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Speaker: Honourable Tom Osborne, MHA

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The House met at 2 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Osborne): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

I would like to welcome to the public galleries today the Presentation Sisters, who are subject of a Member's statement. They are: Sister Roisin Gannon, Leadership Team; Sister Bernadette Doherty, Leadership Team; Sister Sharon Fagan, former provincial leader; Sister Marie Furey; Sister Angela McGrath; Sister Kieran Seaward; and Sister Patricia Whittle.

Welcome to our gallery.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today for Members' statements we have the Member for the District of St. John's Centre; the District of Baie Verte – Green Bay; the District of Lewisporte – Twillingate; the District of Fogo Island – Cape Freels; the District of Conception Bay East – Bell Island; and the District of Placentia West – Bellevue.

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

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

For 160 years, over 200 Sisters of Presentation have based their lives and their community work in and around St. Patrick's Convent. This November, the Sisters moved to the main convent near the Basilica and gifted St. Patrick's to the City of St. John's to be transformed into affordable housing for seniors.

Today, I stand in absolute awe of these courageous and passionate women who are working strategically and from every conceivable angle to address the need for affordable housing in our province. St. Patrick's Convent is valued at \$1.5 million and will be converted into 22 affordable housing units.

This no ordinary gift. The Sisters are leading by example, demonstrating tremendous, critical leadership. Through their work with the

Gathering Place, they see first-hand that more and more of our community members are having difficulty finding safe and affordable places to live.

The solutions the Presentation Sisters offer in our community have always been direct and deeply personal. They have chosen to address the shortage in affordable housing by literally opening up their own homes and, in so doing, they continue to serve our community with enduring, unparalleled and visionary levels of care and compassion.

Thank you, Sisters of Presentation.

I invite all our Members to thank, on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Presentation Sisters.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Now, beat that!

MR. WARR: Not to be done, Mr. Speaker, not to be done today.

I rise today to pay tribute to a great citizen and volunteer of Springdale. He is also an outstanding musician and entertainer. I'm referring to Jerome Byrne who, for the last 50 years, has been playing music all over the province and for the last 18, has been volunteering at two different retirement homes in my area by bringing music to the residents.

Jerome is an outstanding talent and a true community leader. Despite his love for the sea, he was a fisherman until the cod moratorium, Jerome stayed committed to his music and he wasn't shy about sharing it with anyone who wanted to listen.

He started playing when he was too young to be in a tavern. He tells one story of playing in a backroom outside the tavern and using a small amplifier so people in the establishment could hear his music. Jerome Byrne has played with hundreds of local Newfoundland and Labrador musicians over the years and he has played at countless festivals and events. He has been

recognized by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for his contribution to music and to his community.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Jerome Byrne for his many contributions to our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Lewisporte – Twillingate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. D. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, on November 19, I had the privilege of attending the Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner in Summerford.

The event recognized the valuable contributions made by volunteers. Like so many other communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, the Town of Summerford is blessed with a strong volunteer base. Volunteers give freely of their time and talents. As a token of appreciation, the Town of Summerford hosted a meal followed by an evening of entertainment by Mr. Glenn Tetford.

Fire Chief Terry Hann presented the following awards to deserving fire fighters: Perry Small was awarded for attending the most fire emergency calls. Andy Gates received two awards, best overall attendance and most training sessions, while Vannetta Watkins received Firefighter of the Year. Mr. Chesley Jenkins was recognized for his duty over and above a firefighter through assisting the Firettes with their many functions.

Mayor Kevin Barnes also presented community awards to Wayne Small and Calvin Wheeler for outstanding volunteer service. Holly Gates received the prestigious award Volunteer of the Year.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating the award winners and thanking all volunteers throughout our province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Fogo Island – Cape Freels.

MR. BRAGG: You should have dared me, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House to recognize Calen's Run, a great new initiative in my district.

On October 29, a charitable run was held at William Mercer Academy in Dover to raise funds for Calen Collins, a grade three student at that school. He has a rare degenerative neurological condition called Batten disease. It causes blindness, hearing loss, seizures and eventually death in those who suffer from it.

