



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FORTY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume XLVIII

FIRST SESSION

Number 10

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Tom Osborne, MHA

Monday

11 April 2016

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Osborne): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we have Members' statements from the Members for the Districts of Topsail – Paradise, Torngat Mountains, St. John's East – Quidi Vidi, Harbour Main, Harbour Grace – Port de Grave and Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

I recognize the Member for the District of Topsail – Paradise.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge April 10-16 as Volunteer Week, a time to recognize and celebrate the incredible contribution of our volunteers. Volunteers are the roots of strong communities. Just like roots are essential for trees to bloom, volunteers are essential for communities to bloom.

Volunteers are the backbone of our communities, from those involved through youth groups to seniors associations, from those who support healthy lives to healthy environments – all are essential to the continued social, cultural and economic development of our province. Thanks to volunteers, our communities grow strong and resilient.

Volunteers are crucial to many great causes, and also, the not-for-profit sector of Newfoundland and Labrador. It's estimated there are approximately 3,600 volunteer and not-for-profit organizations in our province and over 200,000 active volunteers.

Seniors are helping to actively engage and inspire our youth – our province's next generation of leaders and volunteers. With shifting demographics, it is more important than ever before for young people to be engaged in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of this hon. House to join me in offering our thanks and appreciation to volunteers throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for the District of Torngat Mountains.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize John Christian Erhardt Memorial School and the community of Makkovik for hosting the winter sports meet in March that united athletes from across Northern Labrador in the spirit of friendly competition.

Athletes from Nain, Hopedale, Natuashish, Postville, Makkovik and Rigolet came together to compete in a wide range of sporting events, including native games, badminton, ball hockey, cross-country skiing and the Labrathon.

Congratulations to the Nain Huskies for taking first place at the meet. They will go on to represent Northern Labrador at the regional and hopefully provincial championships.

Two participants deserve special recognition, Mr. Speaker. Edward Tuglavina from Hopedale and Chaim Andersen from Nain won the prestigious awards for sportsmanship.

Events like this sports meet are so important to an isolated region in the province because they bring communities together, preserve traditions and promote physical activity.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating the participants of the Northern Labrador winter sports meet.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Last week, the Bishop Feild School community celebrated a major musical achievement – the Juno Award for Children’s Album of the Year went to the Swinging Belles for their album *More Sheep, Less Sleep*.

The Belles are primary school teachers Laura Winter and Erin Power, with guitarist extraordinaire, Duane Andrews. They call themselves a swing band for children, but you’ll hear overtones of all kinds of genres, as you’d expect from such a multi-talented trio.

The polka dot celebration at Bishop Field last week was a big one, as the three band members are all well-known to the school.

Laura is Mme Winter, a teacher on staff. Erin and Duane are both Feildian parents, with Erin also serving on the school council.

The Belles discovered they had won the award at a gala Juno dinner in Calgary, Saturday, April 2.

They were surprised, but local fans familiar with their blend of good time music, interactive storytelling and dancing were not.

Mr. Speaker, I won’t ask any hon. Members to show off their own dance moves here – although you could give that permission – but I will invite them to join me in congratulating the Swinging Belles, the only 2016 Juno award winners from Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Harbour Main.

MS. PARSLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to celebrate the heritage of a steadfast organization in the District of Harbour Main.

The Star of the Sea organization in Holyrood has been a social gathering spot for 114 years.

As a longstanding community hub, the Star of the Sea organization has yielded the opportunity to draw friends and relatives closer, to turn acquaintances into friends, and to inject more

friendship into business relationships. In short, this gathering spot has provided its community with the opportunity to practice that magic human touch that means more in life than most of us realize.

Such a long and rich history is a complement to the membership, the executives, presidents both past and present, and to the heritage of our province.

Today, there are only two Star of the Sea Associations still vibrant in our province – one is in Freshwater, Placentia, and the other one is in Holyrood.

Mr. Speaker, today let us send from this hon. House of Assembly our congratulations to this wonderful organization for the tremendous contribution it makes to this community.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Harbour Grace – Port de Grave.

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

I’m very proud to stand in this hon. House to recognize and congratulate the under 12 Female Cee Bee’s Ice Hockey team of Harbour Grace.

On March 20, this team took home the provincial title, which was captured in Corner Brook. The Cee Bee’s defeated Mount Pearl in the championship game with a shutout score of five to zero. Yesterday in the Town of Harbour Grace there was a gathering and a motorcade to celebrate the victory.

These young ladies practiced hard all season, and their dedication has paid off. Along with the win, they have also made history. It is this female ice hockey team who will hoist the final championship banner in the S. W. Moores Memorial Stadium.

The historic arena will soon close its doors, as construction on our new Harbour Grace stadium is currently underway. The under 12 Cee Bee’s is the only all-female ice hockey team in Harbour Grace. This is their third banner in three

years. I encourage them to play hard, play safe and keep their sticks on the ice.

Colleagues, please join me in congratulating the team.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to congratulate the Bay d'Espoir Academy Senior Boys Softball Team who captured the 2015-16 2A School Sport Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Championship in October 2015. This was the Predators third Provincial Senior Boys championship in the past four years and they certainly have earned recognition as one of the top high school teams in the province.

It is an honour to recognize the following members of the 2015-16 championship team. Players: Kyle Barnes, Preston Collier, Stephen Cox, Luke Fowlow, Mark Fowlow, Gudmund Hepsoe, Ethan Lawson, Dylan Northcott, Jesse Organ, Michael White, Matthew Willcott and Mitchell Willcott. Their coaches: Shawn Fowlow as head coach, Nathan Gidge and Nancy Oliver as assistant coaches.

Thank you to all of these individuals who have invested countless hours of practice to build a strong softball program in the Bay d'Espoir area and we commend their tremendous sportsmanship which is a great source of pride in our school and community.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating the Bay d'Espoir Academy Predators for bringing home the gold and the coveted 2A Slo-Pitch Banner. I wish them the best of luck as they prepare for next season and defend their title.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Before we move to the next item on the Order Paper, we welcome to the gallery former Member of the House of Assembly for St. John's East, Mr. George Murphy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The Commemoration of the First World War and the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel

MR. SPEAKER: For Honour 100 today, I recognize the Member for the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you.

I will now read into the record the following 40 names of those who lost their lives in the First World War in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, the Royal Newfoundland Naval Reserve, the Newfoundland Mercantile Marine, or the Voluntary Aid Detachment. This will be followed by a moment of silence.

Lest we forget: Herbert Denty, Aiden Devereaux, Andrew Devereaux, John William Devereaux, William Devoe, Joseph Dewey, George Dick, Ethel Dickenson, Stephen Dicker, Almer Dicks, Benjamin Dicks, Henry Dicks, Joseph Dobbin, Michael Dober, Peter Dober, John Dodd, William Patrick Dohaney, Harry Dominy, James John Donnelly, Jeremiah F. Donnelly, William Donnelly, William Donohue, James Doody, James Dooley, Michael Dooley, John Doran, Joseph Doran, Aaron K. Douglas, Henry Dowden, John Thomas Doyle, James P. Drake, Andrew Driscoll, Arthur Driscoll, Kenneth Driscoll, Thomas Druken, Albert Duffett, John Duke, William Duke, Lionel Thomas Duley and George Dullanty.

(Moment of silence.)

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister Responsible for the Office of Public Engagement.

MS. COADY: I rise in this hon. House today in recognition of the incredible hard-working, dedicated volunteers in our communities.

This week we honour those who give so much of their time and talent in the service of others. Over 3,600 volunteer and non-profit organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador, with over 200,000 active volunteers, provide incredible service to the people of our province.

Indeed, 46 per cent of our residents volunteer, at an average of about 151 hours per year.

From the dedicated people who help our seniors to those working to welcome newcomers from other countries, volunteers are essential to the province's continued social, cultural and economic development.

This year's Volunteer Week theme is The Many Faces of Volunteering, which highlights the diversity of volunteers and the lives they touch. The faces of our volunteers are not one age, gender or colour. They are as varied and diverse as the landscape of our beautiful province.

As I learned first-hand, volunteering is worthwhile, fulfilling, engaging and affirming. I encourage you to be a volunteer and enjoy the experience of giving back.

As I look around this hon. House, I see many volunteers and colleagues who support and recognize the contributions of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians on a daily basis.

I ask citizens to join us in celebrating those throughout Newfoundland and Labrador who so generously volunteer their time.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement today. We join with the government in recognizing Volunteer Week in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Volunteers are the backbone of the community sector. They work behind the scenes; they also work on the front lines. They contribute so much to our communities. For that reason, they deserve our acknowledgment and appreciation not just during Volunteer Week, but every week of the year.

From volunteers involved through youth groups, school boards and religious organizations, to those working with our most vulnerable populations, all are essential to the continued social, cultural and economic development of our province.

As the minister noted, there are approximately 3,600 volunteer organizations in the province. Charitable giving and volunteering are a significant part of the Canadian economy, with combined value of over \$53 billion. We rank very high in our charitable giving in this province.

I want to join with everybody in Newfoundland and Labrador in recognizing Volunteer Week.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I thank the minister also for the advance copy of her statement. I'm pleased to join with her in recognizing the benefits of volunteering and the people of this province who are volunteers. We know that our people are very generous with their time when it comes to donating time to make their communities richer and more vibrant.

I join in celebrating the diversity of our volunteer sector. But with Thursday's budget looming, I caution the minister not to cut resources to volunteers who need the support and not to divest responsibilities, which are government's, onto the backs of these generous, hard-working and very dedicated volunteers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

MR. TRIMPER: Mr. Speaker, having worked for 30 years as a wildlife biologist, I am pleased to rise in this House to recognize April 10-16 – another week – as National Wildlife Week. This year's theme, Giving Wings to Wildlife Conservation, encourages us all to consider the creatures that inhabit our skies.

This year, National Wildlife Week also begins on the birth date of Jack Miner. Through his pioneering work with waterfowl, Mr. Miner was instrumental in changing North American attitudes about wildlife conservation.

This year we also celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Migratory Birds Convention between Canada and the United States. This is the first international treaty to conserve wildlife.

Mr. Speaker, we began celebrating this past weekend at our newly opened Discovery Centre at Salmonier Nature Park. Teachers can also invite an interpreter from the park to their classroom this week for a fun presentation about bats.

In our province there are 54 animal and plant species, subspecies and populations of wildlife and plants that are currently listed as endangered, threatened or vulnerable. My department is undertaking valuable work towards creating a natural areas system plan and a provincial wetlands strategy both of which will help to ensure that our wildlife species are protected.

For this reason, Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to celebrate National Wildlife Week and engage in activities all year round that protect and support our wildlife species for future generations.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. Our caucus would also like to recognize April 10-16 as National Wildlife Week.

This year's theme, Giving Wings to Wildlife Conservation, is appropriate as Mr. Jack Miner was born on this day in 1865. The founding father of the wildlife conservation movement contributed greatly to his work on waterfowl.

Keeping with the theme of Giving Wings to Wildlife Conservation, I'd like to encourage all members of the public to pay special attention to our birds and waterfowl this summer. It's important that we keep preserving their environments when going about our summer activities.

I'd also like to recognize the Canadian Wildlife Federation on their activities and awareness campaigns associated with National Wildlife Week. I also look forward to reviewing the natural areas system plan and the provincial wetlands strategy which this government has committed to releasing.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. I'd like to take this opportunity to commend wildlife officers across the province for their tireless work in preventing poaching and protecting wildlife habitat. I also congratulate the staff at Salmonier Nature Park for their innovative programs. We look forward to attending some of those.

Wilderness and Ecological Reserve Advisory Council, which has played a vital role in establishing protected areas, was finally brought back to life in 2014. It's good to have their

expertise back and, hopefully, the council will be front and center in the long-overdue creation of the natural area system plan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to rise in the House today to welcome to the province a delegation of 15 of our friends and colleagues from Nunavut. The delegation, made up of officials from both inside and outside government, is here this week to meet with provincial government officials and industry representatives to further solidify the work that commenced with the signing of last year's memorandum of understanding between our two jurisdictions.

Our province has been working in Arctic-like conditions for centuries, developing mining operations in Labrador, oil and gas reserves in harsh environments and throughout our history, going north to fish. We share many of these circumstances with the people of Nunavut. Our historic MOU has been a significant step toward formalizing mutually-beneficial partnerships between our jurisdictions – because, together, we are stronger.

As geographic neighbours, Newfoundland and Labrador and Nunavut share a strong sense of culture. We also share a like-minded approach to safe and sustainable development that respects the environment and traditional ways of life. With so many opportunities on the horizon, in the coming week we will continue to build on the work that began at our initial meetings at the Northern Lights Conference in Ottawa, continuing to work together to ensure future development is safe and sustainable for the people of the North.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. We also would like to wish a warm welcome to the delegates from Nunavut. I'm pleased to see the minister has referred to the MOU as historic. Our government was proud to have initiated it. We certainly should be uniting with our neighbours for the benefit of our people.

This agreement was designed to build upon the history of successful collaboration that already exists between Nunavut and Newfoundland and Labrador, and encourage increased collaboration as both jurisdictions prepare for future development and increased economic activity in the Arctic. The partnership was, and is, a landmark agreement that aims to maximize co-operation and shared interest for all parties involved. It marks both a new beginning and an acknowledgement of long-standing history of co-operation between our two governments.

I'm pleased to see the Department of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development is continuing with the Arctic opportunities initiative. I offer my full support as critic as it pertains to this initiative as well.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. I'm very pleased to join with him in welcoming the delegates from our neighbour to the north. I do hope that their time here will be a productive one. I'm sure that's their goal.

In addition to exploring opportunities, I hope the Nunavut delegation will work with our province to examine how to meet shared challenges. As a

government who faces distributing services over a vast geographic area to a widespread and small demographic on a limited budget, I hope our guests can exchange ideas and experiences with our government who face similar challenges.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

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

We're all very much aware today that a state of emergency has been declared in Bay de Verde. A large part of the community has been evacuated due to a fire that is ravaging the local fish plant. It is becoming more apparent as the day goes on that the plant will be out of commission for some time.

We know that 700 plant workers will be impacted. We know that harvesters are on the water as we speak and they'll be impacted as well. I do appreciate that it's very, very early. I do appreciate the complexities and the potential enormity of the impact on the community and on the province, but I ask the Premier if he could give us an update on the status of the situation.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly join with all Members in this House of Assembly and, indeed, all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, our thoughts are with the people in Bay de Verde. First of all, I want to commend the local residents and the local fire departments and the neighbouring communities for their quick response in the work that they've done so far in responding to this tragedy in Bay de Verde today.

The Leader of the Opposition is correct; there are about 700 jobs that are attached to that plant. We were already in contact with the processors and with the members who make a living in that

plant. This is very early in the season for them right now.

I can tell you right now that this government will do everything it can to make sure there is continuity both for the harvesting sector and for those who work and make a living in the processing plant in that community. I've already had discussions at the department level and at a personal level with people directly impacted with this. I can assure you we will make effort we can for this to be seamless – even though this is a tragedy that we speak of today, it would be seamless and that we can get these communities back to work.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Premier; I appreciate the update. I'm sure you'll keep the House posted in the days and weeks to come.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has stated that there's not one single choice in this budget – not one – that will be a happy one. She went on to say that every decision we make will impact somebody somewhere and probably not in a good way.

I suggest to the Premier that there are many current important and good beneficial programs that if funding is maintained on those programs would be good news for the people of our province. Programs such as the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program, the Home Support Program, insulin pumps for children – all programs that are about people and for people.

I ask the Premier: Will your budget focus on people? Will it also include hope and vision as part of your plan for the future?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What our plan will focus on is good management, good planning and thoughtful management. Keeping in mind that every decision we make there is a family, there is a

senior, there is some young person behind those decisions and the impacts that are associated with the difficult choices we have to make.

I do have to remind the Leader of the Opposition, though, why we are in this position, as he has often spoke on the campaign trail and to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians about having a plan in place. Well, what we see in that plan is the debt servicing level in our province would be the second largest budget line in our province right now, outpacing what we spend on education for our children.

Even though he talks about maintaining and talks about carving out areas that would not be impacted, we will make the tough decisions that are made, keeping in mind, thoughtfully, the impact it would have on Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I remind the Premier the debt servicing level today is half of what it was a decade ago, and we have more programs and services that benefit Newfoundlanders and Labradorians – much better than we've ever had in the history of our province.

During the campaign trail the Premier, also, himself talked about the future of the province and their vision as well.

I ask the Premier: Will your plan uphold your campaign promise of no layoffs?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite would want to go back to 2003 – and just a reminder, the debt of our province right now will surpass that in 2003 as a result of the inactions and the poor planning of his government. That is a result of the poor planning and mismanagement we have seen from the Members opposite.

It's important for us that we make sure we carve out a path to the future of sustainability for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and we can protect the core services we need to offer to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. These services must be sustainable, they must be affordable if we indeed are going to protect the future for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, protect the future of our next generation.

We will put a thoughtful plan in place, keeping in mind that behind every decision we make there's a family and there are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that are impacted.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Well, I appreciate the response from the Premier. I remember very clearly in 2013 when we cut public servants and the Liberal Opposition was heavily critical of us when we did so.

