As the minister and a number of my colleagues have gone out in the pre-Budget consultations asking people for their input, asking them for their expertise, and outline exactly how they would do those type of things.

I have had the privilege over the last few weeks as Minister of Transportation and Works to meet with people in the construction industry and ask them exactly what it is they feel we could be doing better. What new approaches could we use to get the best return on our investment and to make sure the quality of work that we get lasts long enough so we are not just doing patchwork because we have some financial restrictions? How is it better to invest in certain areas so that you are going to get a longer return on it, and we have been doing that? I engaged and I encouraged, and I know my colleagues have done that in their respective departments, about how we best do that.

I noticed the previous speaker talked about Service NL and some of the engagement there. Well, we engaged. I was minister, and I know the previous minister engaged organizations like COD-NL, engaged them to look at how we best utilize the resources we have to get the information out and get the service provided, and that means developing partnerships. We have become very good at that. We have become very good at doing it with academics, with industry, with other jurisdictions, and within our own ranks, better communications between departments to make sure that we minimize any duplication and we are all on the same page, and how we best look at what are the strategies here, but particularly what are the priorities and how we find ways of doing that?

I might note too, the Finance critic for the Opposition noted about we spent all this money and have nothing to show for it. I just want to indicate a number of things we have to show for it, the investment for the people. We have hundreds of programs and services that did not exist before this Administration took over – hundreds. I am not talking one or two – hundreds in different areas. New services that did not exist. These all add up to billions of dollars in investment.

New investments in transportation, ferries for example. We are at a process now where we have close to three-quarters of a billion dollars invested in our ferry services, and that is not just our base operation. That is a continuous process.

The same with our transportation numbers; our snow clearing, our new equipment, again, nearly a billion dollars that we have invested over the last number of years to make sure people travel safely on our highways, to make sure people have access to roads. We are building roads that did not exist before. We are maintaining them. We are upgrading them. We are doing divided highways. We are doing off ramps. We are doing bridges. Over \$100 million only in the last four years on bridges. It is a major investment there.

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** To ask where our money has gone, we can show you. Drive around this great

Province of ours. Drive in all parts; drive to Labrador and see what we have done on the Trans-Labrador Highway. See what we have been doing on the Straits, how we intend to improve the road service there.

**MR. FORSEY:** The people out in Central where they wanted the Sir Robert Bond Bridge done.

**MR. BRAZIL:** The Sir Robert Bond Bridge in Central, another great asset that we will have for the people travelling to this great Province.

Let's talk about the schools. Let's talk about education, the three-quarters of a billion dollars we have put in new schools and renovating existing schools so that the quality of education and the access to services in this Province would be equal to any other jurisdiction in this country. Our students deserve that, and that is what we want to deliver.

Are there some challenges in some remote areas? There is no doubt about it. Are there things that go wrong in some of our schools that we have to go rectify? Of course there are, but once we identify those we go up and try to engage the stakeholders, be it the school districts, be it the community councils, be it the student councils, and find out what is the best approach we should be using to address these issues. We have been very diligent around that. I do not mind saying, very positive feedback we have gotten and very successful in what we have done.

Let's look at some of the other things we have done about life safety here. For example, water bombers; \$100 million invested in water bombers to guarantee our forest industry and where people live, that we have a way of fighting to keep people safe. We have invested that because our diligent civil servants need to have proper equipment, and that is what we have been doing to make sure they are safe as part of that process.

Air ambulances; we have invested in the air ambulance process to make sure that people who need health care can get there in the quickest time possible but in the safest manner possible.

Fire trucks; support for the municipal volunteer firefighters. Hundreds of millions of dollars we have done over the last number of years. Doubling up and tripling up what was the normal allotment of fire trucks to make sure people have proper equipment.

New ways of training; we have built nine new fire halls in this Province only in the last number of years. It is a major investment in the people in this Province, particularly those who volunteer, particularly those who put their own lives ahead of other people's for safety in this Province. So we respect that, and we support it. It is very important to this Administration since it took over in 2003. There were times when we had some real financial challenges, but even through those we found a good fiscal way of dealing with the needs of people there, but also looking to the future. That is why we had so much support from the municipalities.