The event was called Calen's Zombie Run, and it invited participants, including myself, to dress up as zombies. It was quite the sight to see over 100 zombies running down the road through Hare Bay and Dover. Money raised from this event will help Calen's parents cover travel costs in getting him to the hospital and to raise public awareness on Batten disease.

The community rallied in support around Calen's family during this difficult time. The race raised over \$3,000 and attracted competitive and amateur runners from all age categories. Organizers were pleased with its success and plan to host an annual run for Calen.

I ask all Members to help me to recognize the organizers of Calen's Zombie Run, especially Tom Collins and Russell Stockley for their volunteer efforts.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I stand today to inform the Members of this House and residents of our province of an historic event that will take place

on September 16, 2017. I speak of the 75th anniversary Commemoration Ceremony of the U-boat attacks off the shores of Bell Island which saw the loss of 69 sailors.

This event, which is hosted by the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 18, Bell Island and coordinated by Bell Island resident retired Major Marjorie Coakwell will take place at Lance Cove Beach on Bell Island.

The ceremony will honour the victims of the U-boat attacks for their service and sacrifice; recognize the actions of the residents of Lance Cove who came to the aid of the mariners immediately following the attacks, will highlight the service of the Merchant marines, will pay tribute to the contributions made by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, as well as the Royal Canadian Navy, Army and Air Force personnel during the Second World War and specifically during the Battle of the Atlantic.

Dignitaries already confirmed for this event include: present and former Lieutenant Governor, federal ministers and others.

I ask Members to join me in congratulating and thanking the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 18 and Major Coakwell for hosting such an event.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Placentia West – Bellevue.

MR. BROWNE: Mr. Speaker, the Seniors of Distinction Awards highlight outstanding achievement and effort by seniors in our province. I stand today to recognize a dedicated and longstanding community member of Marystown, Mr. Russ Murphy.

Mr. Murphy has worked in the broadcasting industry for over 50 years, serving as station manager at CHCM in Marystown for decades. In addition to this, he has been an ardent supporter and organizer in promoting the region through initiatives such as Communities in Bloom, Tidy Towns and the Heritage Run Tourism Association.

When Marystown hosted the Newfoundland and Labrador Summer Games in 1980 and again in 2000, Russ was on the planning committee. For his contribution to the sport community in the region, he was inducted into the Burin Peninsula Soccer Hall of Fame in 2008.

This year, he was awarded the Seniors of Distinction Award. His distinction and contribution to the community speaks for itself and no one was surprised to see him achieve this award.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join with me in thanking and congratulating Russ Murphy – the voice of radio that many have woken up to on the Burin Peninsula for 50 years – on receiving this prestigious award.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TRIMPER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate the Town of Paradise on the Paradise Double Ice Complex achieving Silver certification in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, otherwise known as LEED.

Recognized in over 160 countries, LEED provides independent, third-party verification that a building has been built to high-performing standards for sustainability. I was very pleased to attend a celebration of the complex achieving LEED Silver certification earlier this month with the proud mayor and council of the Town of Paradise, staff and residents.

Mr. Speaker, to date, 15 projects have achieved some level of LEED certification in the province, eight of which have achieved LEED Silver. This is, however, the first arena and sports facility to achieve this status in Newfoundland and Labrador. LEED buildings are designed to be better places to live and work.

They also save water, energy, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve indoor air quality and, of course, conserve resources.

Mr. Speaker, the Paradise Complex has already seen a 58 per cent savings in the cost of total energy, and over 36 per cent reduction in indoor water use. This means that the complex uses substantially less energy than equivalent buildings of the same size that were not constructed to LEED guidelines.

Congratulations once again to the Town of Paradise on your accomplishment. Attaining LEED Silver is a significant achievement and the town's leadership in this important area has made the Paradise Double Ice Complex a dynamic and sustainable fixture in the community.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Mr. Speaker, along with all Members of the Official Opposition, I would like to congratulate the Town of Paradise on achieving a Silver certification in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for the Paradise Double Ice Complex. I would also like to mention this is a very special accomplishment for the Town of Paradise, as it is the first arena or sports facility to achieve this status in our province. We should all be very proud of their accomplishment.