Mr. Speaker, during their campaign this past year, their candidates tweeted and touted that cutting jobs was not part of their plan and under a new Liberal government public sector jobs are safe. Now that they have been elected and ready to take what they call expenditure cuts – or expenditure actions is what they are referring to it.

So I ask the Premier: Will your government wait on public service negotiations to determine employment and public service impacts? Will public sector employees know where they stand this week, on Thursday, when the budget is delivered, when budget number one is delivered, or will they have to wait until the fall for budget number two?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to remind the Leader of the Opposition why there is a need for budget number two, because their budget of last year this time, which

was their first budget, didn't work. It got this province in trouble. Let's not forget that.

The decisions that we make as a government will be based on evidence. It will be based on research and the analysis of the situation.

Right now, attrition for us, we maintain that is the best way forward for us. We've also maintained that there will be a fair negotiation, but the tough decisions that we have to make, we will make those tough decisions and in some cases people will be impacted. We know that, Mr. Speaker.

So these are tough decisions that no one likes to have to make but in order to protect the future of our province there is no choice, based on the mismanagement that we've seen from the Members opposite for the last 12 years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

There's a lot of reminding going on back and forth from both sides here today, but I also remind the Premier what the bond rating agency said just as recently as November, during the writ period, when they maintained confidence in the plan that we had brought forward, a significant contrast to what we heard from the bond rating agencies in January.

Mr. Speaker, as the budget process continues we are starting to see a pattern of some mixed messages from the Premier's office and also from ministers. We know that direction for the Minister of Finance seems to change from time to time.

I ask the Premier: Is this lack of consistency the reason that we are only going to see half measures come on the budget this week, on Thursday, with additional measures coming in the fall? Will your government kick some of those decisions down the road until the fall and postpone what really needs to happen today? How much are we going to see this year in budget number one? How much will we see in the fall in budget number two?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are two things that the leader just spoke about, and I would love to have 10 or 15 minutes, if you would allow me the time to speak about it. Because right now, what I just heard, he is actually speaking out of both sides of his mouth. A few minutes ago he was talking about are we going to make the tough decisions. Now he's telling us to take a different approach.

Number one, when he talked about the bond rating agencies – let me make it very clear. The information that they needed to have, this former Premier did not share with those people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: He also talked about his five-year plan. So is he saying today that his five-year plan that would lead to record levels of debt, record levels of debt servicing – is he saying now that his plan is what they thought would be the best way forward? I doubt it because the message that we got when the information was shared was quite different than that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

The federal government released its budget recently and we all saw it included increased spending. What was left out is what is being questioned by many Canadians and certainly the people for Newfoundland and Labrador. There was very little information given on the new Health Accord. In fact, no money was set aside for this. Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador have one of the fastest aging populations in the country.

I ask the Premier: What steps have you taken to ensure that much-needed health transfers and quality health care are secure for

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians this year and for the years to come?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In respect of the Health Accord, there were discussions at the health ministers' meeting in Vancouver between myself and my counterparts, and the federal Minister of Health. We talked specifically about new monies outside of the health transfer for home care, for mental health, palliative care and addictions.

Those discussions are still going on with the department. Hopefully I will be able to report back, in due course, to the House on their successful conclusion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, last week the C-NLOPB issued calls for bids for offshore parcels. Exploration of our offshore industry certainly has now expanded outside the 200-mile exclusive economic zone.

When oil is pumped from these sites, a royalty of 7 per cent will have to be paid to the United Nations. In the past, our administration advised the federal government that we would not pay the royalties from the provincial royalties as this is a federal government responsibility.

I ask the Minister of Natural Resources: What is the position of the current administration?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COADY: Thank you very much for the question. I appreciate it.

As the Member opposite noted, we have gone out for bids. The C-NLOPB has gone out for bids and we're quite confident we're going to have another good bid year.

As the Member opposite did suggest, some of the parcels are outside the 200-mile limit. We are working with our federal counterparts.

There is only one ball of value for the entire offshore. This particular government is looking at what our royalties will be, what our benefits will be. They are also taking into effect what the benefits will have to be to the United Nations as per the requirements of outside the 200-mile limit.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just to clarify, the hon. minister, are you saying that the position taken by the former government, you've rescinded that decision and now you're negotiating in terms of that 7 cent, or do you expect the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador to pay that royalty or the federal government?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COADY: Perhaps the hon. Member does not understand the ball of value. There is only 100 per cent that we can look at in terms of the value on discoveries in terms of production. These are either carved into benefits or they are carved into royalties or their carved into equity investments, which is the full ball of value. Now, because we're outside of the 200-mile limit, there is a requirement for unclosed United Nations.

We are looking at the entire ball of value, we're looking at the percent that is required, once we have discovery, moving towards production of the percentages required for this province under benefits, under royalties and under equity.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a recent media report indicated that there may be challenges in regard to the operating partners of the Come By Chance oil refinery.

Can the minister update the status of the refinery and the operations? Is there actions being taken to make sure those 600 jobs are secured at the refinery?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the Member opposite indicated, there are challenges between what I'm going to call partners within the North Atlantic refinery. These two partners are in negotiations and discussions right now. In arbitration in one, and there are court cases in others. These are going on between the two partners.

I have been speaking with both of these partners. They both reassure this government and the people of the province and the Members opposite that they are both committed to the refinery, both committed to continuing the work there. This is a dispute between two partners and they are working through their differences.

I have been assured and we are following it closely and keeping in close contact with both partners to ensure that this refinery continues to provide tremendous economic benefits to Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the cost for preparing for the new federal waste water regulations by 2020 – this will mean that municipalities will have to put infrastructure priorities on hold while they invest in expensive waste water systems.

I ask the minister: As these are federal regulations, what funding was included in the federal budget for Newfoundland and Labrador? Where is the new funding to address these federal regulations?

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll just give the Member an education on the program and the regulations. What happens is a municipality has to do a flow test. Once a flow test is completed and is submitted to the department of environment in Canada what they do, they offer a permit. The permit will inform the municipality of when they need this waste water.

Mr. Speaker, the conception is given that everybody has to be ready by 2020. It is not correct. There are some that are going to be upfront, the major ones, not all.

Just for the record, he's asking what (inaudible) the federal government. I can tell you that we just had a meeting with Minister Judy Foote on a lot of the municipalities and waste water. The federal government is not only saying we inherit these regulations from the previous government, we're putting up money to help Newfoundlanders and Labradorians with waste water, and I'm very proud of that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: I remind the minister also, there are communities that have to have this done by 2020, and there are communities in my district. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, there are communities with a cost up to \$12 million to \$15 million that they're going to have to come up with for these expensive systems. So I do

remind the minister it does have to be in place by 2020.

Mr. Speaker, municipalities experienced great improvements in infrastructure and services in the past decade, and they cannot run deficits in their budgets. They have aging infrastructure and limited resources. Some in this province have suggested they just can't afford to implement these waste water treatment centres – and in my district, the same thing, they just can't afford to do it.

I ask the minister: Where is the money going to come from to pay for these expensive systems?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't want to be critical, because I love getting along with the Opposition to try to make improvements to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I just find it strange, Mr. Speaker, that these regulations have been in place for four or five years, and all of a sudden they're asking all these questions.

I asked a question, Mr. Speaker: Where was the previous government asking their federal counterparts about money for waste water? They had to go to New Brunswick to get a meeting with the federal counterpart.

Minister Judy Foote was sitting in the Premier's office discussing how we can get through this waste water/water quality for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. They're not up there – Judy Foote and the federal ministers aren't up there saying here's what you got to do. They're down here in Newfoundland and Labrador saying how can we help, and they're putting money into it to help out. So congratulations to the federal government, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Three weeks ago the Minister of Transportation and Works announced tenders for the 2016 roadwork projects. Our office has asked the department for evidence-based decision making which resulted in the list of projects, and we have been denied this information.

I ask the minister: Will he immediately make public the process and results of how these projects were determined?

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you to the Member for the question. We have certainly been doing a lot of work when it comes to preparing for this year's tenders for roadwork.

One of the things that we've done differently this year, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that we are basing our decisions on evidence. Contrary to what the previous government has done, we have removed the politics of it. This is the first time that I know in the history of this province that this government has delivered on providing tenders for roadwork in the amount of \$10 million without political interference.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HAWKINS: This is the first time, Mr. Speaker. My officials within my department – we worked closely on that and they provided the information to us.

I signed off on it. It went to the Premier. He did not make any changes. For the first time we have non-political interference in roadwork.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for his answer. It's nice to know it went up to the Premier's office, but

there's no political interference. That's subject to one's opinion.

Mr. Speaker, the minister announced on March 21 that assessments had been completed. Some MHAs have contacted the Department of Transportation and Works asking for a list of projects under consideration in their districts only to be told the work was not completed. I'm just being told it was completed and it was an evidence-based decision, but we were told it's not completed.

I ask the minister again: How can this list not be ready if tenders have been already announced, which I stated, and priorities already been set? Will the minister table a list of projects under consideration for each district?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Member for the question. I find it a little bit odd that he would make the comment that there was no political interference. All he has to do is turn to his Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune who came across and congratulated me because of the fact that we provided funding for her district.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HAWKINS: That's the first point, Mr. Speaker. The second point is for the \$10 million, to my knowledge, if you wanted to check on the website I think we do have the list of all of the projects that we have out there for the \$10 million.

The second phase of that we are going to be working closely with the project managers within our department to determine on evidence based, what are the next series of roads that we're going to be providing. So it's very transparent, it's very open and we're hiding nothing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: I thank the minister for his answer. I want to remind him that the road that the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune thanked him for is actually in the Minister of Transportation and Works's district. It leads to her district. Just for a little clarification, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are hearing the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board, which includes recycling depots in rural parts of the province, will be cut in the upcoming budget.

I ask the minister: Will the MMSB be eliminated in budget number one on Thursday or budget number two in the fall?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

MR. TRIMPER: Thank you very much for my first question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TRIMPER: I must say a very simple answer. As the Minister Responsible for the MMSB, I have no idea at all what he is speaking about.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The federal government announced funding of new spending over the next five years for such things as Aboriginal programming, including education, water and waste water infrastructure and child and family services.

Can the Premier – given his responsibility for the Aboriginal file – tell us if this is a per capita funding for the province or are we receiving additional funding?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I did have the privilege last week of sitting down with Minister Carolyn Bennett whose responsibility is this, and the parliamentary secretary, MP Yvonne Jones, who also obviously, as you know, is from Labrador. We had a great discussion on the opportunities that we would have to make improvements and some new money to our Aboriginal communities.

I am happy to say, if you stay tuned over the next few weeks you will see some advancements on a number of different files as related to Aboriginal communities in terms of housing, in terms of family supports and so on.

There is a great working relationship right there now. As we work through this with the federal minister, I would say in a few weeks we should have some more good news on Aboriginal affairs within the province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As we are all aware here, per capita funding for a province that has a small population puts us at a disadvantage.

I ask the Premier, will he be lobbying his Liberal cousins in Ottawa to put a more equitable funding arrangement in place for investing in programs and services to service the Aboriginal communities in this province?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: We have a number of concerns, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to per capita funding. We've made those concerns known; not only when it comes to Aboriginal affairs but also as it relates to health care as well. There is no question, per capita funding in a situation like Newfoundland and Labrador does

not necessarily reflect the concerns that we have to deal with.

It's ironic that we get this from the Members opposite. I guess the fact that they have never made any suggestions to their federal colleagues. I know they've met with them lately in St. John's. So I'm not so sure where they come from on this because for 12 years there was no advancement on any of this.

Right now we are making significant advancements with – as you call it – our federal cousins. What they are, are federal MPs working with us here in Newfoundland and Labrador advancing issues like Aboriginal affairs in our province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: I thank the Premier, but I also remind him that we lobbied consistently. It's your cousins that are in Ottawa now. You're saying that there are all kinds of new investments there but we're not seeing any new money for the Aboriginal communities.

Mr. Speaker, Thursday, March 31, marked the 42nd anniversary of the Labrador Flag. Our administration proudly raised it on the courtesy pole on the grounds of Confederation Building on its anniversary. Mr. Speaker, we're all too familiar with this Liberal government's record on flag raising; however, with the Labrador flag they chose not to fly it on flag day as was done last year and expected again this year.

I ask the Premier who is responsible for Labrador Affairs: Can you explain why the Labrador flag did not fly this year?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well the Member opposite, when he talks about proudly flying the Labrador flag; in all due respect, Mr. Speaker, this is a group, this is a former administration that fought tooth and nail not to have it, against it on the entrance and the exit points in Labrador just last year. Just prior

to the election they made a decision out of significant pressure from MHAs in Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair that we see here and other people in Labrador that made a significant effort – as a matter of fact, stood at those sites to get those flags erected.

I have to remind the Member opposite, when he talks about proudly defending this flag; I would have to say that his history speaks to otherwise.

When it comes to the Labrador flag, we consider the courtesy pole – as the Member knows, we will put in place, through the Management Commission, what will happen with the courtesy flag in the future. That will reflect then the flags that are flown on the courtesy pole on Confederation Hill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District is engaged in the school closure process based on questionable reasoning that does not appear to involve the education outcomes of the schools in question or the welfare of the children in these schools; however, the minister responsible was mandated by the Premier to pay a special attention to improving education outcomes.

I ask the Premier: How does the closing of well-functioning, community-based schools and busing children who currently are within walking distance of their school result in positive education outcomes?

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

MR. KIRBY: I thank the Member for the question and another opportunity to address this in the House of Assembly.

According to the *Schools Act*, Mr. Speaker – and I'll table a copy of the *Schools Act* because I know I've referenced it a number of days now in the House of Assembly. I'll table a copy of the

Schools Act for the Member's information, because according to the law in Newfoundland and Labrador – the law – school districts are responsible for the administration of primary, elementary and secondary education. They are responsible for the administration of our schools. The Members in the House of Assembly don't do that.

I know the question was addressed to the Premier, that's not his responsibility either. It's not mine as Minister of Education. It is those individuals who hold office at the Board of Trustee level with the school district.

Another thing about this is the whole business of respecting institutional autonomy. It's not our job to meddle into the affairs of the school district, like the former administration did.

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

MS. MICHAEL: I ask the Premier, Mr. Speaker: When he said publicly that everything will be put on the table when budget cuts were discussed, was he putting the education of our children on that chopping block?

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

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm glad to have another opportunity to address this. As I was saying, it's important that institutions, that agencies, boards and commissions that have a self-governing authority, that have autonomy granted to them by legislation, that have statutory responsibilities to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that are delegated to them by legislation, it's important that we respect that. If we don't have any respect for that, then what do we do? We meddle in their affairs, tell them what to do?

We saw so much of that over a 10-year period, or a 13-year period when the previous administration was in power, whether it was the school districts, Memorial University, other institutions. That is not going to happen. We are going to allow the law to stand in this province and for the trustees to make the decisions that they are delegated by this House of Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, the goal of our education system is simple. It is to give every child, regardless of socioeconomic challenges, the greatest opportunity to succeed.

St. Mary's School off Waterford Bridge Road was slated for closure, but thankfully it remains open. Like Holy Cross Junior High, it is a small neighbourhood school that serves its students and community well.

In absence of duly-elected school board trustees, I ask the minister: Why can't the children of St. John's Centre have the same opportunities to succeed as the children who attend St. Mary's Elementary, and keep Holy Cross Junior High open?

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

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have confidence in the officials at the English School District, as I have in the officials at the French School District in this province. I know how hard they work. I've been trying to do whatever I can to allow them to carry out their responsibilities that are granted to them by the House of Assembly in the best way that I can. I believe that all children in this province deserve to have an equal footing when it comes to education, and that's just what we're going to do.

We're going to allow the school districts to do their work. These annual school reviews are not something that's new to Newfoundland and Labrador. This is a customary thing that happens year to year. This board of trustees has allowed for a lot of public feedback on the decision-making process. They initially went out and met with school councils. They've held public meetings. The meeting that's coming up this weekend, on Saturday, is a public meeting and interested members of the public, parents and

students will have an opportunity to provide any further feedback at that meeting.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that the current school board trustees are not duly elected. There hasn't been a school board election in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador since 2009. He knows that. He's being disingenuous.

Mr. Speaker, 38 per cent of students at Holy Cross Junior High have exceptionalities; over 50 per cent are at risk. The exceptionality rate and at-risk rates in the English stream at Brother Rice Junior High are also very, very high.

I ask the minister: In absence of duly elected school board trustees, how will closing Holy Cross and busing and combining these high-needs students into Brother Rice give every child the greatest opportunity to succeed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, many students in Newfoundland and Labrador have exceptionalities that they need assistance with in schooling to ensure that they are put on more even footing with their peers in school. No one is talking about changing the teacher allocation formula as it relates to the provision of instructional resource teachers, who are also known as special education teachers. That is not under consideration.

If children move to a different school as a result of any of the decisions that are made by the board of trustees of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District, their needs will be met in the same manner as they are being met now. When we have the budget, they may be actually improvements to that, but let's wait and see.