We are the ones who brought in the fiscal framework for smaller municipalities on the 90/10, the 80/20, and the 70/30. That is why you see more investments in water and sewer, why you see more recreation facilities. All strategic plans made by this Administration to make sure – the \$20 billion that is being talked about that we so-called squandered, you go around to any of the communities and you will see where it is squandered. Squandered in people's ability to be engaged, ability to have better recreation, better education, better health care, and better access on the highways, better engagement for businesses.

There was \$1 billion spent to engage businesses in this Province over the last number of years. That is turning back tens of millions of dollars and billions of dollars in revenues from different companies on a continuous basis. So we are looking for some innovative ways to do that, and we have done it. Particularly over the last eight years, we have opened up the business community to come here. We told them we are open for business but we said we are open for business that benefits the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and our programs and services reflect that.

The programs and services that are in Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development are also another entity there about how we are

drawing the non-traditional businesses here. The aerospace industry, aquaculture. What we have done in the fishing industry, the aquaculture there, to diversify and be world leaders.

This is not just about sustaining what we always had and being quite happy with status quo. This is about being innovative, finding new, creative ways to engage our own citizens, train our own citizens. Bring business in here, but business in here that benefits the people of Newfoundland and Labrador through tax basis, through job creation, through their own investments in communities.

We have carved out a real good working relationship with multinationals when they come here. No longer is it come, take what you want, then leave. When they come here the contracts they sign are in the best interest of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. They know we are going to be fair because we are open for business. That is how we do it, but we are going to be fair to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador first. Companies have accepted that. Now they come here looking to do business. They engage us.

Other jurisdictions look at the Memorandums of Understanding, the contracts that we sign with these companies to say: How did you negotiate that? How did you get such an equitable, fair deal that both parties can live with it and your citizens get to reap the benefits? Because we thought it out. We did not sell out anything. It was not a giveaway. It was strategic planning, and that is what this Administration has been all about.

When we talk about squandering of money, there is no squandering of money. It is investing money back into the citizens of this Province. We have done a great job of it. The best way we have done that is because we have asked the people of this Province and the business communities and the social organizations, what is it that you need us to do? What is the best way we could be doing that? That is what we ended up doing, developing the programs and services around that.

The Minister of Finance and the former Ministers of Finance went out with a Budget

consultation process, even in times when there was some restraint, and asked people to be very open about what their expectations were and what we could deliver on. That is one thing we wanted to be, open with people and say here is what we can deliver on. Tell us the best way we can deliver it.

Would the people like more? Would we like to have billions of dollars more to be able to put out there and service everybody in every way, shape or form? Of course, that is not there right now. It is not there, but we are on the path to be able to do that one day.

Our investments in Nalcor is another example of where we are going. It is stability. This is not only about the immediate, it is about the future. We have managed to make sure there is a pathway that is bright and that this generation and future generations are going to be able to draw on that and benefit from those, and that is what this Administration has always been about. It is about the money we have gotten.

We can go back and stand proudly about all the money we have invested. Sometimes you go out and you take a chance with certain things. That is around business, the right way to do things, but we have been very professional about how we have done it and very cautious to make sure the people were protected first. That has been a benefit to us here. That is why we are still one of the best jurisdictions in the world for companies to want to invest.

That is why people in this Province have moved up when it comes to poverty reduction and access to education, access to health care, access to transportation, and recreation. All the things that five, six, seven, ten years ago people thought were a pipe dream. We have gone beyond that. We have offered the services to people, and we are going to continue to do that.

We have a little fiscal bump in the road right now. We are going to have to look at how we best do the things we do and get the best bang for our dollar. That will be done through consultation, through input, and open dialogue. The Opposition will have a great opportunity to debate exactly what programs and services when the Budget comes down. You will have an opportunity to do the Estimates debate.

We will explicitly outline exactly where every dollar is going to go. We will be able to outline by each minister why that is the best investment for the people of this Province, and why the people of the Province have gotten us to this point. They have engaged with us and told us what would best service them.

Mr. Chair, I thank you for this opportunity. I look forward to getting up again.

Thank you, Sir.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

I am happy to get up for my first time in this debate to speak to the Supply bill, Bill 44. I will not go through an explanation of what we are doing here because the Minister of Finance has done that, but just reminding people who might be newly watching that when we debate Supply bills, it actually happens in what is called the Committee of the Whole. We get quite a bit of time to raise issues and concerns at this time. A Supply bill is what we call a money bill. Every issue that one may be concerned about certainly comes under money bills.