As we celebrate Paradise's achievement today, I would also like to mention that this is another great investment by the former administration, which the current Liberal government are celebrating once again. My colleague for Topsail – Paradise had the pleasure of turning the sod and he's a very proud Member today too.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. This is great news for the people of Paradise and congratulations to the mayor and councillors for actually taking the lead on LEED.

I ask government: What is their plan for the many communities in this province who will not be able to continue to run their facilities when they get hit with skyrocketing Muskrat Falls power rates? What provisions will government make for these smaller, less affluent communities and make their facilities more energy efficient? What about people's homes across the province, what is government willing to do to take the lead on this, Mr. Speaker?

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

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, what a pleasure it is to rise in my place to congratulate Memorial University of Newfoundland's Enactus Team on winning the 2016 Enactus World Cup in September.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BYRNE: After competing against more than 1,700 teams, Memorial won this year's competition with Project Suc-Seed. This initiative, created in partnership with Memorial's Faculty of Engineering, provides year-round locally grown produce through a hydroponic system comprising of recycled materials in places like coastal Labrador. They also engaged at-risk youth through Choices for Youth to manufacture the hydroponic units, Mr. Speaker.

Enactus is an international non-profit organization focused on student entrepreneurial action to help create a better world through community development projects. The organization provides students with an invaluable opportunity to impact their communities using innovative ideas, creativity, partnership and hard work to deliver sustainable change.

Mr. Speaker, Memorial University's Enactus Team was established in 1992, and focuses on projects that create economic impact to improve the standard of living and quality of life for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and people around the world. They have won the World Cup twice and have nine national titles to their credit.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Enactus Memorial on yet another outstanding achievement and thank you for the continuous dedication to helping make our province and the world a better place. Students have proven it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. Memorial University's Enactus Team continues to thrive on the national world stage. As the minister pointed out, this is not our team's first taste of success. This is their second world championship and nine national titles. A fantastic feat, especially when they are competing against the best of the best.

What's even more impressive than their titles are the group's overall purpose. They are focused on student entrepreneurial growth that leads to valuable community development. This has a significant potential impact in so many ways and cannot be overstated.

You make us all very proud and we wish you all the best with your particular projects, but more so with all your future endeavours. We can be certain that your futures are indeed very bright.

Thank you much, and congratulations.

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, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. Yes, congratulations to

Memorial's Enactus Team for winning the World Cup with this innovative and collaborative project, and congratulations also to the Enactus Memorial program for fostering social enterprise and community development.

Now it's up to the government to show us its plan for making sure the Suc-Seed project is sustainable in the long run so remote communities on the Labrador Coast and elsewhere can have access to locally grown produce year-round.

Let us make this now a way of life, not just a project.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

The Premier has buried the hatchet with Quebec and is not interested in putting conditions on the discussions.

I ask the Premier: Will you commit today that redress on the Upper Churchill must be addressed before any further discussions can take place?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Before you could get to any conditions about any potential agreement that you would ever see with any province, what I mentioned yesterday, for me, the most important thing is that we be able to continue to strengthen relationships with all provinces. We've been doing that with our Atlantic colleagues already, with the Atlantic

Growth Strategy. We've been able to do that with our federal government. The Province of Quebec is the only province that we share a land border with. So there are many areas that we share common concerns, areas where we can provide similar services and partnerships.

Mr. Speaker, so what you've seen in the last few weeks really – obviously it seems to me the former premier doesn't like the fact that you can actually build a relationship with another province, in particular, if it's the delivery of health care or transportation and so on.

So to put conditions on any potential discussion that could occur is way too premature to have that discussion. First and foremost, it's important to get to any table. We're not there yet.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I ask the Premier: Before you continue your discussions, will you secure a commitment from Quebec to ensure that Newfoundland and Labrador is given transmission access to move power through Quebec, which Quebec has blocked for more than 40 years?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, as you know, the free flow of electricity is one of the components and one of the things that's been discussed in the Agreement on Internal Trade, which is yet to be finalized. But I would remind the former premier that it was a premier that he sat under that actually is wheeling power through Quebec and is now been sold on the other end. So the fact that power actually goes from Churchill Falls, which we actually sell on the other end, is something that's not foreign to this province.