No one is talking about any diminution of the quality of special education. Children with exceptionalities will continue to have their needs met as they are being met now with this decision.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

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

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

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 5 of the Local Authority Guarantee Act, 2005, I wish to table the annual report of loan guarantees provided to local governments to enable them to arrange interim financing for capital projects. I am pleased to report that there were no new guarantees issued on behalf of local governments during the fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, the last report under this act was tabled on May 11, 2015, and included guarantees issued up to and including March 31, 2014. This current report covers the period from April 1, 2015, to March 31, 2016.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Further tabling of documents?

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

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

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 49(2) of the Financial Administration Act, I wish to table the attached list of temporary loans that were raised under section 48 of the act since the last report to the House tabled on May 11, 2015.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 55(3) of the Financial Administration Act, I wish to report that there were no guarantee loans paid out by the province since the last annual report also on May 11, 2015.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 55.1(2) of the act, I wish to report that there has been no guaranteed debt of a Crown corporation or agency assumed by the province since the May 11, 2015 report.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With the Speaker's permission, I would further like – pursuant to section 26(5)(a) of the Financial Administration Act, I am tabling 29 orders-in-council relating to funding pre-commitments for the 2016-17 to 2022-23 fiscal years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that pursuant to Standing Order 63(3), the private Member's resolution for which notice was given on March 21 by the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune will be the one we'll debate on Wednesday, April 13.

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

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

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

I give notice that I will move the following motion: that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Mr. Speaker, I also give notice that I will move that the House resolve itself into the Committee

of the Whole on Supply to consider a resolution for the granting of supply to Her Majesty, Bill 11.

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 East – Quidi Vidi.

MS. MICHAEL: 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 humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District trustees proposed to close Whitbourne Elementary effective June 2016 and bus them to a distant school; and

WHEREAS Whitbourne Elementary is an important, accessible and inclusive neighbourhood school with programs, community partnerships and extracurricular activities designed to meet the particular needs of the children who attend it;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to ensure Whitbourne Elementary School remains open.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand here today on behalf of the school community and the broader community of Whitbourne in presenting their petition, which in my hand has been signed by hundreds and hundreds of people.

I was really privileged on April 4 to be at the public meeting that was held by the English School District in Whitbourne and to hear the

presentations of the parents and community leaders of Whitbourne and beyond Whitbourne – even presentations from the Mayor of Long Harbour – pointing out how important it is to keep this school in this community.

The thing that struck me was the facts and information that were presented by the people of Whitbourne to the school district. Facts which are not being recognized by the school district in the material it has been putting out. They are using statistics that go back to 2011 that are completely outdated, and it is a shame the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development does not recognize he does have an ultimate responsibility for how the school board acts.

These people are begging, begging the minister, they've written the minister, they've written the Premier, they are begging and they are joined by hundreds and hundreds of people begging that their voice be heard, because it is one of the most thriving communities in the province. It has grown immensely since 2011 – 200 new homes since 2011 built in Whitbourne, Mr. Speaker. These people are not just asking for something that's not needed; they are being very responsible. The presentations that were made to the board, I couldn't believe the quality of the presentations and the information that was presented.

If the minister is really going to do his job with regard to making sure that educational outcomes are at the maximum for our children, then he should be reading these presentations.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS policing is vital to the protection and service of our province's communities;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to increase the presence of law enforcement in the Conception Bay South area.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I presented a similar petition a couple of weeks back and I plan on continuing to do so as I have a lot of these petitions from the people in my district, from the Member opposite for Harbour Main and also my colleague, the MHA for Topsail – Paradise.

Right throughout the district there is a huge concern on policing. We have had an increase in the last number of weeks. I know there has been an increase in patrol vehicles. The community of Conception Bay South is the largest town in the province, probably the second largest municipality, and right now we rely upon two, maybe three police vehicles.

As it was well published, last week we had an armed robbery every day. A couple of those happened to be in CBS, and it is not uncommon. It's a daily occurrence.

During the election it was hammered home to me loud and clear that people have concerns and they don't feel safe. We don't have a police presence in the sense – you can't go find an office. It wasn't a dedicated office. It was kind of a satellite. That too has since been closed down.

I commend the increase in police patrols. There have been some improvements there but I do lobby the government to give strong consideration to establishing a dedicated office for the Town of CBS. As I said, it's a fast growing community. The people are asking for it and I am advocating on their behalf.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS the English School Board Trustees propose to close down Holy Cross Junior High school and send students to a distant school; and

WHEREAS the board has arbitrarily and without consultation reduced the Holy Cross Junior High catchment area and students will have to be bused to a far more distant school; and

WHEREAS Holy Cross Junior High is an important neighbourhood school with programs, community partnerships and extra-curricular activities designed to meet the particular needs of the inner city students who attend it; and

WHEREAS the school board trustees are an appointed body and no longer accountable to the people who elected them;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to ensure that Holy Cross Junior High school remains open and to immediately arrange for a democratically elected English School Board.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am amazed at the Minister of Education. For him to present the education act as if people in the House were not familiar with it. Of course we're all familiar with it but we're also familiar with how the school boards should operate. The minister knows that as well. He knows it's based on a duly-elected process of trustees who are answerable and accountable to the communities from which they are elected.

Mr. Speaker, he knows, this minister knows that there are no duly-elected school board trustees right now. There hasn't been a school board election since 2009. That is shameful, Mr. Speaker. That flies directly in the face of everything that our school board is founded on.

For this minister to abdicate his responsibility and to say he is not interfering in that process is

absolutely shameful. The decisions that are being made are very important decisions. We all know that in this House. We all know how important our education system is. We know how it affects the future of communities. We know how it affects the lives of the children in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, this minister has to stand up and do the right thing. He has to intervene. He knows this is not right. As a Member of the Opposition, he hammered it again and again and again in this House of Assembly. How he can stand up and say that it is not his responsibility is mind-boggling. It is absolutely mind-boggling, Mr. Speaker.

So if he's not going to stand up and do his job, who in God's name will stand up and take responsibility for what's happening right now in the school boards in Newfoundland and Labrador? There is absolutely nobody in charge then, Mr. Speaker. The school boards are able to do whatever they want and they are not accountable to anyone because they are not duly elected. We have a minister who is not willing to do his job.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

It's certainly an honour and a privilege for me to rise in this hon. House again today and bring forward my petition which I have brought forward on a number of occasions as well, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have an interest in participating in the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to press the Government of Canada to schedule both preparatory consultations and inquiry sessions in communities in Newfoundland and Labrador in which grieving Aboriginal families live.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, in my prelude I said I had brought this petition forward to the House now – the House has been open for three weeks and I'm bringing it forward at least on a weekly basis. I will continue to do so until such time as we see results, as we see an announcement from the federal government that says they are actually going to conduct their consultations right here in the communities in Newfoundland and Labrador where people are affected.

We will not quit and we will not sit back and wait idly for them to make a decision. We will continue to apply pressure. We call upon our Members in government, sitting on the government side of this House in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, to join with us so that the results can be delivered for the people of our Aboriginal communities.

This petition I have here today – and this being at least the third one, if not the fourth one – has 12 pages of signatures, Mr. Speaker. It's a very important issue and a very important concern to all persons in Newfoundland and Labrador, not just our indigenous people.

We really want our voices to be heard and we feel strongly. It's fine to send down a few plane tickets and pay for some hotel rooms to bring some people up to Halifax to ask about what we think the consultation should look like, but it's not good enough, Mr. Speaker. It's okay to do that if you're doing that in conjunction with going to communities, but not in and of itself because it's not enough.

These communities as a whole are impacted. Men, women, children, grandparents, nieces, nephews, everybody wants to share their views and their concerns about what is happening with murdered and missing Aboriginal persons, Mr. Speaker.

We want these community consultations to take place right here in our province. We want Members of the government opposite to work with their federal cousins and make sure they deliver the results that the people of this province are expecting.

Thank you so much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Before I recognize the hon. the Opposition House Leader, I would ask Members of the House – it's difficult for the Speaker to hear the Member designated to speak. I understand that you're carrying out the people's business in the House. I ask to keep the level of conversation a little bit lower or take your conversations outside the House.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to rise today and present a petition.

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 an extension was announced to the Robert E. Howlett highway on March 25, 2014; and

WHEREAS the environmental assessment, design and engineering of this project is complete; and

WHEREAS continued residential commercial growth has increased traffic on the Southern Avalon;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to continue with this significant piece of infrastructure to enhance and improve traffic to the Southern Avalon.

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

Mr. Speaker, over the past 15 to 20 years, certainly on the southern Avalon, we've seen tremendous growth in residential development, in terms of commercial development, significant manufacturing and small business operations. Obviously, the fishery along the Southern Shore and the southern Avalon is extremely important.

There's one major highway to the southern Avalon. With that growth and with the boundary to the City of St. John's, we've seen tremendous growth in regard to the amount of traffic on that highway. That's why for many years we've lobbied to see new infrastructure built, so we could see an extension to the Robert E. Howlett which would bring that traffic and highway up beyond Bay Bulls Big Pond, bringing it down to drop it in at the city limits of Bay Bulls and St. John's after Middle Pond. As well, it takes that heavy traffic volume out of residential areas as you go through Middle Pond and around Big Pond and those areas which are so important.

I know there's infrastructure money that the federal government has talked about in the budget. I've had discussions with MP O'Regan for the area, very good discussions, exchanged information in regard to his efforts in terms of getting recognition and partnering to get funding to do this. I also have written the provincial Minister of Transportation and Works and actually advised him that this is indeed a worthy project, is shovel ready and shovel worthy.

So we look forward to the coming weeks and months ahead in regard to this piece of infrastructure which is so vital and important to the southern Avalon to continue the economic growth and certainly to continue to meet the transportation needs of that region.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further petitions?

Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Bill 4, second reading.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation, that we now move into Bill 4, second reading.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 4, an act entitled An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act." (Bill 4)

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

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

I rise in this hon. House today to speak to the proposed amendments to the *Financial Administration Act* or as it's commonly referred to the FAA, related to purchasing cards or what are referred to as P cards. The *Financial Administration Act* will be amended with a new section, 34.1, which has been drafted by Legislative Counsel and has been reviewed and approved by the Department of Finance.

P cards are essentially government issued credit cards to be used for the purchases of goods and services. The credit card provider for the provincial government is BMO. A P card is a charge card used by both industry and governments in Canada to procure and pay for selected goods and services. Purchase orders and invoice-based procurement processes can be labour intensive and for low dollar value transactions, the processing costs often outweigh the cost of goods and services.

The introduction of a P card has enabled many organizations to reduce the cost of this process while maintaining an appropriate level of control and also achieving rebates from the card provider based on the annual spend and speed of payment.

These proposed amendments allow for the payment of government purchased card transactions, or P card transactions, to the card provider to be recorded as an advance or non-budgetary payment and requires accountability by the cardholder or employee to properly record expenditure against budgetary appropriation and reconcile the advance in a timely manner as per section 22, section 30 and section 31 of the FAA.

The new section also provides the comptroller general with the ability to recover any amounts that are not properly accounted for. I think that would be an important message for the Members of this House to understand that the comptroller general will have the ability to recover any amounts that are inappropriately charged to these cards of low dollar amounts.

To give you some background on how government got to this point, the process has been going on, my understanding is, since 2014 and had included a multi-phased approach. In the fall of 2014, an interdepartmental team was established to implement the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador P card program, which included the development of government-wide policy, procedures and business processes to govern the use of the card. It was determined the P card would be rolled out using a multi-phase approach.

Phase one would include a small pilot group in select departments utilizing a manual process. Phase two would involve developing, testing and implementing a fully integrated technical solution between government's financial management system and P card transactional data from BMO. Phase two would also include any amendments to the P card policy and procedures developed in phase one, but includes additional training for phase one participants and the widespread rollout of purchasing cards to remaining departments with the assistance of BMO.

The policy and procedures outlined and the roles and responsibilities within the program and the overall administration of the program would reside with the Government Purchasing Agency, and the day-to-day administration would reside with card coordinators in each department.

Phase two is anticipated to commence in spring/summer 2016, subject to legislative changes to the FAA that we are discussing here today. The agreement with BMO includes a rebate the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador will receive from the card provider based upon the volumes of purchases and the speed of payment to BMO. Rebates will range from 0.88 per cent to 1.3 per cent based on an aggregate volume of \$10 million to \$150 million, as well as government's ability to process speedy payments. To maximize the benefits of the P card program, government needs to pay the card provider in as timely a manner as possible to achieve the greatest possible rebates.

Within the current confines of the FAA to make the monthly payments to BMO, the amount must be recorded in the financial system and immediately charged to an available appropriation. In order to pay as quickly as possible, it has been determined that the optimal business process is to pay BMO in advance of the detailed card reconciliation each month. This is because there would be a greater risk that all reconciliations would not be able to be compiled within the required seven-day time frame to accomplish reconciliation in an advanced manner of payment, thus delaying the payment to BMO, and therefore putting at risk the rebate the province would be able to avail of.

Section 22 of the FAA requires that no payments shall be made out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund except under the authority of the Legislature. Further, section 30 requires that an individual certify receipt of goods and services before payment.

In the pilot phase of the P card, a manual process has been implemented which complies with the requirements of the FAA. To achieve administrative efficiency and maximize rebate potential, a long-term solution for P cards will be implemented which will require a process using a single electronic file from the card

provider and completing an electronic reconsolidation process.

To give an example, compare this to an individual's personal credit card. Ideally, you would pay your credit card charges as soon as possible, or at least by the payment due date to avoid extra interest charges. A good practice would be diligent and to be verifying the charges on your statement. Then if there is a problem, you would seek to get the credit reflected on your next credit statement. This is how the P card would work under this new amendment to the act. The amendment, along with the electronic solution, will allow government to maximize the potential rebates from the cardholder and achieve administrative efficiencies in administering the P card program.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes my remarks today. I look forward to hearing from my colleagues on these proposed amendments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's great to be here.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister with regard to her discussion on Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act. I just have a few comments on the actual amendment.

As was said when the minister spoke to it, it would "allow payments to corporate credit card providers without a direct charge to available appropriation, provided that those payments are subsequently charged to an available appropriation in the same fiscal year;" in regard to the management of that within the bill. The purpose is to revise the certification process for these payments.

As was indicated, these are referred to often as P cards or government issued credit cards for the purchase of goods and services within government. Through this process, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has received a rebate from the card provider based upon the volume of purchases and the speed at

which the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador makes the payment. So an amendment to the FAA as referred to is required to implement an internal process to make sure we can maximize the rebate potential.

Currently, if you look at how it happens. The FAA requires all expenditures be charged to an appropriation and that an individual must certify receipt of goods and services before the payment. This often creates a practical time lag and does not maximize the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's rebate potential. So this certainly, what the minister proposes, will help to address that.

Amendments to the FAA would include section 34.1. It will allow payments to the card provider to be accounted for as an advance on expenses. The requirement will be that the amounts subsequently be charged to an available appropriation in the same fiscal year and be certified in a manner prescribed by section 30.

As we often do with pieces of legislation or amendments, we look to other jurisdictions and what practices and protocols they would have. This is what I just described. It's consistent with other jurisdictions and what they actually do in handling such situations in regard to these cards.

In regard to accountability controls in place, an agreement with BMO provides that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is not responsible for unauthorized use, dispute process in place with card provider, built-in card and transaction limits, block of merchant categories, training for cardholders and supervisors, cardholder agreements, and the Comptroller General has the ability to recover funds from the responsible party in event of misuse.

For example, the Government of New Brunswick has partnered with us on the agreement I understand. They spend approximately \$30 million annually through these P cards. The potential rebate for spend between \$25 million and \$49.9 million is 0.93 per cent to 1.7 per cent.

Those are some of the details in regard to, as the minister has introduced, the amendment. As I said, these cards are issued for the purchase of

goods and services within government. These changes, we believe, would make it easier for the Comptroller General, the Department of Finance, to use the P cards in a way which would generate rebate funds for the province. Anything we can do in terms of administration or utilization of expenditures like that is something that we would certainly support.

The faster the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador makes payments on the P cards, again, the greater the province's financial benefit would be. This is about streamlining the process. Faster turnaround means greater results for Finance and for the department as a whole.

The P cards were initiated certainly when we were in government. I am pleased to support the legislation that takes an extra step to maximize the benefits of P cards. The legislation, while fairly technical, would also allow the comptrollers to make payments on P cards immediately, as I said before, and then assign it to the appropriate budget line.

The accountabilities, I talked about those, the checks and balances will still take place. Certainly, the legislation alters the internal process for maximum benefit, and I think that's what this amendment is about. It's making some adjustments consistent with some other jurisdictions in what's happening to make sure we're maximizing the utilization of these cards for expenditures of goods and services in government which I think is a good initiative.

With that, I'll conclude my remarks.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I'm happy to take a few moments to speak to Bill 4, An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act, something that is very practical and I think very sensible to be doing. We will be supporting this bill.

As the minister and the House Leader for the Official Opposition have pointed out, the cards that we're talking about, P cards are government issued credit cards which must be issued to a person and apparently do have a limit of \$2,500. The public, I'm sure, would like to know that if there are credit cards going around in government that are being used, that they are being used wisely and there are controls in place to make sure that that is the case.

The P cards themselves are usually used to buy supplies, furniture, and occasionally can be used for travel. The thing this bill is getting at is that the government receives a rebate from the card provider based on the volume of purchases and the speed of payment. The whole idea of the amendments is to maximize the rebate so that it would be a benefit to government in having a maximization of the money that comes back to government.