What we will be approving by the time we finish the debate on Bill 44 will be the expenditure of \$2,784,047,800, basically the expenditure of government bringing us up to June. The Budget, of course, has not been brought down, and it will take time once it comes to the Table. There is a period of time that is involved, a fair period of time involved in the debating of the Budget.

So there has to be an approval for government to spend money so that prior to the Budget being finally approved and put in place, government can carry on the work that it has to do; providing services to the people in the Province, paying the workers in the Province who work in the many, many departments, offices, and institutions under government. Also, the expenditure is included in keeping our infrastructure going

I was trying to decide which issue I first would raise today. One of the members across the way talked about us in the Opposition always bringing up something that is wrong. Well, that is our job. Government loves to pat itself on the back for the things that it is doing. That is fine, but there are a lot of people for whom things are not working. It is our job as elected members in the House to bring up those issues.

The one I thought I would speak to first in this debate, which will be going on for some days here in the House, is the expenditure under Education and Early Childhood Development. We are going to be approving an expenditure of \$316,708,200 to be spent in education between now and June once we pass the bill, well, from April 1 to June actually. I think it is a really important time then to bring up some of the issues that concern me with regard to government's expenditures, especially under education.

The Premier is on record as saying that as they prepare the Budget and as they look at the dire economic situation they have us in this Province, they have to look at cuts and everything will be on the table. There is nothing that will not be on the table. I can tell the Premier one thing that definitely should not be on the table is education along with a few other things. Our health care system should not be on the table either because both of them are absolutely essential services that government offers to the people.

The one I am going to speak to first today is the whole issue of education. The problem is, Mr. Chair, not only should we not be putting education on the table from the perspective of cuts, we should be looking at what is desperately needed in our educational system. How government is going to deal with this in the context of the economic constraints that we are under I do not know. There has to be long-term planning and people have to see the long-term planning that government has.

We seem to have a real weakness in this government with regard to long-term planning. Everything seems to get to a crisis point before government deals with it. I am going to use a very, very clear example of that, Mr. Chair, and that is the example of the situation that parents, teachers, and students attached to Holy Family

School in Paradise are in right now. I have coming through emails message after message after message from people who are –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MS MICHAEL:** – attached to the Holy Family School, parents and teachers who are writing because of the terrible situation they are in there. This government has to realize that it is one thing to say it is the decision of the school board, but the school board is constrained by what government approves when a school board puts forward proposals.

I know there is a new school planned for Holy Family. If there is anything that should not come off the table when this government looks at the Budget is the plans in the educational system for new schools. The ones that I know which are being planned are desperately needed. If there is one that is desperately needed it is Holy Family.

I do not know what this government is doing in terms of – are they speaking to the school board, are they aware? We are certainly aware because people are sending us emails on a regular basis. I had a dozen just today already, people saying that they are not being listened to by the school board. You know government has a responsibility there. Government has to listen to people so that even the planning for how the kids were going to be taken care of – because they are completely overcrowded in that school.

Right now, you have twice as many children in the school than the school was built for. So in the process of waiting for the new school to come about, which is going to be a number of years, the school board's decision was to move Kindergartens and Grade 1 on a bus going out for at least a half hour's drive, a minimum of a half hour, every day and back. Even Kindergartens who are half day, because the full day will not be starting there yet, are going out to the School for the Deaf on Topsail Road.

I know that there have been meetings, I know new options are being looked at, but surely this government should be talking to the school board and saying listen to what the parents are

saying. The parents are being very vocal about the option that they looking at.

They want the move to happen. They want children to be moved while the new school is being built. They do not want more temporary buildings put up because what they have there now is such a mess. When I saw some of it, when I see the emails that are being sent to me, the situation in which children are being educated in that school – so they do not want more temporary units put in. They do like the option of the children from Grades 2-6 being moved out to the School for the Deaf. They are older in that context. They are the older ones. Let them move. They will have a good space for the next couple of years or few years while the new school is being built.

Then the children in Kindergarten and Grade 1 who are left in the school will have a good space to be educated in. You will not have rooms that were not meant to be classrooms now being used as multiple spaces, or children in Grade 2 going into their classroom at 8:30 in the morning and not moving from that classroom until they leave at 3:05 in the afternoon.