Now with that said, Mr. Speaker, if there's a benefit to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, there's an overall benefit so we can put money into social programs, provide critical services to

our province, any deal that would be structured with Quebec on anything related to hydro developments on the Churchill River would be the right deal for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. And I'll assure you it will be open and transparent and it will be done in this Legislature. They have the right to know.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I ask the Premier: Will you commit today to continue with court action against Quebec, asking to be treated fairly, and not drop the actions that Quebec has asked to be dropped?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, as you know, there has been a discussion that I had on Monday morning with the former premier. It seems to me that's a much different discussion that the former premier would have had with Premier Couillard a few years ago. Maybe it's the fact that we were able to sit down and have a mature, professional, respectful discussion with the Province of Quebec, Mr. Speaker. That's the way it is. It's about building relationships; it's about building bridges with other provinces to the benefit of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. So to put any condition in place before you actually get there, that is not about actually fostering discussion.

By the way, I'd say, Mr. Speaker, contrary to maybe what the discussion would have looked like with the former Premier, I was not asked to remove that notice of appeal. We made it quite clear in the media yesterday that we would not be doing that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Yesterday, the Premier made a comment that it's now their responsibility to finish Muskrat Falls. It's also their responsibility to release the long-awaited oversight reports. None of which have been released in the 12 months that they've been in office.

So I ask the Premier: When will you release the EY report, and the Oversight Committee reports?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you very much for this very important question. Oversight is important, and we take this job very seriously. That is why we have worked very hard to have the EY report do the cost schedule and associated risk. That's why we're expanding and making sure that we have a very strong board of directors and we're working on that.

That's why we have an Oversight Committee, Mr. Speaker, who is actively doing a lot of work. They're working right now on looking at the cost and schedule that was released in June. They're working on the methylmercury issue. They're looking at the agreements with Astaldi. They've been very, very active. Their minutes are online. There will be, I'm sure, a report in due time.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I remind the minister we've been 12 months without an Oversight Committee report.

I'll ask the Premier: Can you confirm that the unreleased EY report has cost taxpayers over \$1 million?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you very much for the question.

When the interim report, which was a fulsome report, was released in April we did indicate that it did cost over a million dollars to do that tremendous piece of work. I will remind residents of the province and the Members opposite that what EY did say was that the cost and schedule released by the former government in September of last year was not reasonable, and we had to go out and do a whole piece of work around making sure that the cost and schedule was very specifically stated and made sure that we implemented the recommendations of the EY report.

The final report of EY will come once we have negotiated with and have finalized our talks with Astaldi, the largest contractor with regard to the powerhouse.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the bridging agreement with Astaldi added \$150 million to the Muskrat Falls Project. This disclosure was made in Astaldi's financial statements that had not come from Nalcor or from his new government, which promised to be open on the books of Muskrat Falls.

I ask the minister: Why did government or Nalcor not make this information available to the public?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to address this very issue around Astaldi. After the election in 2015 and during the transition, we did have some briefings from Nalcor. It was clearly obvious from the briefings that we had with Nalcor at the time that the former administration were aware of the situation around June of 2015 and did not disclose that to the people of this province when they were in government at the time. So, Mr. Speaker, the bridging agreement that was put in

place, as Astaldi had mentioned, was up to \$150 million.

Mr. Speaker, what is very clear here when you talk about openness and transparency, it was the former administration that did not release the information related to that very contract over a year ago.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Speaker, I say to the hon. Premier, that work was underway; they've come to a conclusion. A simple question: Why didn't you release it to the public? You've come to a conclusion on the expenditure, \$150 million.

Mr. Speaker, protests continue at Muskrat Falls site with protestors suggesting they may stay through the winter.

I ask the Minister of Natural Resources: Have you reached out to speak with Aboriginal leaders to ensure protests don't escalate like they did in October, due to your lack of engagement resulting in increased costs of \$300 million to \$400 million?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Aboriginal leaders, we had a marathon meeting where we came to conclusions on the methylmercury issue – unlike the former government that did not address the concerns of the Aboriginal leaders, dating back to before the sanctioning of the project, Mr. Speaker. We were able to sit down and have a very good discussion, came up with a very good process for discussion and engagement. It was very vital, I think, to the people of Labrador, and very vital to the three Aboriginal leaders. We'll continue to have those talks.