In the current act, section 22 stipulates that all government money must be charged to an available appropriation. That a claim is actually made, and section 30 stipulates government must certify receipt of goods or services before payment.

The difficulty is that it does not allow doing so in a time frame that allows an efficient processing. Things are slowed down. There is a wait time on the putting in of a request and the payment happening. So with the amendment that's now being made, it will allow payments to the credit card providers without an available appropriation. So long as they are charged to an available appropriation within the same fiscal year.

Now that's very technical, and I'm sure anybody out there listening to us is probably going to sleep as this moment. The thing is that my first question was: Who is benefiting from this? Is it the bank that's benefiting because they're getting the money ahead of time? In the briefing that we got, we got clarification: no, in actual fact the government is benefiting because it will get the rebate much more quickly. That is the thing that I think makes this very important for us.

The bill that we're discussing and will pass, I'm assuming, includes section 34.1 which will

allow credit card payments as an advance on expenses. I think that's extremely important. I'm glad to see that there, but we have to make sure there are safeguards in place. One of the safeguards put in place includes an agreement with BMO that government is not responsible for an unauthorized use. So if somebody in whose name the card is uses it inappropriately, government will not be held responsible. It will be the person whose name is on the card.

There are also built in limits on the P cards, which is extremely important. If a person working for government receives a P card, they will be trained so that they fully understand what the responsibilities are and their own liability as the person whose name is on the card. Another safeguard is the ability of the Comptroller General will be allowed to recover funds from the cardholder if the card is misused. Safeguards are put in place to ensure that government and the people's money will not be used inappropriately by people who have these P cards, whose names are on the cards.

This is not something that's new. It happens in other jurisdictions. For example, PEI, Ontario, BC uses this method. Obviously, it's working well there. With the safeguards in place, I know we can make it work well here.

We do have a practice going on whereby you get pooling. Our government is pooling with New Brunswick to collect a pooled rebate. By pooling you actually will get a larger rebate. So those involved in the pooling will get larger rebates.

I think this has been thought through carefully, and I'm very happy to say we will vote for this bill.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the parliamentary assistant to the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BROWNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great honour to rise today, as this is the first time I have risen in debate since becoming elected. So if you'll indulge me, I want to say thank you to the people who put me

here. Like many of my colleagues, I am certain it will be a tremendous honour to serve in this House for these four years, and perhaps beyond if the voters allow.

Today we are discussing amendments to the *Financial Administration Act*. It is also refreshing today to notice the multi-partisan co-operation here and the agreement by all parties that this is a good measure we are putting forward, that's been ongoing. This process began in 2014, and we're currently now entering phase two, pending the legislative approvals.

This amendment would allow for the payment of government purchasing cards, the P cards, provided to be recorded as an advance or a non-budgetary payment, and then requires accountability by the cardholder or the employee to properly record the expenditure against the budgetary appropriation and reconcile the advance in a timely manner, as per sections 22, 30, and 34 of the *Financial Administration Act*.

Mr. Speaker, it's important, we can compare this to a personal credit card where you would make your own personal payments as close as you could to when you made the transaction, or before the date when your interest would start accruing. So it is certainly good practice to be diligent and verify your charges on that statement to ensure we are streamlining purchases within government to make sure we are getting the best bang for our buck for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The introduction of the P card system has enabled many organizations to reduce the cost of this process while maintaining an appropriate level of control and achieving rebates from the card provider based on the annual spend and speed of payment. It would also create that checks and balances, where the Comptroller General would have the ability to recover any amounts that are not properly accounted for.

So, Mr. Speaker, we see this as a good measure to take, highly technical as it is, but it's something we are happy to support, and I am extremely happy to rise today in support of it.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board speaks now she shall close debate.

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

I wanted to thank the colleagues in the House today who spoke to the bill. I also want to say a thank you to them for participating in the briefing that Finance officials provided. I certainly want to say a thank you to the officials in the Finance Department, including the Comptroller General's office, who have been working hard on this and have provided the information to government to bring this bill into the House today.

With respect to the conversations that have been happening in the House today as part of the bill, I think one of the things that's been echoed is the need for us to find efficient ways to process things while also making sure we have exceptional control in place as we steward and take care of the public purse.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the support of Members of this House of Assembly as we move forward with this bill. I thank the House for its consideration today.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that Bill 4, An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act, be now read a second time?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those against?

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act. (Bill 4)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill has now been read a second time.

When shall the bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole House?

Now? Tomorrow?

MR. A. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 4)

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 4.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole and I do now leave the Chair.

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those against?

Carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Dempster): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 4, An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act.

A bill," An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act." (Bill 4)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act.

CHAIR: Shall the long title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: I move, Madam Chair, that the Committee rise and report Bill 4.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee do now rise and report Bill 4.

Is it the pleasure of the House?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: The motion is carried.

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

MR. SPEAKER (Osborne): The hon. the Deputy Speaker.

MS. DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have asked me to report Bill 4 carried without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed her to report Bill 4, An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act, carried without amendment.

When shall the report be received? Now? Tomorrow?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 5, second reading of Bill 5.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board that Bill 5, An Act To Amend The Interprovincial Subpoena Act, be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 5, An Act To Amend The Interprovincial Subpoena Act, be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Interprovincial Subpoena Act." (Bill 5).

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

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

I'm very happy to stand today in this House and speak to Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Interprovincial Subpoena Act. It's the first piece of legislation that I've led, I guess, that comes from my Department of Justice – and thank you I say to the Members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, the *Interprovincial Subpoena Act*, in the grand scheme of things, this is not what I would term a contentious piece of legislation. You see bills that come into this House, some are very short and can be deemed housekeeping and some can be long, contentious and propose very dramatic changes to maybe previous legislation or practice.

I certainly don't think this is a contentious piece of legislation, but I also don't think that it's mere housekeeping. The effect of it does have certain significance when it comes to the order of business and the order of work as is carried out by courts and tribunals and commissions not just here in this province, but across the country. Basically what we're doing is we're trying to amend the legislation to give us uniformity across the country.

As we know, a subpoena is simply a legal document that is issued by a court or another body that has the power to issue subpoenas that compels a person to appear before that court or body to give testimony. I think everybody is aware of the general concept of a subpoena and its purpose, and when you receive a subpoena you must show up in front and give your sworn testimony.

The Uniform Law Conference of Canada, which I'll refer to hereafter as ULCC, adopted a uniform *Interprovincial Subpoena Act* in 1974. Since then, all of our jurisdictions in Canada,

except for Quebec, which has its own different form of law than we have in the rest of Canada, being more of a civil law, they have adopted legislation based on this act. However, some provinces are further ahead than other provinces in how this is applied.

The intention of this particular piece of legislation, this amendment, is to create a uniform process to allow subpoenas in one province to be recognized and enforced in another province, and it will ensure a witness who's residing in one province in this country can be required to attend to a court or proceeding in another province to give evidence.

So, in general, this process we have here today, which we are putting forward this amendment for debate and hopefully for adoption, is two-fold. A court in the issuing jurisdiction must certify the subpoena. Again, you have, say, the court in Ontario will issue a subpoena, it has to go through a process in that court where the subpoena is certified or passes muster, we'll say, and has to be done in front of a sitting judge or justice. Secondly, a court in the receiving jurisdiction must adopt the subpoena.

We have two issues with the current legislation we have here in this province. Currently, the first issue deals with boards, commissions and tribunals. Under section 3 of our current *Interprovincial Subpoena Act* a subpoena from a court outside the province can be adopted and enforced as an order of the court here in Newfoundland and Labrador where, (a), a judge in the other province has certified the person's attendance in the other province is necessary for the adjudication of a legal proceeding and that attendance is reasonable and essential to the administration of justice in that province.

That's a fairly simple concept. If you're going to issue a subpoena, the attendance of that person is obviously necessary. Because forcing someone to go to court, even if it's just here in this province, it's not a small thing. It takes time out of a person's life, and it doesn't matter what kind of court or body it is. If you're doing this, it's essential to that particular case of whatever nature that case may be. Again, that has to go through a court, and again, a judge will certify that the subpoena is necessary; secondly, obviously that attendance in the other province

would not adversely affect the health or well-being of the person being subpoenaed or cause irreversible economic loss. That again seems to be a standard concept. We're not going to force somebody to show up where they can show that doing so would harm their health.

The second part of that, the irreversible economic loss, obviously that's covered in the fact that a subpoena is supposed to be accompanied by witness fees and travelling expenses. A person, if they're being compelled to attend court, then the cost of doing so should be covered by the bodies that are compelling them to do so. That's covered out in the Schedule of the particular piece of legislation.

Our act here when it defines court, it includes courts in another province, as well as boards, commissions, tribunals or other bodies in another province that have been designated as a court by our Lieutenant Governor in Council. This is where the big change is happening. It has to go through Cabinet, through the LGIC.

Under the current version of the act, before a subpoena issued by a board or court – sorry, board or commission or tribunal, not the court – can be recognized here, that board must be designated by our Lieutenant Governor in Council, and the designation order must be published in our *Gazette*. That is a time-consuming process, to go through that rigmarole, that procedure, that protocol. I'm sure when this was originally conceived there was good reason for that, and we have seen other provinces that have already moved away from this. So it's not necessary to go through that procedure in order to go through Cabinet, and then go through all the documentation and protocol that follows thereafter.

In 1998 the ULCC recommended a new definition of court which would include not only the court, but board, commission, tribunal or other body or person that has the power to issue a subpoena. This is a group that's trying to apply uniformity in the law across the country.

The proposed amendments that we are putting forward would adopt this approach and include a definition of other body to eliminate the need to seek LGIC approval each time a board, commission or tribunal seeks to have a subpoena

adopted here in Newfoundland and Labrador. So we're trying to eliminate it, trying to streamline it, trying to establish uniformity across the country. Other provinces have moved here, many others are on the way. In fact, I think the only other province that currently has the same practice as we do here is Alberta.

The fact that a board, commission or tribunal has been given the power to issue subpoenas through legislation should be sufficient indication of the stature to warrant the application. So the fact that these groups in their respective province – or here in our province because this is not just incoming, this is also outgoing as well. The fact is we have boards, commissions and tribunals that we – we've given them stature to have subpoena authority, to warrant somebody coming in front of them to give testimony on obviously what is a pertinent or necessary issue.

The fact that they have subpoena authority should already establish them as a group that should have their subpoenas followed and approved and recognized. It goes through a process as it stands anyway. It's certified already.

The safeguards are already built into this act, because we don't want to have – nobody wants to see any kind of procedure abused or not treated properly or with respect. The fact is there are already safeguards in this piece of legislation that will continue to apply, including the judge's certification. That's the big one there.

Obviously, we have the independent arbiter, a judge of the court of that respective province who has to certify this subpoena and make sure it passes muster, we'll say, and that it is necessary and that it does ensure the person's health is not jeopardized.

We've always – and you always will have people who, obviously if they get subpoenaed, don't want to go somewhere else to give testimony. That's standard. You will have disputes over that, but in this case we are avoiding the process of having to put it in front of Cabinet and have to go through that process when it's not necessary. The fact that a judge deems it necessary should be cause enough to say that it should be respected and adopted. The province will still be satisfied that there are no facts suggesting that anything adverse will

happen to this person's health, well-being or economic well-being by compelling them to attend.

The second issue that our amendments are hoping to address relate to boards, commissions and tribunals in Newfoundland and Labrador. Section 6 of our act allows a party to a proceeding in a court in this province to apply to court and have a judge certify that a person's attendance in Newfoundland and Labrador is necessary for the adjudication of a proceeding and attendance is reasonable and central to the administration of justice. This certification has to be required before the subpoena is issued and sent and enforced in another province.

The second issue with our current act is that while our Lieutenant Governor in Council can designate boards, commissions or tribunals in another province as a court – court being that power. The act doesn't allow boards, commission or tribunals in this province to be designated as a court. So, again, this inconsistency we see here has implications for bodies that we have in this province that have been established or been set up who wish to compel witnesses to come here. It's incoming and it's outgoing as well. We want to ensure that our boards, commissions and tribunals who do have subpoena authority can make sure that it's sent out of province and enforced.

Some of those examples would be the Human Rights Commission, Public Utilities Board, the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. They don't currently meet the definition of court and they cannot be designated as a court, so they can't apply for that certification. So without this, their subpoenas cannot be adopted. They cannot be enforced. You can see the inconsistency that applies here, that other provinces have already moved forward with in trying to ensure they don't deal with those issues. The amendments we're putting forward would remedy this inconsistency. They would permit them to have the power to issue the subpoenas and have them enforced in the other jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, I guess it's fine when you stand up in the House sometimes and you say: well, I don't think there's going to be any issue with this. I can say that with all honesty, I don't think this is a piece of legislation to which there are

any issues, but I would say to my colleagues on the other side – again, I do appreciate that department officials took the time to provide a briefing. I know Members on the other side took the opportunity to go to the briefing. I'm sure that any questions they had were addressed sufficiently. If not, I would ensure that as we go to the Committee stage on this, if they have questions we would want to address them or if there are any suggestions.

I don't think this is a piece of legislation, though, that should be held up. I think it's one that has been in the works for some time. We have seen other provinces moving forward. In fact, I wanted to check and see who exactly has already gone there. Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories and Nunavut all recognize subpoenas from boards, commissions and tribunals. Similar legislation in PEI, Manitoba, BC and Yukon limit the recognition of extra provincial subpoenas to courts in the province with no inclusion. Alberta provides for the recognition, the same process that we have here.

I think this is a step in the right direction. I think it's going to be of great use to our boards, especially when you look at the boards that I've referenced, and other boards, commissions and tribunals that had that power and should have it enforced and have the ability to call people because the matters that – just looking at the three that I referenced there, our Child and Youth Advocate, the Human Rights Commission. The fact is if they're having a matter and they need testimony from them, we need to ensure that people can be compelled to show up and give that testimony.

Again, I look forward to listening to the commentary provided by my colleagues on the other side. If there are any questions, hopefully we can address them at some point during this debate and move forward, hopefully, to the adoption of these amendments and moving forward on Bill 5.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Yes, the minister can relax a little bit now because I will confirm for him, yes, I agree, it's not contentious. It will create uniformity across the country, and there won't be any issues raised by us as the Official Opposition on this bill.

Also, we did attend a briefing provided by officials. We appreciated the briefing to provide clarity, to make sure that the bill was what it appeared to be and what the intentions of the bill were.

Mr. Speaker, it's laid out. I'm not going to go through all of the commentary that the minister has already done. He's done a job of clarifying exactly what this is about. I can tell you that this is going to streamline. It does make uniformity, is the word he used, and he's correct. It will streamline the process for this province.

Currently, there are circumstances where a request or a subpoena would have to go through a Cabinet process. Part of the bill is to repeal that part of the section, that part of the act, because it will now be covered off and respected from not only the courts, which mean a court in a province of Canada but also other bodies, which is new. A new section on other bodies means a board, a commission, a tribunal or body or person that has the power to issue a subpoena.

The province of Canada is updated and also subpoena, which means a subpoena or other document issued by a court or other body requiring a person within a province of Canada to attend. This is not about what happens within the province but it happens when you cross provincial lines, not just for courts but for agencies and commissions and tribunals and boards who have the ability and have the power to issue subpoenas.

Probably a good example would be the Child and Youth Advocate. For example, the Child and Youth Advocate in this province wished to subpoena someone from another province then having this legislation in place would streamline a process in that example.

If the Child, Youth Advocate wanted to subpoena someone from Alberta, then this would streamline and simplify the process of being able to subpoena that person, obligate their attendance, require their attendance here in

this province. Also, it would work the opposite way, vice versa, the other way. If someone in Alberta wanted to subpoena someone in Newfoundland and Labrador, it would streamline the process for requiring that person to appear as a witness in a matter in that province.

This is not about people alleged to have committed breaches of the law or anything like that. Subpoenas are for witnesses so people have some value to bring to a legislative process by an agency or board that has the legislative ability to issue subpoenas. It will allow them to call witnesses throughout Canada, where they have this type of similar legislation, in a simplified manner so that the witnesses can bring value to the process that's before the court, before the board, before the commission or tribunal, body or person as the case may be in which a province may have a legislative authority to issue those types of subpoenas.

This is updating the current legislation, and I'm sure we'll see lots of this from the government. We did lots of it when we were in government where we went through processes of constantly updating legislation. I'm sure they'll have lots more come before the House which will be updates similar to this, which require us to look at them in the House, to give our due diligence to them to make sure that they are bills that are appropriate and right. We have the right to debate them as Members of the House on both sides and then pass the bills here in the House if the House sees fit to do so.

I'm sure we'll see many more of these in the weeks to come. I would expect to see more of these in further sittings of the House. We'll look forward to debating those as well. We have no issue with this bill and we'll be supporting this.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I am very happy to stand and to speak ever briefly to Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Interprovincial Subpoena Act. Any time, Mr.

Speaker, we make any kind of changes to our legal system, whether through the court system or any aspect of our legal system, we must do so carefully. We know the power of our legal system, we know the power our judicial system, the court system, and we also know how often the general population is terrified, intimidated, frightened and sometimes does not have a working knowledge of how our judicial system works, how our legal system works.