I mean these are developing-country conditions that we are talking about here. Children going in, their music class is in the classroom, the music teacher comes with her portable case with everything that she needs – one of the music teachers. They eat in the classroom. They do not get out of that classroom all day. This is terrible. If temporary buildings are put in, that condition will continue.

This government has a responsibility to talk to the school board and say we know what is going on and you have to listen to the parents, you have to do what the parents are suggesting. What I am finding is that is the last thing that happens.

We have a number of examples right now in the Province of where parents have told the school board what they think is reasonable and the school board just does not listen. Government cannot wash its hands of that. Government has to get involved in that. The one thing that cannot be on the table is the educational system. I say that to the Premier.

In my own district we are lucky; the school has been approved for Virginia Park Elementary. Work is going on there now. I hope when I hear the Premier say that anything that is in process will continue that it will. That is also a place where they have been in temporary buildings for years.

For example, the room that I go into and serve breakfast in once a month, that room is also a place that kids use. There are multiple purposes in that room as well. You have kids eating off tables where all kinds of other things are happening in that space so it cannot even be kept clean.

I will leave it at that for right now, Mr. Chair. I look forward to raising more issues as we continue the debate.

Thank you.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development and Advanced Education and Skills.

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is an honour to be back in the House again. After a brief hiatus, it is indeed good to be back here.

Mr. Chair, to get up and speak on the bill today is certainly a pleasure and listening to the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi. One of the things that amazed me during my time in education was the challenges around building schools. I do not have them all jotted down in front of me here, but I do believe we have built two in Paradise. We have one in the west end. There is another one proposed for CBS. There is another one proposed for and I guess it is under –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Portugal Cove, Beachy Cove.

**MR. JACKMAN:** – Portugal Cove – St. Phillips. There is one more, and one out in your district, Mr. Chair.

Not only that, I remember –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Torbay.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Torbay again, built it in Torbay and another one underway in Torbay. I know the Member for Ferryland, in discussions with him and in discussions with the board, was finding that the population growth is heading out his way. A new school opened in Carbonear just a little while ago.

The population growth on the Northeast Avalon has been amazing. Mr. Chair, trying to contend and manage your way through it, for someone to suggest that there have not been discussions with the school board, it is wrong.

**MR. KIRBY:** You appointed them all (inaudible).

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Chair, can you get the Member for St. John's North to stop that heckling over there? It is the first day back. The first two minutes I am up and the Member for St. John's North over there is shouting and blaring already. It is time to stop him – and red as a beet.

**MR. KIRBY:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for St. John's North on a point of order.

**MR. KIRBY:** I apologize, Mr. Chair. I was trying to remind the minister that he appointed all of the trustees on the school board. He appointed them all. He knows them all.

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

**CHAIR:** There is no point of order.

Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development and Advanced Education and Skills.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Chair, I can go into that debate, but I will choose not to right now.

I go back to the issue of school construction. The numbers in this particular area have grown

to the point where there is no choice, there has to be schools constructed. It is as simple as that.

The amazing thing that I found is that the minute you build a school, the demand is there right on the heels of it to start another one. What did you have to do? You had to put in these temporary units that you attach. Here is one basic concept. This is a very important concept when people say there was no planning and everything else.

We could easily address the school accommodation, housing the students in this area. We could go out and we could build one school that might house about 3,000 students, centralize it, and your problem is taken care of. The philosophy within education, especially in the primary-elementary area, is that you try and have a school population of about 600 to 650.

The reason being at that young age you want teachers and staff to have an attachment to the students. You want it at all ages but at those particular younger years you need that. At those very young ages, that is where they are impressionable. That contact between teacher, principal, and the larger community, the parent community, is of vital importance. It is of vital importance. So we as a government have taken on the philosophy that we are going to build schools that will house around 600 to 650.

We know, at this particular time, there are many schools out there that are jam-packed, there is no doubt about it, and we will see what comes of the Budget process. For a member to get up and say that there are no discussions going on between government and the school board is absolutely ridiculous. She knows that in her own district, Virginia Park, there were many ongoing issues. As you moved in one particular area, another issue arose. It took us a number of years to get there, but we have finally moved where that school is advancing to where it should be, Mr. Chair.

I guess, like someone said earlier, it is a very short stint that you have to get up to speak to this bill. I have a number of things that I would like to speak about. The Minister of Finance got up and spoke in his introduction as to what types of things these dollars allow to happen.

I said when I spoke recently at an event, as a former educator when I leave government there are two initiatives that we have undertaken that I will be extremely proud of. He mentioned them earlier and all of us here have a context where we can speak to that. Those two things are, as the minister said, doing away with schools fees and doing away with the charge for textbooks.

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** I will leave this government proud of those accomplishments and I will tell you why. As a school principal, every September there were two things that I dreaded. You had to send out a letter to parents, here is the list of textbooks that you had and here are the list of fees that you had, knowing that there were some families who could easily do it, while there were other families who struggled.

We will take the example – I can remember one parent in particular who had four children. So, four children at various grade levels meant four sets of textbooks, four sets of fees. I knew that they struggled with it so between the mother – often, I found out it was the mother who dealt with these things – and myself we worked out a schedule whereby she could pay it out over the year, because I knew that I could trust her and that she would commit to it.

I would say to you, Mr. Chair, that there are lot of us here who held positions in the school system that did the same thing. There were two reasons we did it. We knew it was a demand on the parent, but equally as important there was a stigma that attached itself to the children. The children who could not pay, they knew it. They knew it, and therefore we as administrators – and I suppose we as human beings – would do whatever we could to eliminate that stigma and eliminate that attachment to a child in particular.

I know there are many of us who did it over and over. When I say that we have made a move to eliminate the school fees and textbooks – it is one of the things that I just said – I will leave government knowing it is something that I take away with me as something that I pride our government on doing.

Of course, there are many, many other things. The Department of Education is not my portfolio

now, the K-12 one, but I started out on that and I have seemed to go on a bit of a rant on it, to take a look at where technology has come in the school system. I know that people talk about the dark side of technology, but when I look at what technology has done for some people, I am amazed at it.

I will just tell you one short story. There is a young fellow who writes us emails every now and then. People will know, on both sides, who I am talking about: Tony. All of us have received emails from Tony. I wish there was one thing that I had done. I wish I had kept the first email that I received from Tony and the number of emails that I have received from Tony, because Tony got into using technology to help him write and to correspond with people.

I am telling you that as a young fellow he is very proud today that he has hooked onto a job, but where Tony's writing has come over the course of the last ten years, it is simply amazing. The reason he has been able to do it is because he used technology. The second thing is that we, as MHAs, have responded to him.

So, as he writes, many of us will write back to him, and he has improved his writing skills. We get to that point in the education system where the use of technology enhances an individual's learning ability. While so many people, as I said, talk to the dark side, we look to what we have done positively around technology in schools and our investment in the schools over the years. It has been tremendous, and because of it our education is a better system.

Mr. Chair, I know have no time left, so I will sit down.

Thank you very much.

**CHAIR (Pollard):** I recognize the hon. the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

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

It is nice to be back in the House to start another spring sitting. We always come back with lots of issues. I just listened to the member across the way talk about Tony that we have all had emails from – and this is not what I am going to talk about, but on the other side we are hearing a

lot today about the positive things they are doing.

I was actually really saddened when I saw the most recent report card. Persons with disabilities, we were scoring the worst in this Province in the country – the worst. We looked at, I think it was in 2011, the number of people with disabilities who were working and when compared a year later, only 35 per cent were still working. So I just say that as side note, Mr. Chair, to point out that we still have a lot to do.

Mr. Chair, it will be no surprise to anybody that I am going to talk about an issue that is plaguing my district right now, that is plaguing Labrador and people from the Island who are trying to get to Labrador, and that is the ferry and the ferry system. I hope one day I will be able to stand in my place here and I will be able to talk about any other things – a gamut of things – but I will not talk about this main transportation link from the Island to Labrador being severed. The Finance Minister got up and he said he hears us with our stories of doom and gloom and we do not offer solutions. He is going to hear me today offer solutions. I will offer a couple.