With any change we must act with absolute certainty, keeping in mind those aspects, and keeping in mind the needs of our community. We have no problem whatsoever with the amendments put before us in this act, but I do again want to point out, as we've heard from Chief Justice Derek Green a number of times, how important it is for us to modernize our judicial system, to modernize even specifically our court system so that it better serves the people of our province.

He speaks so often about the need to improve access to our justice system, to improve access even physically to our justice system, as many of our courts have real physical accessibility challenges across the province; also access to our justice system in terms of people understanding, having a working knowledge of their rights within our justice system; also access to our system in terms of the high cost, the high cost in terms of the high cost of representation for those who need representation; also the time that it affects people's lives.

Any time we extend the authority for anyone to subpoena someone to come to the court, we must do that with great certainty and keeping in mind we must always keep in mind the rights of the people who are being subpoenaed.

So again, we believe this move is simply another method to help streamline our justice system. In fact we are not losing anything by doing this particular type of streamlining, but always we must keep in mind how it affects the people of the province, how it affects people's access to justice, how it affects people's human rights. To ensure that nobody is unjustly subpoenaed, that no one is suffering any hardship because of a subpoena.

I would hope again that this government, as clearly petitioned by Chief Justice Derek Green, takes really into account the need for ongoing legal education within our schools, legal education within our communities, and that we take into account the great need to improve accessibility to the legal system. Whether it be the physical accessibility of our buildings that are part of our legal and our justice system, and also accessibility to the courts, the accessibility to justice.

In light of that, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to support this. I look forward to more attempts by this government to further modernize our legal system.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. the Government House Leader and Minister of Justice speaks now, he will close debate.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I appreciate and thank the commentary from my friends on the other side. I don't think every piece of legislation that we bring forward is going to be so agreeable. That's to be expected. In many cases, that's to be encouraged because that's what this House requires is good debate.

However, in some cases, as this one, I do think this is a piece of legislation that is necessary. It's a step forward. It's the right thing to do. As the Leader of the Official Opposition said, there is going to be lots of legislation that comes forward like this that it's an attempt – and to quote my comrade for St. John's Centre – to modernize our legislation, to modernize our system.

I would go further to what she said and say that if there are any suggestions on modernizing and attempting to make things better, that's what we should all be doing and listening. We're open to listening to that on this legislation or anything that's not there. We've had correspondence on other issues just within the Justice Department

alone, where we talk about things that we hope that we can do to make things better.

I appreciate the fact that the bill seems very straightforward. I don't know if there will be any questions in the Committee stage, but I look forward. I do want to take this opportunity on this piece of legislation to say something that I hope will stand for the rest of it. There's a lot of work – and everybody in this House realizes, but I don't think people behind the scenes or people out in the public that watch this or maybe listen realize the tremendous amount of work that goes into just one piece of legislation that shows up in this House.

Something as small as this bill, in terms of just a few sheets of paper, requires an immense amount of work by a number of people in various departments, whether it goes through Cabinet, and goes through the Legislative Council, it goes to the Department of Justice, it goes through solicitors, it goes through people in policy. So I just wanted to take an opportunity to thank those people. It's easy for us to stand up sometimes and speak to this, but we do have the benefit – certainly I do – of having very, very smart people explain this to you and they do a very good job sometimes of explaining this.

I'm going to be very self-deprecating here now and say that sometimes they dumb it down to my level. So I appreciate the work that's being done by our people in Legislative Counsel and by our solicitors, especially in Justice who are fanned out throughout government and working in departments.

So I appreciate the commentary by my colleagues on the other side. I do want to say very much that I appreciate the work done by all those individuals on this piece of legislation and every piece of legislation. I think it should be noted. Sometimes we don't always get that opportunity, but there's a lot of work and thought that goes into the most minute piece of legislation, let alone the things that are very dramatic and significantly change policy. Even something like this has to be thought out as to what the cause and effect will be and what the repercussions are.

To all of those individuals – and they know who they are – I want to say thank you so much for

the work that you do for this legislation that we get the honour to stand up here in this House and debate and put forward and have passed by this House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that Bill 5, An Act To Amend The Interprovincial Subpoena Act, be now read a second time?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those against?

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Interprovincial Subpoena Act. (Bill 5)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill has now been read a second time.

When shall the bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole House. Now? Tomorrow?

MR. A. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Interprovincial Subpoena Act," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House on tomorrow. (Bill 5)

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 5.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole and that I do now leave the Chair.

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

CHAIR (Dempster): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 5, An Act To Amend The Interprovincial Subpoena Act.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Interprovincial Subpoena Act." (Bill 5).

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 through 10 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 through 10 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 10 carried.

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

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Interprovincial Subpoena Act.

CHAIR: Shall the long title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

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

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

A quick question for the minister – I would ask the minister: What are the plans for public education around the changes to this bill? Again, I think it's so important for people to fully understand when there is any change made to any of our laws, in terms of modernizing our system, I believe doing public education about any attempts to modernize our situation is also a modern step as well.

I was wondering if there was any plan at all as to how to introduce this, how to explain to the public what's being done. Again because the notion of being able to be subpoenaed by even more bodies could be concerning for some people.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I appreciate the question from my friend for St. John's Centre. I'll be quite honest that there was no actual education campaign specifically planned on this because I guess the concept of subpoenas in general has been well established, but I do appreciate the fact that with this change notice has to be given to our boards, our commissions and our tribunals.

The other thing, there is a group in this province that I think does tremendous work, the Public Legal Information Association of NL, PLIAN. They are not as well-known as they should be. They are a very good group. A gentleman named Kevin runs the show. So maybe this is worth a conversation with him, because in a lot of cases this group does get called by people when they get questions.

I would suggest that when individuals are subpoenaed, whether it is by a board, a commission or a tribunal or by a court, in many cases I would suggest they contact their solicitor, if they have one, or make a telephone call. In many cases people will call legal aid or call some group to get information on this.

I don't think there's an education campaign per se planned, but certainly I'm also open to suggestions on notices and information, memorandums that we can put out there. I know the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, when there are changes, sometimes they also put out information to their members. These are individuals, in most cases, who are dealing with this on a day-to-day basis.

I certainly will take that under advisement. I'm welcome to having a chat offline to hear if there are other things we can do. I'm certainly open to hearing that, but I guess the best bet is if people do get subpoenaed – I guess being a lawyer, I always say contact a lawyer, but there are many options and avenues out there that are of no cost. PLIAN being one of them, legal aid – call them. If you don't get the right information, you can always contact the Department of Justice as well so that we can ensure that people get the right information, to steer them in the right direct direction of where they need to go, what their rights are, their concerns are. We don't want to see anybody left with questions without answers.

I appreciate the question and hopefully I've answered it somewhat sufficiently.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Seeing no further questions, is it the pleasure of the House that the Chair report Bill 5 carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Madam Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report Bill 5.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Speaker.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair of the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have asked me to report Bill 5 carried without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed her to report Bill 5, An Act To Amend The Interprovincial Subpoena Act, carried without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

Now?

MR. A. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted. Bill 5 ordered read third time on tomorrow.

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

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

I call from Orders of the Day, Motion 1, Address in Reply.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Baie Verte – Green Bay.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WARR: Good afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and humility that I rise today in this wonderful place entrenched with so much rich history of our Newfoundland and Labrador to give thanks and express my sincere gratitude to the wonderful people in the new District of Baie Verte – Green Bay – my district – for bestowing upon me the honour to represent them in this House of Assembly. From La Scie in the northeast, to Brighton in the south, we are fortunate to reside in an electorate that is vast and diverse and abounds with many of nature's gifts. There is a rich diversity of industry across the landscape.

I would be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I didn't take the opportunity at this time to thank former MHAs Kevin Pollard and Ray Hunter for providing representation for the District of Baie Verte – Springdale and of Grand Falls-Windsor – Green Bay South, now the new District of Baie Verte – Green Bay.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WARR: Mr. Speaker, one of the most striking features of my district is its natural beauty. There are 42 communities, of which 41 are directly situated on the salt water. It is only the small community of Sheppardville, near the turnoff to the scenic Baie Verte Peninsula, that

has no direct connection to the ocean. It is a humbling experience to have been elected to represent an area that I love and have lived in for most of life.

To the people of Baie Verte – Green Bay, my pledge to you is that I will represent you to the best of my ability. I commit to being a strong voice on issues that affect our lives, our families, our region and most importantly, our future. Together we will work through our challenges and opportunities. We will endeavour to earn your trust and your confidence in our new Liberal government.

Madam Speaker, we must all remember that we stand here in this place as common people holding our province's common hopes, our common future and commission to build a better Newfoundland and Labrador. We must all embrace the spirit of what it means to be proud Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Our story is one of determination and resilience, often against the odds. In realizing the economic and social potential of this province, we must believe in ourselves and plan together for a sustainable future.

Madam Speaker, I stand here today, a product of my family, of the heritage of my ancestors, but also of the community that raised me. My parents, Harold and Marg Warr, left St. John's in 1964 with three of their children to start a new life in Springdale. My father had been employed with Newfoundland Light and Power as an engineer but was offered a position with his family's business, George Warr Limited. My great-grandparents, George and Mary Ann, started the business in the tiny town of Pilley's Island in 1908, but relocated to Springdale in 1910 after the closure of the pyrite mine. They never looked back.

My great-grandfather took great pride as a carpenter and was a skilled boat builder who had a total of forty-two vessels of various sizes to his credit. He also built churches, and one still stands today in the small community of Fortune Harbour in MHA Dean's district. The Catholic Church there has stood the test of time.

My great-grandmother, along with her sons, worked the business and together built it to be one of the most successful businesses in the

district. My mother's family were deeply rooted in the railway. My grandfather, Jack Collins, was a well-respected engineer with the Newfoundland Railway Company.

After the move to Springdale, mom gave birth to my three youngest siblings but always travelled back to her home of St. John's to do so. She is very proud of her townie roots and also proud to say that six of her children were born at St. Clare's Mercy Hospital. So I guess, Madam Speaker, you can say I was born a townie but proudly raised a bayman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WARR: I grew up in a family that valued and encouraged community activism and volunteering. My parents nurtured in me and modelled for me compassion and empathy towards others, and a passion for truth and tenacity despite any circumstances.

My family also values education. My father left his home at age 15 and travelled to St. John's where he would remain in the United Church residence for his final two years of high school to obtain his chemistry and physics courses needed to pursue his post-secondary education in the engineering faculty.

My oldest brother John, a political science major, is the superintendent with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Sisters Jane and Jennifer both have business degrees. Sister Lisa has a bachelor of nursing and Rob has a diploma in correctional services, but finds himself today as the recreation director with the beautiful Town of Marystown.

Mr. Speaker, my post-secondary education started at Memorial and finished at the Atlantic Police Academy in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. I joined the RNC after graduation and remained with the force until 1987. While stationed in Corner Brook I was offered an opportunity by my father to return home to Springdale to the family business, and something that I had anticipated and always looked forward to.

I would spend the next 28 years managing the business as a fourth-generation operator. The business was a real education for me and I put

many hours of unpaid time into it. Madam Speaker, I thought nothing of it. It was my passion.

Madam Speaker, the highlight of my career in business came in 2008 when my great-grandparents were inducted into the Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame. I was honoured to accept on behalf of my family. It wasn't just receiving the award that was so special; it was the timing of the occasion. It was the 100th anniversary of a family-owned business that still operates successfully today in Springdale.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WARR: Madam Speaker, I believe today's small business, that I will describe as the quiet heroes of our provincial economy, is the engine room of that same economy. It is my belief that a strong, innovative, small-business sector is key to ensuring the health of this province.

Madam Speaker, the greatest wealth is health. No doubt the author of this was referring to the health of an individual. There is no doubt truth in the greatest wealth of a family is health, or of a community, or of a province. I would like to discuss the two variables mentioned herein: wealth and health.

We would all agree wealth symbolizes prosperity, autonomy and a good return on investment. In Newfoundland and Labrador, nearly 40 cents of every dollar spent is spent on our health care system. Are we getting value for money well spent? Why is it, Madam Speaker, that some health systems are getting so much more for their money than others? The Swiss spend \$9,000 per person on health care, yet other countries have similar health outcomes with a fraction of the cost.

In Newfoundland and Labrador we spend just over \$4,000 per person on health care. What factors have been shown to provide more health for less cost? First, having a strong primary health care system is one of the most important factors; easy access to a family physician and nurse practitioners and have all partners working collaboratively. Second, using technology to contain costs is important for highly efficient health care systems. Becoming technologically

connected and building information sharing systems is important for all stakeholders within health care.

Finally, having a system where health care outcomes are linked to enumeration has shown to provide more health for dollars spent. In the Baie Verte – Green Bay District we are working hard to strengthen our primary care system. Through innovative design we will have the first adopter of the TELUS Electronic Medical Record at Main Street Medical Clinic in Springdale. Innovative use of technology within primary care eases the flow of communication, holds physicians more accountable about documentation and improves patient outcomes through improved information sharing.

We continue to have valued relationships between private and public partners in health care. For example, Madam Speaker, the Town of Triton has a primary care clinic. The township assumes all administrative and staffing costs while fee-for-service physicians regularly visit from Springdale. The residents of Triton, Brighton and Pilley's Island benefit from having increased access to primary care within their own community.

We have so much work to do when we talk about health outcomes. Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest rate of obesity and diabetes in the country. Both these variables are linked with so much more disease. Mental health needs are increasing at an alarming rate. Madam Speaker, the greatest wealth is health.

During the campaign, like many other districts, health care in its many facets were highlighted as the most important issue for the people. An aging population, changing housing needs and an overdependence on hospital-based care all within a rural district is complicated.

As the MHA for the people of Baie Verte – Green Bay District, I will work hard to advocate for ways we can improve health and health care delivery. Madam Speaker, I want to express my commitment to the people of my district and, more importantly, those involved in the fishery. The community of La Scie on the northeast coast is home to one of the largest longlining fleets in the province, all who harvest their catch in Area 6. The shrimp fishery has been an

important source of revenue, not only for my district but for the province, and we need to ensure that we, as elected officials, continue to insist there be changes to the LIFO policy that reflect fairness and commitment to all involved in the fishery.

Madam Speaker, my district is home to only a handful of operating mines within the province. We have had a rich history in the mining sector dating back to the mid-1800s. Presently, both Rambler Metals and Mining and Anaconda Mining Inc. operate within the Baie Verte mining district, and Rambler owns the mill at Pine Cove, which is located in the Snook's Arm area.

I can't express enough the importance and the economic benefit these two companies continue to drive to my district each day. There are over 300 employees working with both companies, and although there has been a downturn in the mining sector, both are committed to the long term.

Madam Speaker, I would like to highlight the tourism potential of my district. As previously mentioned, most communities can be accessed by water, and we have in recent years experienced a great increase in boater traffic, and many have called on our area to support a new marina, which I am happy to report that it's a work in progress.

Last year was an amazing year for the small community of King's Point. There were several large icebergs in the bay, and two or three of these massive spectacles became grounded. What a spectacular sight. What an amazing source of revenue. This community hadn't seen this amount of traffic in years, and took advantage of every opportunity to make sure the traffic was diverted to other fabulous sights in the area, including Rattling Brook Falls, the Whale Pavilion, Alexander Murray trail and the famous King's Point Pottery.

Summer festivals are always special to attend throughout all of our own districts, and my district is no exception. We have the Caplin Cod Festival, Spree By The Sea, and of course The Gathering, hosted by Burlington's own Shaun Majumder. All communities participate with their own unique civic holiday, and this year

Coachman's Cove will have their Come Home Year.

I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to the Baie Verte – Green Bay Liberal Association for all their assistance, and to my amazing election team. Although we were small in numbers at times, we made up with determination and hard work. Thank you so much for your guidance, understanding and commitment to me and my dream.

Elections can be tough on candidates and even tougher on families. I'm blessed to have the enduring support and wise advice of my beautiful wife, Judy, and to my daughters, Kara and Amanda, you both remind me every day how proud I am to be your dad and how lucky we are to have you both.

Madam Speaker, I'm not the first in my immediate family to enjoy the confines and work in this House of Assembly. Both my daughters were fortunate to hold Page positions while attending Memorial. Kara in 2006-2007, and Amanda in 2010-2011. It was an experience they will never forget. I hope I can make them just as proud with the work that I'm doing here.

I also thank the officers and staff of the House of Assembly for their assistance in my transition here and whose commitment to their work is admirable. I look forward to working with all my colleagues and to make our province and our communities a better place to live.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MADAM SPEAKER (Dempster): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PETTEN: It's a great honour and privilege to stand here in this hon. House and deliver my maiden speech. I want to congratulate, first, all the members who were either re-elected or elected for the first time, such as myself. I look forward to much spirited debate for this term, for

the next number of years, but in a respectful debate obviously, Madam Speaker.

I want to personally thank the residents of CBS for giving me this privilege to be their representative in the House of Assembly. It's a great privilege and it's an honour. During the swearing in ceremonies, I sat up in the gallery many years before in my previous life and I thought I had it all figured out until I sat down here during the swearing in and I realized this is pretty intimidating.