The Minister of Transportation talked about going around engaging citizens, listening to people, and acting on it so that we are not just doing patchwork. Well, Mr. Chair, I can tell you that I live in an area where we feel very much like the services that we have been given are patchwork. The Minister of Transportation talked about the three-quarters of a billion in ferry services. We are not there yet, Mr. Chair. Why are we not there? Are we last again? That is what the people in my district are asking: Are we last again? We are still not there.

There was an RFP that went out, closed almost a year ago – after three delays, it closed in June 2014 and it was an RFP to replace the aging vessels that service Labrador Marine. Months later, I had a number of mayors in here from my area and we were told that the RFP would be out before the end of the year. We waited. In January I was told it would be out very, very soon. Here we are, Mr. Chair, we are back into spring sitting. It would not fix the problems that we have right now, but I guarantee you it would be a little reprieve to know that something better is coming for the people in that area.

I once read a quote that said if we do what we have always done, we get what we always got. I think my colleague for St. John's South said it well earlier today when he said we cannot do much about the ice conditions in the Strait of Belle Isle, but we can do something about the resources that we put there.

Mr. Chair, I want to talk about this RFP for a minute. There is a lot of concern. Right now, people are stranded for days on end. I look around this House of Assembly and I think that the people here would have to live on the other side and try to utilize that service to gain a full appreciation of just how bad it is. When you have family on one side of the Straits and they have a family member who is dying on the other side and there are no flights and a ferry has not moved for six or seven days, it is not a very pleasant situation, Mr. Chair.

When you have somebody who needs to get to Corner Brook for a fifteen-minute appointment and that takes them fifteen days and thousands of dollars later, it is not a good situation. When you have store shelves, Mr. Chair, that are bare – and we could talk about the whole ripple effect of unhealthy food and things like that. Years ago, when I grew up – and I did a statement speaking to my grandfather earlier today; I was proud to do it. When I grew up as a young teenager, we stocked for the winter. I grew up in a family business. The supplies came in and we stocked.

We are much worse off now. I am sad to say that we are much worse off. People are not stocking for months because we have this service. We have companies that have gone down to St. Barbe just last week and they sit there for six or seven days and then their produce is spoiling and then they are going back and they are collecting again, and the people in Labrador are paying for the price of that.

I had a business person email me just yesterday and he said I have the largest retail business in your district, and when this government tells me that we are not stranded, that we have the option of driving around, he said I get my goods from Corner Brook. A container of goods costs me just under \$2,000. If I want to take that same container of goods and I want to drive 3,000 kilometres and several provinces and several

ferries, that same container of goods is costing almost \$19,000. Now compare that, Mr. Chair. That is what we are dealing with.

I had an email this morning from a business that said I am being forced out of business. We warned this government. We asked them to listen. We asked them to put something better in place. Nobody listened. Now who is compensating me for losing a business?

As I sat here this afternoon, Mr. Chair, my mind wandered back to the mid-1990s, about twenty years ago. I had not moved home very long. When I moved home to Charlottetown from living in St. John's, we had two commercial flights flying in and out of my little community. We had two private airlines. We were paying \$100 return across the Straits. Movement every day, multiple times a day, planes coming and going.

Here we are, Mr. Chair, two decades later, and days and days on end from January to April we are at a standstill. That is sad, Mr. Chair. It is very sad. If we do want to get a flight, we are paying \$900 return. It is infuriating that when the boat does not run for six, seven, eight days there is no option offered to the people. There is no subsidy. There would not be a big uptake on subsidy, but you would be helping people like the sisters who were stranded on the other side. They had a family emergency and they were stuck there for days.

I am very concerned, Mr. Chair, as are many people in the region who after having these problems for years and years and years, we are about to lock into a fifteen-year ferry contract that I do not know if it is going to do anything to alleviate the problems we have now. Are we going to spend \$70 million, \$80 million of taxpayer's dollars and we are going to have a nicer seat to sit in on the ferry, but we are going to be no better off in terms of ice class or in terms of horsepower? That is very concerning.

Mr. Chair, we have to get things right. The government, no matter who they are, sometimes like in the case of providing this essential link and this essential service, we have to put things aside –

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

**CHAIR (Littlejohn):** Order, please!

**MS DEMPSTER:** – politics aside, and we have to look at the greater good. The business of government is to provide at least a basic service to the people it represents. The people in this case have been failed. There is nobody who can stand up on the other side and say what they have done. They have been failed and they have been failed miserably.