The hon. Member, my friend alongside, for Cape St. Francis, the MHA, leaned into me and he said this is a special privilege. There are not a lot of people who get this opportunity. You should soak it in and enjoy it. As a matter of fact, when he said those words to me my nerves kind of settled. I figured I could get through this because it is a privilege. I think we all kind of sometimes take it for granted, especially once you get into several terms.

I worked with the previous Member, and it was after the fact, he's often said to me he didn't realize when he was so involved, being a minister and being an MHA, what a privilege it actually was. I just want to point that out. His comments are well founded and they're ones that I kept near and dear to me.

Madam Speaker, I'm one of four children. I grew up in Kelligrews, Conception Bay South. I've lived there all my life, actually. We never had a lot growing up, but I always found that we learned hard work was the key to any future success. It was something we were all taught at an early age and something I've used as a guiding principle throughout my life.

My commitment to the people of CBS when I went door to door was always – my commitment was I would be a hard worker. I never went around with a list of promises because I didn't believe in that. I always committed that I'd promise to do my best, be accessible and deal with all their issues in a very respectful manner. That's my commitment as a Member of the House of Assembly to do the same. I intend to do just that.

Madam Speaker, my dad, who passed away some 21 years ago, was a lover of politics. I'd

have to say it was almost to a fault. There are a lot of people who would say he was political to a fault. I guess we all know people like that. He had very strong beliefs, but he instilled a lot of values that I use to this day.

As a teenager, we didn't always agree. I like to use the term that when I was 15 I couldn't believe how stupid my father was, and when I turned 30 I couldn't believe how far he came in 15 years. So I guess we all live that mantra and I'm living proof of it now. We never always agreed, but I did respect – as I've gotten older I have respected a lot of what he taught me. I'm very grateful for what influence he had on my life.

My mom happened to be – she's a much softer personality out of the two of them. She's a very loving, caring person, someone who's always been a constant source of support for me and my child. To this day, I'm very grateful. I seek her advice on a daily basis, as a matter of fact, pretty well every night. I'm very proud of that.

Madam Speaker, we all come – where you come to your political beliefs. You're always a Tory, you're always a Liberal. I like to tell the story because it's worth telling. I had a balanced approach. My father was a Tory to a fault, as the former Member for CBS used to always say, Terry French. He was absolutely bang on. My mom happened to come from this diehard Liberal – and there's a crowd of them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PETTEN: There's a massive family of them. I was telling my colleague for Topsail – Paradise, our leader, yesterday about it. My mom's family, there's a massive crowd of them, and they're all Liberals. So much so you go –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible) family.

MR. PETTEN: Oh yes.

My grandparents would have the bust of Joey, the father of Confederation, on the mantelpiece. When we visited for family visits it was a very entertaining conversation when you brought my father up there on a Christmas visit. Let's just say there was a lot of interesting debate went on over the years.

I'd like to say I had a balanced approach. I have no regrets of the party I chose, but I just wanted to make that clear. I wasn't all one way. I've been around both sides all my life.

Madam Speaker, I'm married now for 21 years to my wife Rhonda who was originally from St. John's. I like to tell people – but they don't believe me – she came to CBS looking for me, but she wouldn't agree with that. We have two beautiful daughters, Morgan and Mackenzie. They have grown into two beautiful young women.

Madam Speaker, my family has always been a constant source of support. I like to say they keep me firmly grounded. They offer constructive criticism, but they also offer support when I need it. During this last election it was a very difficult election for me personally and for my family. My hon. colleague said it's never easy on families. I mean, this is tough.

I have to say the stuff they did for me, I never imagined they would do it. They really rolled their sleeves up and picked it up. I just have to say one big thank you to them for their love and support. I probably wouldn't be standing here today without them. Well, I wouldn't be here today without them. I personally have to thank them because, like I said, I wouldn't be the MHA for CBS.

I have a campaign team which I will speak about in a minute, but my family are very important to me. I just wanted to highlight that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PETTEN: One point I will say about my wife, she likes to always tell – I'm sure we all have spouses and they don't like politics. If one is right into it, they don't. She always makes the mention, I support whatever he does, but I'm not into politics.

If you watch the newscast every evening when the evening news comes on there is a decision being made, whether by the government and it's a political decision – she does have very pointed views. I question her sometimes about her political followings, but I respect everything she says, obviously. When I make decisions I take a

lot of what she says to heart and I also appreciate that.

Madam Speaker, Conception Bay South is nestled on the south side of Conception Bay. It's strategically located just minutes from St. John's. The town is a growing town with over 25,000 residents. It has a varied coastline which offers spectacular views of Kellys Island, Little Bell Island and Bell Island.

I would like to remind my colleague for Conception Bay East – Bell Island that I'm always looking over his shoulder. I can always look across the bay. It's quite a beautiful district, Madam Speaker. It's a popular choice for divers and sailors. The Foxtrap Marina is in our town, so is our Royal Newfoundland Yacht Club, which is very well known throughout the province. A lot of people, I am sure, are familiar with it.

CBS was incorporated in 1973. It's made up of nine communities. We have Topsail, Chamberlains, Manuels, Long Pond, Foxtrap, Upper Gullies, Lawrence Pond and Seal Cove. They were all individual communities at one time. In 1973, they formed what we now call Conception Bay South. If you live in CBS, we all identify with the individual community. We are a part of CBS obviously, but we still keep the namesakes for that reason. It's a beautiful community.

Madam Speaker, I recall as a young boy living in CBS that when you said a surname you knew where they lived. You could say the street, you knew the family. Obviously, that's changed a lot over the last number of years. It's still a rural divide of 70/30 probably, rural to urban. It's a lot more families from out in rural Newfoundland who want to be close to the city, but don't want to live in the city. It's 20 minutes away, so this is after changing the dynamics of our population. It has grown a lot to almost 27,000, I think, the last count. It is a nice community to raise your family. When you're only 20 minutes outside the city commuting to work, it is a beautiful area to live.

We have recent additions, of course. We have a new arena and the Manuels River Interpretation Centre. We also have advanced now to have an artificial turf field which is going to be a great

addition to the upcoming 2016 Summer Games being hosted by the Town of CBS. I look forward to that this summer. I am expecting it will be a showcase for the rest of the province when they come to visit. I'm looking forward to that event, obviously.

Being a Member of the House of Assembly wasn't something that was on my bucket list. The Minister of Transportation and Works, when he did his speech there a couple of weeks back, said it was a dream come true. I respect that. I know a lot of people that being in this House is probably something they had for a long time. As close as I was to politics, I guess I just never sat back and envisioned myself being here. I always liked being a backroom organizer.

The opportunity arose in 2014 upon the resignation of a former Member and a good friend of mine. I needed to make a decision and I was getting lots of pressure. People were asking me, and at first I never laughed, but I said, hang on. It took me a while. I had to process.

After working with the former Member and his father before him – it's a very up-close-and-personal perspective – I knew what the good and the bad pitfalls were with taking on this role. I wanted to make sure I was prepared mentally and ready to do it myself.

After several days of debate I had to make a decision. Family were leaving me alone. My wife was hoping I was going to stay a backroom organizer, but she supported whatever decision I chose. So I finally decided if I never ran for politics, it's something I'd regret. When I asked myself that question one day I said, you know what, I think I really would regret it. From that minute on the campaigning began.

My first run at it was in the by-election of November 2014 where I came oh so close, but I lost by 60-some-odd votes to the former MHA for the district. It was a fair contest. It was a clean race. It was heartbreaking, but you respect the will of the vote.

So after you get over that, it was kind of like you didn't have four years to wait, there was an election coming within a year. So the election was looming, I was faced again – oh no, within

months I have to make another decision, so I ran twice.

I

I had to decide. What do you do? Do you stay? Do you go? I learned a lot about myself and what it took to win. I made the decision months back that I was going to run. That kind of helped me being successful in the end because I mentally prepared.

As my colleague, our leader, the MHA for Topsail – Paradise said, I knew you were going to win because you lost. That was a good point because you are running on fear. You're preparing yourself because you don't want to have to go through that a second time. That's a great motivator. The same thing with team sport, you have to lose to learn how to win they say. I guess that's what motivated me.

I made a motto. I said we may lose, but we won't be outworked or out organized. That became my mantra for months and months and months. I had a great campaign team who I am going to speak of now. I speak about them often when we have conversations. I can't thank them enough. They were absolutely out of this world.

The effort they put in was extraordinary, especially when you consider I took sick during the election. I lost nine days. I was home in bed for nine days. My signs were up in the campaign, life was going on. I was, like, very good.

I got a call when I was in hospital. The campaign manager said I just became the candidate and the campaign manager, which was a pretty telling statement. They carried on like I was there. They just kept knocking on doors. They kept campaigning.

How can you thank people like that? They were volunteering to help me. They were just doing that out of supporting me. So I think any of us can say of our campaign teams they come and volunteer, but it's for you at the end of the day. That can't be understated.

I finished off the election. I wasn't feeling great, I have to be honest. The energy from this team really propelled me and the support too, like I said, from my wife and daughters who I owe a

great deal of gratitude due to them. Like I said, this team was phenomenal.

Madam Speaker, when I look back and realize, it was probably the most improbable victory election night, especially when you consider sickness, the climate and where we were in the polls. Everything was going against me. The saying, you were swimming upstream. We all said just stick to our plan. Keep our heads down until 8:00 p.m. November 30. It wasn't easy, but thankfully we were successful.

I have to say once more thank you to the people of the beautiful District of CBS for giving me this opportunity. I'm proud to call it home all my life. I want to also acknowledge once again the campaign team for unbelievable work and support and, of course, my family who I love dearly.

Madam Speaker, there's one story I'll finish off on my campaign team because I do think they deserve much more credit than probably I can even give them. It was two days before election day and my wife, who doesn't like politics, was knocking on the doors with me. She was taking sympathy on me. We had about 30 doors left to knock on, on this street. It was a cold, windy, rainy Friday night and I guess I was just starting to run out of gas. So I said I don't know if I can do this. I was exhausted. So we were going down and I started counting the doors – when I start counting doors on the street and you've knocked on as many doors as I've knocked on in the last two years, you're tired.

I didn't know anything and the next thing two vehicles haul up and out came eight campaign workers. My campaign manager had flicked the message that I don't think I can do it. They fanned out and within 15 minutes and completed the street.

I told that story election night because it is kind of uplifting. That tells you, though, the type of people that you had around you. They did carry me a long way. I just want to say one big thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PETTEN: Madam Speaker, a little on who I am, I've spent 20-plus years working as a

mental health counsellor which has been challenging but very rewarding. It really is who I am. It's my roots. I feel it has helped me develop as a person.

On this note, I do hope, as all of us here in this Chamber, that an All-Party Committee on Mental Health makes some necessary improvements to how mental health and mental issues are both viewed and dealt with. We can build all the new hospitals we want, but until we address the stigma and provide meaningful services to support those needing assistance, we are no further ahead. Mental health is something I have a real passion for and it's something I hope to have a positive impact on during my time here in this hon. House.

Madam Speaker, advocating for seniors and assisting in whatever way I can is also something I look forward to during my time and it's something that I enjoy as an MHA, helping seniors on their various issues. So again, that is another issue of importance to me.

Madam Speaker, my political involvement dates back to the '80s when I was runner, door knocker and whatever else they asked me to do. I had a real interest but I continued to be involved in municipal, provincial and federal politics for years to follow. In 1996 I got heavily involved with the former member, the late Bob French campaign, as an organizer. From this on, it just grew a deeper passion for politics, which continued on to Bob's son Terry, who succeeded him on his passing.

Bob French, for those who don't know him, was a larger than life figure. He had a great impact on me. He was like a second father, actually. As a larger than life figure, he was also very soft-hearted. I just want to, on record, acknowledge and make reference to him because he did have a huge impact on me and possibly why I'm stood here today. I just wanted to personally recognize Bob. He is looking down upon us today. I just wanted to say thank you.

As I said, his son Terry followed him. Terry had a very successful political career, I think we agree. I was a very active organizer with Terry for years. I became his executive assistant in 2009 until his retirement in 2014. During these years I learned a lot about how government

works, how to work through government and to get things done. It was a great training ground. These years were very enjoyable and I want to thank Terry for the opportunity and guidance over the years. We had a great run together. It has definitely helped me prepare to be an MHA and hopefully an effective Member in this hon. House.

I also need to mention my colleague for Conception Bay East – Bell Island who also gave me the opportunity to come to work with him in the last year in Transportation and Works. We, too, had a lot of enjoyable times. I will make one reference. He said to me after the election: I'm really happy you got elected but a part of me was thinking and hoping if you never got elected, whenever anyone makes reference to some decision I made I can always blame it on my executive assistant, but now I can't. I just want to say thank you very much to MHA Brazil.

Madam Speaker, as a wrap up, I want to say that I look forward to fulfilling my critic roles and I plan to ask meaningful questions and give constructive criticism and not criticize for the sake of criticizing.

In closing, I make the same promise I made at the doors. I'll do my best to be an effective MHA for Conception Bay South and I also hope to be an effective MHA in this hon. House.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PARSLEY: Before I start, I'm just going to make one comment: It's taken me a long while to get here. It was a lifelong dream.

I know me and the hon. Member across the way had a lot in common; I will discuss it with him later. One of them is one parent being Liberal, the other being PC and his keen interest in mental illness, which I do have.

It is indeed an honour to rise in this hon. House and deliver my maiden speech as the elected Member for the District of Harbour Main. I would like to take a moment to thank the voters from my district for trusting me with the responsibility of representing them in the House of Assembly. I would like to thank my family, my daughter Kim, my son Thomas and my grandson Brandon, also my sisters Jenny and Georgina. I would like to thank the hard-working volunteers that made my campaign a success. Madam Speaker, without their support, I would not be standing here.

Taking my seat in the Legislature of Newfoundland and Labrador represents the fulfilment of a long held dream of mine and the conclusion of a long journey in public life.

Madam Speaker, I was born in Avondale and spent most of my early years in Brigus Junction. I am the daughter of the late Sarah and George Buckle and one of their nine children. My father's work with the railway meant we were on the move a lot during my childhood and it allowed me the opportunity to see a lot of this beautiful province.

My parents instilled in my siblings and myself many values that we share to this day. They showed us the value of hard work and the commitment to what we believe in. They thought us to believe in our dreams and pursue our ambitions. Though I spent most of my early life in Avondale, I moved to St. John's to continue my education of the completion of my secretarial and travel and tourism program to work in the field of travel and tourism for over 20 years.

Madam Speaker, I moved back to Harbour Main with my late husband and daughter, following my daughter's graduation from the School of Social Work. Though our daughter was grown up, my husband and I felt we still had more love to give a child. Recognizing this, I got involved in the Chernobyl program which brought in children from the Soviet Union who were affected by the nuclear power disaster in the Ukraine. For six weeks we hosted a boy from the Soviet Union and provided him with clean air, fresh food and a broader global perspective. The cost of this program was \$10,000 a session. My husband, daughter and I raised the \$10,000

two years in a row. We got a lot of joy from providing an adventure and a loving family environment for a boy we took in.

In our mid-'40s, we adopted a young boy named Thomas. Two years later our family would be complete when my daughter adopted Tommy's little brother. We agreed we would raise the boys in our home, becoming parents of young children again after 25 years, which was a major adjustment for my husband and me.

There was a lot of laughter and a lot of tears, and though our family life was full of joy and excitement, there was still something missing in my life. I felt a call to serve from a very young age. My father instilled in me a keen interest in politics. I realized I could give back to the community if I put myself forward for public life. So in 2007, I ran for town council for the Town of Harbour Main–Chapels Cove–Lake View and was successful. I served as a councillor and later deputy mayor.

My husband also felt the call to serve in public life and served as mayor for the town. Unfortunately, he lost a three-year battle with stomach cancer. During his ordeal, he courageously continued to serve as mayor. After his passing on Mother's Day, 2014, I took over the role as mayor. His strength and courage was an inspiration to me as I assumed my new role and devoted countless hours to this. This was a difficult time because in addition to my husband's passing, my son struggled with mental illness and my grandson struggled with autism, but I had to focus and move ahead.

One of my fondest accomplishments while serving as mayor was to organize the Town of Harbour Main–Chapels Cove's 50th anniversary celebration. I also spearheaded an annual Canada Day celebration hosted by the town. I was honoured to take part in bringing the community together in a celebration of heritage and history. These were truly highlights of my term as mayor.

In July of 2014 I made a decision to run for a seat in the House of Assembly under the leadership of the man who would become our Premier. I committed to serve the people of Harbour Main as a member on the Premier's team of leaders.

I ran for the District of Harbour Main because I had a lifelong personal connection to the area of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is a large and diverse district with a rich history and vibrant communities. Just to name a few of the annual cultural offerings in Harbour Main, there's the Holyrood Squid Festival, the Cupid's Legacy Centre, the Brigus Blueberry Festival.

Madam Speaker, each town and community in my district has its own unique ways and values. Because I have spent most of my life in this district, including terms in public office, I'm very familiar with the issues my constituents face and the concerns they hold.

Madam Speaker, two weeks into the election I lost my sister, and let me tell you it was no easy task to bury her that afternoon and to put on (inaudible) and to move on, but I knew in my heart and soul I also then had two people who were working for me on the other side. It was unbelievable the things that happened.

While I was campaigning I spoke to hundreds of people about the issues that mattered to them. Based on their feedback, I hope to work with my colleagues on both sides of the House to find solutions to some of the issues my constituents raised with me. I will advocate for greater Internet coverage in certain areas, infrastructure issues like water, sewer and paving. I will advocate for increased access to purchasing Crown lands for the people of my district.

Madam Speaker, health care is another issue that was often spoken of during door to door. My district runs from Seal Cove to Upper Gullies into North River, which is over 10,000 constituents.

I believe in the Premier's vision for a stronger tomorrow. I share his values of openness and accountability, better management, long-term planning and strong leadership. I'm confident that under his leadership my constituents will be able to share in a stronger tomorrow.

Before closing, I would also like to share a small story. Most of you people here had to go to – when the districts changed; however, I didn't have any of that to do because I only decided six weeks prior to the nomination that I was going

to run. I was having a very difficult time. I had lost my husband; I had the boys to deal with.

I was asking my late husband – people might have thought I was crazy – what will I do? Send me some signs. The first sign wasn't very good. The second one was worse. But on a Friday morning in the pouring rain the most beautiful yellow butterfly came into my door with my dog and it was raining outside. I'm there jumping up and down by myself in the kitchen saying, that's it Ray, that's the answer I needed, I'm running. So I never looked back.

Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to rise and address this hon. House. It is truly a privilege to be here and a dream come true. I'm so grateful to be a part of this team.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HOLLOWAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's definitely an honour for me and a privilege to rise in this hon. House today to represent people of the District of Terra Nova. First, I wish to thank the residents of the district for putting their faith and their trust in me on November 30, 2015. I also wish to acknowledge my opponents, Mr. Sandy Collins and Mr. Bert Blundon. Both individuals worked hard and each of whom ran a great and respectful campaign.

Madam Speaker, on March 19, 1989, I began my career as a public servant. I spent more than 26 years working with children, families, municipal governments, health and education boards and various community-based organizations, always with a focus to help as many people as possible, and with the idea that rural Newfoundland and Labrador is a remarkable place to live. However, I always knew there was something more, a calling if you will.

On October 8, 2015, after having a great career serving the people of this province, I resigned as a public servant. I decided to seek the

nomination as the Liberal candidate for the new District of Terra Nova.

Madam Speaker, winning a nomination in a provincial election in less than seven weeks is not an easy task to accomplish. It comes with great determination, a lot of hard work, a focused plan of action and a large group of supporters who believe in you. I'm very thankful and proud of the election campaign we ran. I wish to acknowledge each person who assisted in making the election a success.

To my core campaign team, under the guidance of Ms. Phoebe White, I owe you all a debt of gratitude. Each of you worked tirelessly to knock on doors, return telephone calls, put up signs, help raise some funds and, most importantly, keep me focused. Together we ran a very well-organized and highly executed plan.

The Member for Conception Bay South talked about the impetus for him wanting to win. I can tell you the impetus for me was my wife, Heather. She certainly believes in me and believed in me at the time when I said I wanted to make my dream come true. She also reminded me that if I lost I was going north and going to work, and she was staying here in Newfoundland and Labrador. So the encouragement I needed was all from her.

To my mom and my mother-in-law, I owe you both a debt of gratitude. It was said during the campaign, as we were knocking on doors, if he has both his mom and his mother-in-law knocking on doors, he can't be too bad.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge a young fellow who came my way. His name is Mr. Dustin Fitzpatrick. Dustin came and offered to help out my campaign. He's a 24 year-old who has Newfoundland roots, but he soon became known to me as a very remarkable asset to my team. To Dustin I am forever grateful.

Madam Speaker, being the Member for the House of Assembly and representing the great people of Terra Nova District is truly an honour. Many people have asked me why I decided to run for political office. I have always worked hard for others and for the community. I am passionate about rural Newfoundland and Labrador and about this province. Whenever I

travel outside the province I am proud to say I live in Newfoundland and Labrador, an island in the North Atlantic that is rich in culture and heritage, and is as unique as its people.

Madam Speaker, I believe we have a bright future ahead of us. It will take some collective action to turn the challenges we face today into opportunities for tomorrow.

In thinking back to 1992, after working for three years with the former department of social services here in St. John's, I accepted the position as a child management specialist with the department of human resources and employment in Bonavista. I recall that as part of my orientation process I was asked to meet with the former coordinator at the Seniors Resource Centre here in the city. During that meeting, I was asked what I was going to do while working in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. Madam Speaker, I can tell you my response was succinct. I was going to make a difference.

In response this person said, you don't know how many people before you have sat in that chair and said those very same words. Well, Madam Speaker, as I reflect on my accomplishments thus far in my life, I feel I have made a difference in the lives of the people whom I have encountered, the children and their families, as well as the numerous community groups and organizations that are a huge part of rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

My experience, Madam Speaker, in community economic development is extensive. I have volunteered for many community organizations ranging from being a school board trustee, to helping youth find a second chance in life when they became involved with the law, to assisting children and their families who live each day with the diagnosis of autism. I have been involved in family resource centres, in community youth networks. I definitely enjoy public policy.

Each day I awaken and I ask myself: Who will you help today? Madam Speaker, this is my personal motto. It is also why I decided to seek the nomination as a Member of the House of Assembly for this great district.

Madam Speaker, my district is vast and diverse. It is comprised of 36 distinct communities which range in population between 200 and 6,000 residents, with the average being less than 500. Furthermore, 11 of these communities have municipal councils and the remaining have local service districts or are considered unincorporated areas. This is a major challenge in my district when it comes to regional representation, regional service delivery such as waste management, fire and emergency services and taxation.

The Terra Nova District has a deep history in forestry and in fishing. Communities such as my hometown of Port Blandford, or nearby communities like Charlottetown and Terra Nova were founded on the forest industry, and each has a close affiliation with the former Newfoundland Railway.

Today, the economy of the Terra Nova District has changed. With the onset of mega development projects at the Bull Arm fabrication site like the Hibernia project, White Rose and currently Hebron, as well as Long Harbour with the Vale Inco nickel processing facility, the employment opportunities that have been created have been enormous. As well, North Atlantic Refining Limited employs many of the residents in the district, especially communities that make up the Southwest Arm and Clarenville areas.

Within the district there are two service centres, one in Clarenville and one in Glovertown. It employs residents living in and outside the area. Clarenville is home to many provincial and federal government services. Between Monday and Friday each week the community comes alive with the hustle and bustle of residents travelling from communities like Arnold's Cove, Terrenceville, Bonavista, Charlottetown and all points in between to access services and amenities.

Glovertown, similarly, is a regional hub to the communities on the Eastport Peninsula. Later this year, Glovertown will begin the development of a new town centre that will provide a focus of economic development and collaboration in the community.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the provision of regional services and opportunities in oil and gas, tourism and culture is a thriving industry throughout the district. When I think about the Southwest Arm area, I think about the remarkable scenery and the people who possess great musical talent. During the election, I had the fortune of travelling extensively and listening to many, many talented singers like Marion Dean, Katie Kelly and Darren Sceviour.

The District of Terra Nova is also home to many summer and winter tourist attractions such as the White Hills ski resort, as well as the Terra Nova and Brookside golf resorts. There are campgrounds and RV parks at Thorburn Lake, Sandringham, Malady Head and Newman Sound. In fact, Mr. Speaker, tourists often remark about the tranquil nature of the area and how photographic the scenery is in many of our communities.

As I travel the Eastport Peninsula, I am once again reminded of what attracts visitors to this province. The remarkable scenery associated with sheltered bays and inlets is breathtaking. No wonder tourism is the main industry in this part of my district.

Since being elected, I have taken a proactive approach to being the representative for Terra Nova by meeting with municipal councils, actively reaching out to individual constituents and learning about the challenges facing this district. All of this has helped to educate me about the district and its people. All of this information will also help me in advocating for the right investments required for the district to make it sustainable. They have also taken steps to build a stronger relationship with our seven federal colleagues in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, eight days after being elected in November, I had the great opportunity of being invited by my friend and colleagues, MP July Foote, to come to Ottawa and meet our prime minister. I am encouraged by the possibilities that lie ahead for this province because of the great relationship we are building with Minister Foote and her federal counterparts.

Mr. Speaker, Hurricane Igor hit the province on September 21, 2010. Many rural parts of the Bonavista Peninsula, as well as Terra Nova

National Park, my home community of Port Blandford, and Random Island were devastated by the damage to homes, businesses and road infrastructure. Today, six years later, we are still dealing with the impact of this terrible storm. I get calls from municipal leaders and business owners who recant the story of how Hurricane Igor impacted them and how the infrastructure is still in need of repair.

Mr. Speaker, many communities in my district has been impacted by the boom and bust cycle of vigorous economic development. During the Hibernia construction days of the '90s, communities like Clarenville witnessed the influx of new residents to the area. New houses were constructed, leading to new subdivisions, and the growth of new businesses requiring new employees. Clarenville and many surrounding communities were benefiting from the boom of oil and gas. The surge of economic prosperity would change a community forever.

In 2012, came the development of the Hebron GBS platform at the Bull Arm fabrication site. The impacts this time, however, were noticeably different from previous projects. The pull of skilled and non-skilled labour had a negative impact on local small- and medium-sized businesses. Many retail stores reported an inability to retain employees and the basic salary and benefits were continuously rising.

On the surface, this may be seen by some as a very positive thing, but for those who are on fixed incomes like our seniors, our disabled and our retirees, the impacts of high rents and housing prices had forced many to live in less than ideal accommodations and to take money for food and heat and light to pay rent. Small businesses too had to reduce their operational hours because there was not enough staff for a second shift. Many people who are on fixed incomes have decided to leave the community.

These impacts, Mr. Speaker, had forced the focus on a need for recruiting and retaining new workers. Clarenville today is now a very diverse culture with new Canadians working in retail, fast food and health care. These impacts have also created the need to focus on sustainable and affordable housing options for certain populations in the area.

In 2009, the need for awareness and development of affordable housing was garnished through the support of community organizations like the Regional Action Committee on Housing. Moreover, in 2012, well-established provincial organizations like Habitat for Humanity also saw a need to provide affordable home ownership and set up a chapter in the community. The developments of such initiatives have helped ease the burden for finding affordable, stable housing in the area.

It is well documented, Mr. Speaker, that we have an aging population in the province. My district is not exempt from this demographic challenge. The average age in smaller communities is increasing and the population is declining. At one time families were large with eight, 10, 12 children. Today, with the high cost of living and the demand and opportunities for two-person family incomes there are fewer children.

Fewer children and both parents working means a need for fewer schools, the increased burden on fewer volunteers, thus increasing the challenges to the vibrancy we once experienced all throughout rural Newfoundland and Labrador. But we can turn the tide on these challenges, Mr. Speaker. We need to find ways to encourage greater community participation and greater volunteerism.

Mr. Speaker, winter tourism and recreation sports are on the rise in my district. White Hills ski resort in Clarendville and a newly renamed Corwin Mills Nordic Centre are real gems to the area, ones which have not realized their full potential. We need to work with the community and the district to identify new opportunities that will make this facility a year-round venue. In a similar fashion, recreation activities in the winter and summer help boost the local economy. Recreational hockey games and snowmobiling are also a huge focus for many outdoor enthusiasts in the entire district.

During the summer the Terra Nova District becomes a destination of choice for many visitors from the Avalon Peninsula, other parts of the province and throughout the Maritimes. Many people come to the area for boating, golfing and other outdoor activities. Just last week, I had a conversation with an ATV tour operator from New Brunswick who had already

booked 10 tours for this province, utilizing the Trans Canada Trail network.

Mr. Speaker, as a Member elect for the District of Terra Nova, I make one commitment to the people in my constituency. I promise to work hard on your behalf. In doing so, I will make every effort to understand the issues presented to me and to advocate for a positive resolution. I have always given 120 per cent to everything that I have done and will continue to work just as hard in my new role.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to this overarching commitment, I also feel that the District of Terra Nova can benefit from a shared vision that focuses on building future prosperity and sustainability. It is a vision that requires commitment to action and extensive collaboration by individuals and organizations in all communities. This vision will include a new model for the delivery of regional services; investing in aging infrastructure, like roads and bridges, and safe drinking water; changing our personal health status and how we each live our lives; improving access to healthy, affordable foods; and encouraging the development of more vibrant, active communities.

Mr. Speaker, during the next four years I look forward to working with my caucus colleagues and all Members in the House of Assembly as we build a stronger tomorrow for the people of the Terra Nova District and the province. I know we have many challenges ahead of us but I am confident we can find a path forward, a path that will require new ideas and new commitments from everyone. It is a future that looks different from the past but a future that builds on a strategic focus on the things that we are good at, and a future that makes us less reliant on oil and gas. It is a future that is focused on creating a diverse economy and strengthens the relationship between urban and rural. It is a future we can all be proud of.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Lane): The Speaker recognizes the hon. the Member for Virginia Waters – Pleasantville.

MR. B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I'd like to say congratulations to everyone on your recent election victories. It's the first time I've had the opportunity to say that.

It gives me great privilege to rise in this hon. House and deliver my maiden speech as the Member for the District of Virginia Waters – Pleasantville, or should I say the historic District of Virginia Waters – Pleasantville.

Over the last few weeks and months we've been debating and writing laws of the land. It is truly starting to sink in for me; the entire process we are engaged in is a true democracy in action. When I consider that I'm standing here as one of 40 individuals chosen by the voters to make decisions on behalf of Newfoundland and Labrador, when I consider that the decisions we are making during these legislative sessions will impact the province today and into the future, it is both gratifying and humbling. It's gratifying because my constituents considered me the best choice for the job and humbling because of the huge responsibility we are taking up here in this House.

I am deeply honoured to be here among so many admirable colleagues. As we carry out the important business of governing this province and as I begin my term of service, I offer this pledge to the hon. colleagues on both sides of the House: I will always carry out my duties in a respectful and courteous manner. I don't care what your politics are; in here we are all working for the betterment of our home province. I'm honoured to be among you.

I have to take a moment to thank the constituents of Virginia Waters – Pleasantville for entrusting me with this great responsibility. I met many of you in the weeks and months leading into the election. I stood on your doorsteps in the east end of St. John's and heard your concerns about your neighbourhood, your city, your province. I heard about your issues that are important to you and your families, your loved ones, your friends and neighbours and for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I promised that you can count on me to be a strong voice advocating on your behalf in this

very Legislature. I stand here in this House to reaffirm this commitment that I made to you as I begin my first term as an MHA. I will work tirelessly to retain your trust. As long as I'm in office, you'll find me accessible and willing to listen. I will never forget that it's my constituents that I'm accountable to in all things.

I also have to take this opportunity to thank the many volunteer campaign workers who made it possible for me to stand here today. Politics is a team sport, as many people around this House can attest to. Behind every elected official there is an unsung group of people out knocking on doors, making calls, collecting donations and hammering down election signs. I had an amazing team on my side. You folks have my lasting gratitude and sincere appreciation for your outstanding efforts.

My journey started well before the November election. I had the pleasure of leaving my job right out of university that I had, to go on tour with Premier Grimes at the time in 2003. I had to know if I liked politics or not. From that point, I've been volunteering with the Liberal Party as president of the Young Liberals, treasurer for St. John's East federal riding association, on the board for the Liberal district in Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi, as well as the past-president for Virginia Waters District. This is where I gained all the experience in campaigning and hopefully gave me an opportunity to stand here today.

I think it is fair to say that the District of Virginia Waters – Pleasantville is the most diverse of the 40 provincial districts. My constituents come from a wide range of social, economic, ethnic, religious backgrounds. This multicultural nature means my district has a vibrant sense of community, and I couldn't be happier to be a part of it. Diversity is truly something to be celebrated. Friends and neighbours from different walks of life are essential to the fuller appreciation of the human experience.

From an urban planning perspective, Virginia Waters – Pleasantville is a diverse area. It ranges from the former American military base in Pleasantville to King William Estates and the landfill at Robin Hood Bay. On Torbay Road and Logy Bay Road alone there are factories,

industrial facilities, media outlets, architectural firms, religious institutions and residential areas alike. Virginia Waters – Pleasantville is truly a cross-section of St. John's, and I feel honoured to be representing the people in this House of Assembly.

I would like to make specific mention today to a few issues regarding the district. These are issues that are important to my constituents, and I will champion in this hon. House.

For one, I will be following the construction of the new Virginia Park Elementary School slated to be built on Middleton Street very closely as the member for the district. The students of Virginia Park Elementary are currently served by an assortment of portable classrooms tacked on to an old school gymnasium. I firmly believe they deserve a state-of-the-art facility, and I'm encouraged that the new school is scheduled for the 2017 completion date.

Education is truly an investment in our future, and it will be a highlight of my first term in the House of Assembly to be part of the official opening for Virginia Park Elementary as a legacy to school-aged children in the district. Part of this process has revealed the need for environmental stewardship in the area. Due to the old military facilities and industrial sites around the district, I will be a strong advocate for the protection and preservation of our environment in the district. To me, the environment has to be finished first, since it is what is left after all of us are long gone. There is a way to pursue urban development in a responsible and sustainable manner, and I intend for all developments in Virginia Waters – Pleasantville to move in that direction.