Here we are today in 2015, and I listened to speakers get up on the other side and talk about the progress that we have made. I am talking about transportation. Local people on the ground and the knowledge that they have, I am a firm believer, is second to none.

This government appointed transportation committees. Mr. Chair, the recommendations they put forward, they did not adhere to them in any way. Why waste people's time? Why set up committees when they are putting forth suggestions and none of the suggestions are being followed?

I do not know why the new RFP is not announced yet. The people of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, the people of Labrador, the people of The Straits – White Bay North and western, and the trucking companies, we would like to know what is causing the delay. More important than that, this new vessel was supposed to come on stream in 2016. Because this RFP was supposed to be out by the end of the year, will the delay in the RFP mean a delay in that ship coming on?

These are all questions, and I hope in the coming days, Mr. Chair, we are going to get some answers to that because I can tell you right now, it is pretty tough going right now. It is very difficult. People will say to me, Lisa, it is a tough year everywhere. There is ice in the Cabot Strait. Marine Atlantic had a delay. There is ice between New Brunswick and Charlottetown. We had three passenger boats, they had a delay.

I guarantee you, Mr. Chair, there is nobody who is experiencing anywhere handy to the delays that are being experienced in the Strait of Belle Isle. Frequent, continued, prolonged, days on end, delays for people, spending huge amounts

of money, missing appointments. It all comes back, if we invest and we do it right.

I look at these people who are using the Medical Transportation Assistance Program. I could give you many examples. They are stranded and it is costing. They are claiming that back through the government, Mr. Chair.

I hope the delay in RFP is because they are back to the drawing board and they are hoping that they are going to get it right, because they know what they put out before was not right.

I thank you for the opportunity and I will be up again.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** It is a great opportunity to speak to the Interim Supply bill here today and listening to debate from both sides. It is good to be back in my chair.

I wanted to talk primarily about when you are looking at approving the sums of money in government, that you want to see the focus. The focus around what my speech will be will be on jobs and the economy because that is something that we see. This government is missing significant opportunities to look at diversification, to look at the economic activity that will be happening in the area and across the Province.

One area that I want to talk about significantly by this government is an absolute mismanagement of our forestry resources. We have seen it in The Straits – White Bay North, we have seen it in Labrador, and we have seen it across the Island, in Central Newfoundland and Labrador, when we see what happened with the AbitibiBowater properties and the resource that is tied to that. We want to see how we can actually create more jobs, more value from our forest sector, whether that would be with Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, through Kruger.

When I look at my own district and I see contractors who were heavily invested, who had to sell a number of their assets; who are just

getting by, by selling fuel wood in terms of firewood to homes to continue their operations, or others who have had to lay off workers and they are finding jobs elsewhere, to having to commute. That is really limiting the investment, and we lose the institutional knowledge. We lose that skill from our area and our region.

Government invested into a forestry diversification plan that I do not think lived up to its expectations when it came to the pellet plant in Roddickton and the jobs that it should have created. The potential is there to certainly create jobs but we have not been given an update from, I guess the new minister now who is responsible for forestry and Agrifoods, on that matter to see where things are headed.

There was an expression of interest for Labrador in central timber. Things are really gone mum, when we have seen a company like Rentech and others, where other provinces are developing a pellet industry or they are developing other technologies to create jobs, creating long-term leases with wharf infrastructure, with their energy companies and utilities in Ontario to diversify and utilize biomass pellets and other alternative energy forms, but we are not doing that here in Newfoundland and Labrador because this government does not have the vision to develop the alternative energies, to develop and fully create the greatest economic return from our renewable resources, such as our forestry. Rather, they would prefer to see wood rot in Labrador at the Muskrat Falls site. We have not seen that plan. We have not seen a lot of plans or a lot of vision from this government in terms of how do we get greater investment.

When we look at the fishery, for example, it is one area that is highly important to my district, given that almost 25 per cent of the people are directly employed in this industry. When you see the seafood year in review come out and you see a loss in value to the industry, the seafood industry in Newfoundland and Labrador, of \$150 million you are saying: What is this government doing wrong? When will they look at the fishery and look at the opportunities that are there to create jobs and create more value from the primary, secondary and tertiary level, and where are we seeing the investment in market that was promised that is not being delivered?

There are so many things that could be done from this government in terms of creating more value in our fishery. They are not taking that approach. The interest just is not there, sadly.

We see on the ground where people in the district are doing good work in creating that value. St. Anthony Basin Resources Inc. is a company that basically takes care of the communities in the St. Anthony Basin region area, the seventeen communities of the north. They manage 3,000 metric ton quota of shrimp. They have made significant investments into the economy in terms of infrastructure, such as St. Anthony Cold Storage, which was a multi-million dollar cold storage investment of up to 60,000 cubic metres.

Then they have that ability where they have just entered into an agreement with an international company, Eimskip, and that long-term lease now where Eimskip will become the owner of that port infrastructure. They are going to make significant investment. They are going to own the cold storage, in partnership with the Harbour Grace Cold Storage that is there and a forwarding company.

That is going to mean more direct links to Europe. Rather than stopping just in Iceland, they are going to be sending more product directly into Europe. What a tremendous opportunity to open up the West Coast for shipping, for export, for all the potential for the companies that are on the West Coast, in Labrador, and to look at doing greater partnerships with this type of company. It is on the ground where you are making that investment, creating those opportunities, and you think of where something like CETA could actually benefit the region in moving forward by the elimination of all the tariffs and the potential export, imports that could be happening in that region.

It is good news. It is very positive things that are happening in the region, but we are not seeing government take a more active role where they could be trying to see where we can accelerate growth and diversify the economy.

The minister opposite got up and talked about Tony and talked about how he has been using technology in being able to secure a job. That is

great. We need to make sure that technology is more accessible in all regions of the Province such as broadband.

There are areas where this organization like St. Anthony Basin Resources Inc. partnered with Bell Aliant and they partnered with the government under the Rural Broadband Initiative to ensure that three communities in their region, Great Breat, St. Carol's, and St. Anthony Bight will see broadband, fibre cable there. It is a very strong connection that will help those households.

By doing that, leveraging that investment, they will have the opportunity to help lever great cellular opportunities and other as the technologies change to move and use this tool. We have to lay the cable, we have to build the networks, and we have to make sure that we have the good assets moving forward in the long term.

By making strategic investments, the St. Anthony Basin area will prosper, it will thrive, and it will have a diversified economy. We have to thank organizations like SABRI that are making those investments. We need to see a stronger partnership from this government and from the federal government in how we can continue to diversify port infrastructure, how we can create the Arctic opportunities, the export, and the shipping potential that is there. It is there and if we create and have prosperous economy in rural areas of the Province as well as the urban areas, then we are going to be all better off because of it.

This government just continues to ignore significant opportunities and investment potential that we could have. We have heard of lots of promised strategies and plans around moose management, around caribou management and protection. We have not seen a whole lot of action from this government on holding the federal government accountable on the *Manolis L* and removing the oil from that ship.

We have not seen an update from the Minister of Fisheries when it comes to what dialogue he has had from his trip down in Boston at that seafood show. If our seafood and our export potential were dropping off the value of our industries, dropping off about 13 per cent from last year

under his watch, what is happening? What is happening here?

Are you having that dialogue that is needed? Are you having the investment with the processors on marketing and moving forward so that we are creating jobs? Our rural economy and our urban economy depend on it. It is not something that we can just say that we are doing something good on it, or highlight and pick up something and say we have certified this product in mussels. What are you doing in all the other fish products moving forward in terms of the certification? We need to have that. We need to focus on our marketing; we need to focus on that. We need to do greater research, greater research on things like shrimp shells and that potential so that we do not lose that product and that waste, and that we can enhance and get the best value.

We throw away some of our best resources that we have. We just dump it. We are not recycling and we are not managing all of the things in terms of our industry that we could. There is so much more that we could be doing here in Newfoundland and Labrador to create jobs and build a much more stronger economy.

I look forward to contributing to debate and providing ideas.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**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 progress and ask leave to sit again.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

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

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Port de Grave and Deputy Speaker.

**MR. LITTLEJOHN:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of Supply reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

When shall the Committee sit again?

**MR. KING:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted. Committee ordered to sit again on tomorrow.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, that the House do now adjourn.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that this House do now adjourn.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

This House remains adjourned until tomorrow at 2:00 o'clock, Private Members' Day.

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