Another issue I will pay particular attention to, as mentioned by previous colleagues, is the mental health and addictions support. Thankfully, our provincial government is acutely aware of the challenges Newfoundlanders and Labradorians face with respect to addictions and mental health issues. Our government and our Premier are committed to ensuring programs and services are in place for those who need them the most.

I, along with my colleagues, recognize the access to timely and appropriate care is vital in

the treatment for mental health and addictions. I will work with my colleagues to implement a comprehensive mental health addictions strategy. Part of this strategy will be the continuation of the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. Part of it will be working with the community partners and schools to ensure coordinated and seamless approaches to mental health and addictions.

Mr. Speaker, one in five Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will live with mental health, a mental illness, in any given year. I'm strongly encouraged that the government I serve in considers mental health and addictions issues a priority.

I am sometimes asked what prompted my decision to enter politics. I've always seen politics as an extension of who I am. Like many who have been drawn to public service, I've always found I'm most myself when I'm serving in the community. Before running provincially, I had the distinct pleasure of serving as the councillor for Ward 4 in the City of St. John's. My time in the council chambers has given me first-hand knowledge and insight into the importance of municipal government in delivering vital services. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians rely on their municipal governments for dozens of services that enable them to go about their daily business.

When I was campaigning to represent Virginia Waters – Pleasantville in the House of Assembly, one of the things I told voters was that I was going to work hard for a stronger relationship between the City of St. John's and the provincial government. I see myself, along with my esteemed colleagues, who have made the transition from municipal politics as an essential link between municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador and the provincial government. I know the government that we have an honour to serve in recognizes the importance of municipalities and the importance of strong intergovernmental relationships. It will be my privilege to play a role in strengthening these relationships.

It is fitting that I stand here giving my maiden speech in Volunteer Week because I learned many of my skills through that very same sector. I learned how to build bridges and develop long-

term relationships between different groups of people when I worked as executive director for the CLB for 13 years. The CLB's mandate is to empower youth to become future leaders by providing them with educational, recreational and social opportunities.

I grew up in the inner city area of St. John's where there was a lot of opportunity to get yourself into a little bit of trouble. Some of my peers fell off the track, some coming from very similar backgrounds and opportunity levels. I found an organization called the CLB, and thrived. This was an unforgettable lesson to me in the value of the community sector.

I firmly believe that every one of us has the capacity within ourselves to display excellence, even when we might lose our way from time to time. Those of my friends and neighbours who fell off the track could just as well have gone on to be model citizens, if they had a little bit of an easier upbringing. On the other hand, the CLB provided essential opportunity for any inner city and disadvantaged youth to bring out the good in themselves.

The CLB, and organizations like it, serves an essential bridge between government services – like the school system – and the home lives of these youth. I was truly privileged to serve the community as the CLB's executive director, and I'm tremendously proud I played a small part in improving the lives of the young people in our community.

I am forever thankful to the CLB, not only for allowing me to develop my leadership skills and engagement with the community but also for giving me the greatest gift I've ever received: the opportunity to meet my incredible wife, Sebrina, some 19 years ago. I'm her biggest supporter and she's my biggest supporter, but she also has this uncanny ability to keep me grounded – like many of my colleagues have said before – and balanced.

My lifelong commitment to community services came largely as an inspiration from the example set by my own parents. We grew up in co-op housing in Rabbittown. My mom grew up in foster care and had a positive experience being raised by a family who took her in and raised her like she was their own. When she was grown up

and had a family of her own, she decided to give back in the same way that the family had done for her. She left the workforce and devoted herself as a full-time foster parent.

My father was a very quiet man from Norris Arm who instilled a sense of patience, understanding and hard work in me. He was diagnosed with diabetes at the age of 12 and had an assortment of health issues related to this disease. He lost his battle to cancer at the age of 62. I gained significant interest in our health care system through navigating the system with my father. Making improvements to the health care in our province is of paramount importance and will make the biggest difference to our aging population.

My parents were very enthusiastic in being foster parents. I had dozens and dozens of foster brothers and sister when I was growing up. This is a very large and unconventional family; I wouldn't have wanted it any other way. The unconventional upbringing instilled in me a high tolerance for change. We coped with the changing circumstances through patience, kindness and a sense of community. The way we pulled together as a family to support each other and overcome challenges has served as the underlining inspiration for my life ever since.

It's just as relevant now today as I embark on my first term in the provincial Legislature. I truly believe that we are all in this together. All of us Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are members of what amounts to a very large family. We share hopes and heartbreaks. We have mutual goals and fears. We're a family. What does a family do when it's faced with hard times? It sticks together. Its members band together to support each other through these challenges. To me, this is the way forward for Newfoundland and Labrador.

We're all very well aware of the challenges we face. We have an increasing debt and an aging population, a resource-based economy which has been shaken by the unstable commodity prices. There are tough times in store for us and I don't think any of us has any illusions about that. But if we stick together like families do through the tough times, then we'll get through it.

Newfoundland and Labrador has faced steep challenges before and has succeeded. We will succeed again in the current challenges in the same way: by supporting each other and pulling together.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to rise and address this hon. House for the first time as the Member for the District of Virginia Waters – Pleasantville.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Speaker recognizes the hon. the Member for Placentia West – Bellevue.

MR. BROWNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today with a sense of honour, distinction and responsibility. On November 30 the people of Newfoundland and Labrador made a choice, and I thank the people of Placentia West – Bellevue for choosing me as their representative.

As their Member in this House of Assembly, the people's House doing the people's work, I pledge to work hard, to work long and represent my constituents at every turn. As a Member of a newly elected government, I accept the tremendous responsibility we have been given collectively by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. As part of a team led by our Premier, I pledge to continue being part of decisions in deliverance of good government, sound public policy and the most open and transparent framework of government in this province to date.

To each of my colleagues who were also elected for the first time in last year's election, let me say congratulations to each of you. The citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador have elected us to join the ranks of an institution that sits at the heart of our democratic governance. Many a debate has been had in this Chamber and many more will follow. As newcomers, the class of 2015, it's up to us now to breathe new life, new ideas and new energy into this institution and its functions, and I know we are up to that task.

Mr. Speaker, as those in my district would know, and indeed, many colleagues in this

House would know, my interest in politics and passion for public service is not new. But I would be lying if I said that when I first began work as a constituency assistant to my Member of Parliament in 2009, that I would have envisioned myself delivering my maiden address as an MHA in the spring session of 2016. I think it's fair to say that timeline got accelerated.

It was in those early days, Mr. Speaker, alongside my friend, the Member for Burin – Grand Bank, that I discovered the most rewarding aspect of politics. For all of the speeches, rallies and campaign stops, I find no greater satisfaction than in solving an issue for a constituent. Perhaps it's helping a fish plant worker access their EI or assisting a senior in getting the supports they need to continue living in their home, or a young person seeking to return to school. It is these small victories – which to our constituents are big victories – that make this job worthwhile every day.

It goes without saying that I wholly and truly thank my friend and mentor, my Member of Parliament, the hon. Judy Foote, for giving me my first exposure to professional politics. Though I was raised in a house where politics and current affairs were regularly discussed and debated, my work with her taught me to never forget who hired you and to always fight to the bitter end for your constituents.

I also say thank you to my family: my parents, Jack and Theresa; and my sister, Jacqueline, who is in China teaching. I come from Placentia Bay fishing families, but both of my parents were teachers who encouraged my sister and me to give back to our community and engage in public service. I think it's also fair to say they probably intended for that public service to be volunteering rather than running in politics, but they've been nothing but supportive to me in my campaign for two nominations and during the election, all of which combined to span some 20 months.

During this time I knocked on every door, many twice. Daily I encountered the generosity and kindness for which Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are renowned. Had I accepted every offer at the door to come in for a drink or for a cup of tea and a slice of bread, I would have either been perpetually inebriated or

forever laden down by all the toast and tea. People were always understanding, despite their temptations, that I couldn't stay and asked me to drop in any time after the election – and I will aim to do just that for that slice of toast and tea in the next four years.

The fact that we knock on people's doors and ask for their support and then see them come through for you on election day is a remarkable exercise of our democracy, and I thank people for participating in it.

The team around me were second to none. Led by one of my predecessors, former MHA Mary Hodder, our team extended from one end of the district to another – knocking on doors, doing phone calls, organizing the rallies, assembling and putting up over 1,300 signs. I thank Mary and all of my supporters for the late nights and diehard commitment each of them brought forward to my team. It would have been impossible to do this and to stand here without your help.

I also wish to thank my two immediate predecessors, the MHA for Bellevue and the MHA for Burin – Placentia West, Mr. Calvin Peach and Mr. Clyde Jackman. Political life comes with its sacrifices, and I thank both of them for their service and wish them the very best in their retirement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BROWNE: Placentia West – Bellevue, Mr. Speaker, though new in configuration, is steeped in history, unrivaled landscapes, major industry, and a people with a genuine and sincere kindness. Spanning some 4,600 square kilometres, taking in communities of Placentia, Fortune and Trinity Bays, it has a long and storied history. From Sunnyside, where in 1602 John Guy met the Beothuk, and in honour of their good relations he renamed it to Truce Sound – to Southeast Bight where the first settlers arrived in 1835, or to Chapel Arm where the wood trade would attract its first newcomers in 1765. With some 45 communities of this district, each possesses their own sense of identity and history, trickles of ingenuity and pockets of creativity.

Mr. Speaker, many of our ancestors came to this great land in pursuit of a more prosperous future for their families. I am proud to say that my district, in many ways, has offered itself as the industrial heartland of the Island of Newfoundland.

On the Burin Peninsula it wouldn't be long after the first English speaking settler arrived in Mortier Bay in 1800 that Marystown began its long and successful trade of shipbuilding. Among the first vessels built in Marystown was 30 ton fishing schooners in the 1840s. During World War II, the Commission of Government ordered that minesweepers be built in Marystown to serve in the British Fleet. In fact, Mortier Bay played a strategic role during the war as it was the site selected for evacuation of the Royal Family and regrouping of the British Navy in the event of a German invasion of Britain.

It would be these same conditions, the fact that Mortier Bay was sheltered, protected and one of the largest, deepest, ice-free, year-round ports on the eastern seaboard that would produce ideal conditions for a thriving shipbuilding industry for decades. Even in modern times, Marystown and its workforce have greatly contributed to the oil and gas industry and continue to this day with an able and skilled workforce.

In Come By Chance, the North Atlantic Refinery serves as another major industrial employer. Built in the early 1970s, it today employs over 600 people refining over 115,000 barrels of oil a day. The location of the Come By Chance Refinery gives it prime access to petroleum markets in the United States and Europe while also maintaining close proximity to crude suppliers in Russia and the Middle East. Adjacent to the refinery sits the Whiffen Head transshipment terminal. Construction was completed in 1998 and was specifically designed to handle crude oil production in the oil fields of the Grand Banks.

In Trinity Bay, Bull Arm has morphed into Atlantic Canada's largest industrial fabrication site. It has the comprehensive infrastructure to enable fabrication and assembly of megaprojects such as the Hibernia GBS, the topside modules, Voisey's Bay ship loader, oil rig refits, and of course at present the construction of the Hebron

GBS. The calm waters of Bull Arm make it an ideal location for this type of work which currently employs over 2,500 people. In Long Harbour, the nickel processing plant is currently under construction. Once completed, it will employ over 500 people.

While there is an adherent ebb and flow in employment levels during the construction phase of megaprojects, Mr. Speaker, we must work towards maintaining more stable levels of employment. The Marystown Shipyard facility and the Bull Arm fabrication site can both serve as areas of expansion as we further diversify our economy. Even beyond servicing the oil and gas sectors, both areas have a proven and skilled workforce with the institutional knowledge to carry forward young apprentices and to the benefit of future projects. I will work with the site owners of both facilities, organized labour, our federal partners and community leaders to maintain and continue the level of prosperity beyond the current projects.

Mr. Speaker, I chose to first highlight these major industries in my district to show Members of this House that the area which I represent serves as a major hub of employment. In fact, as I mentioned, I liken it to be the industrial heartland of the Island portion of Newfoundland. I assure residents of my district, I will engage all levers of our government to assist and facilitate employment moving forward. I am confident that my district – encompassing parts of the Burin and Avalon Peninsula – can play a crucial and significant role in leading an economic resurgence.

Mr. Speaker, to highlight these major industries and omit mention of other examples of thriving success would be a disservice to my district. As mentioned, we have parts of Placentia, Fortune and Trinity Bay where the fishery plays a significant role in our local economy. Without a strong fishery, a rejuvenated fishery, rural Newfoundland and Labrador will not flourish to its greatest potential. From the thriving fishing enterprises in Southern Harbour, to the bustling lobster fishers of English Harbour East, to the members of our shrimp fishery in Norman's Cove-Long Cove, our district is also home to the province's only cod processing plant, as well as the province's largest lobster company, both of which are based in Arnold's Cove.

It is time for the fishery to be given a renewed focus, as it can play a crucial role in the future of our rural economic development and as a sustainable source of generating wealth with exponential opportunities for expansion, if managed properly. This will take bold leadership and strong advocacy to Ottawa, in concert with our federal Members of Parliament and our provincial minister and Premier. We will be tough and we will be strong, but we will work with our federal partners to enhance the standing of our fishery.

Both of my grandfathers fished in Placentia Bay during hard time of the 1940s, '50s and '60s. Both raised large families: 13 children on my mother's side and six on my father's. The fishery, Mr. Speaker, is why we came here. It's why we settled. It's what has sustained us. It is the reason why I am standing here on the floor of the House of Assembly today. I assure the people who voted for me I will take every opportunity to fight for a fishery that is equitable to all sectors and to sustain a way of life in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

Tourism also plays an important role economically in my district. The pristine and magnetic beauty of colourful Swift Current, to the towering mountains of Terrenceville, to the glacier-scored landscapes of the Burin Peninsula, from the rugged cliffs of Chance Cove to the peace and isolation of communities like South East Bight, Petite Forte, Little Harbour East, Thornlea, Fair Haven, the District of Placentia West – Bellevue has something for everyone.

We are uniquely positioned given our proximity to St. John's and the rest of the Avalon, but we are also the gateway to the Clarenville and Bonavista Peninsula areas as well as Central Newfoundland. The Burin Peninsula also has an advantage like nowhere else in North America, and that is the fact you can see a foreign country from our shore. Yearly, thousands of tourists from all over the world flock to explore Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, and I am fortunate to have many of them travel through my district, as well as the District of Burin – Grand Bank. I believe there is significant opportunity to grow and expand upon our tourism.

I've highlighted many economic opportunities for growth, Mr. Speaker, but with economic progress sometimes social issues accompany it. I will do my part in our government to address these issues. Whether it's creating affordable housing alternatives, legislating ways to curb illegal substance abuse, addressing means of improving mental health services, or advocating for ways to lesson impaired driving, I will work on all of these issues as well. I support using education as a means to lift people into the light, to enable them to pursue opportunities that would otherwise elude them.

Seniors also deserve our most special attention, as these are the people who have built our society, the people who raised us, the people who came before us. They not only deserve our attention, but they require it. We must act collectively to ensure our senior citizens have the ability to age at home in their communities with their families for as long as possible. I am very passionate about helping our seniors and those in society who are most vulnerable, including children and the poor. We must all strive to make sure nobody is left behind.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, let me reiterate how honoured I am in having been selected by the voters of my district to be their representative. Many times since being elected, I have been reminded that it is good for young people to be involved in politics. When I recently spoke to the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Parliament, of which I was a part for many years, I reminded them we do need more young people in politics, and I challenge them to break my record in hopes one of them can also become the youngest ever elected.

Fortunate for me, I had a leader, and now a Premier, who believed in the power of a team comprised of diverse backgrounds and skills, a team of people who come from all walks of life to come here to be effective contributors to the legislative process. So yes, we need to break even more barriers for young people, but it doesn't stop there, Mr. Speaker. We also need more women, more indigenous people, people of visible minorities and people of all varied backgrounds to come to this chamber.

So yes, Mr. Speaker, I will be a champion for young people, but it doesn't end there. I will be

a champion for the young, for the old, for the rural, for the urban, the disabled, the disadvantaged, the people who need our help most. Because when all of us are doing well, when all of us are looked after, when society has a place for us all, Newfoundland and Labrador is strong.

As referenced in our Throne Speech and as we see here every day, 2016 marks the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel. It is not lost on me, Mr. Speaker, that most of those men who were massacred in that battle were roughly my age at the time. Each of us, as Members of this House, have an obligation to carry forward their legacy and their commitment to service which they so valiantly displayed to protect our future.

We are each bound by a common purpose. Liberal, Conservative and New Democratic, we each come here, Mr. Speaker, with an ambition, an ideal in our heart for a more prosperous and secure future for the people who we represent, economically and socially.

I thank the voters in my district for their vote of confidence in me. And yes, there are challenges that lie ahead, but I am excited to a part of a team led by our Premier that pledges to do our part to yield the full promise of our potential. Working together, Mr. Speaker, I am convinced the best is still yet to come.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Osborne): The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I would now move, seconded by the Member for Baie Verte – Green Bay, that the House do now adjourn.

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

The House is in recess until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

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