As the Opposition knows, and as the people of the province know, we are engaging in an independent expert advisory panel; we are continuing our discussions with Aboriginal leaders on an ongoing basis. We will be

responsive to the concerns of the people of this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Speaker, if the minister was concerned about the province and the issues, why didn't she deal with it? In June, we had a statement from the government that everything was fine in regard to the protestors. Again, we see issues today that don't appear to be dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the sale of excess energy, valued by Nalcor of \$3.5 billion, the province holds an 8.4 per cent equity stake in Muskrat Falls, which will pay dividends over a period of \$22 billion. These revenues can be used to –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. HUTCHINGS: These revenues can be used to decrease rates in the projected Nalcor rates in 2021.

I ask the minister: Is this factored into the projections by Nalcor?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm assuming when he asks if they're factored into the projections of Nalcor, he means the projections of rates. I am assuming, because that is the question he did ask last week. As I repeated last week, the rates are disclosed as to what they would be in full and open and transparent – as they have been in the past, Mr. Speaker.

Under the former administration, they were raw numbers as well. We have undertaken to say that we will be mitigating rates. The Premier is on record, even before the election, as saying he would use the sale of export power to mitigate those rates, to bring those rates down.

And further, Mr. Speaker, we have directed Nalcor to find ways of mitigating those rates to making sure the rates are as low as possible. We do have the issue of Muskrat Falls, Mr. Speaker, but this government is dealing with those problems.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the hon. Minister to check Hansard. What I asked her last week was: Will she use the excess energy revenue to offset rates? What I'm asking today: Will you use the equity return in the project to reduce rates?

There are two components there available now to mitigate rates. You don't appear to want to use either.

So can I ask you: Can you get that information on both remediations that are available, bring them to the House and give the people of the province an update on the Nalcor number of 22 cents in 2020?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I will remind the Member opposite, it was, I believe, in July of 2009 that they actually increased the rate by 8.4 per cent. So it was actually under the former administration. They were the ones who actually did that.

Mr. Speaker, as we've said time and time again, and as we commit to do to this House and to the people of the province, we will be mitigating those rates. We have some period of time now to find means and mechanisms. We have tasked Nalcor with finding the ways to mitigate those rates, and in due course we will be disclosing how we're going to do it, what approach. We've already said we're using export power to do so, Mr. Speaker. We have a loan guarantee that will

help offset some of those rates. We will have a fulsome plan, Mr. Speaker, for mitigating those rates.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think the minister has just indicated she had acknowledged there are two methods available in the project to mitigate rates. She's aware of them. Nalcor has given projections on what they would look like in future years, but she's not willing to use that right now to mitigate rates; yet, they say they're looking for ways to mitigate rates.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister update us on the proposed wind farm project from Beothuk Energy on the West Coast?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At least this government is going to mitigate rates, unlike the former administration who didn't say they were going to do that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, regarding the wind energy project that is being considered for the West Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, I have had a meeting with Beothuk Energy. I know they are very excited about their plans. They are moving forward with some of those plans. They are looking at other locations in Atlantic Canada as well.

This government is committed, obviously, to green energy. We are committed to making sure that we have green energy available. As they move forward with the plans, we will continue to meet with them and see the impacts it will have in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Section 14(1) of the *Electrical Power Control Act* defines distribution and sale of electrical energy.

I wonder, Minister, in relation to that project, does there need to be an amendment to that act?

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

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, as I've just indicated, the project is still in its analysis stages. They do have partners. They are coming forward with their plans. They have not laid out in any full detail their plans at this point in time. As we move forward we'll consider whether or not there are changes that are required, whether or not they will be exporting all their electricity, whether or not – some of the considerations that they are looking at right now: How do we move forward in this project?

They are still reviewing their plans. They will come forward with them in due course.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Speaker, the legislation speaks to Nalcor and the public entity that produces energy in the province. This obviously would be outside of that.

I'm just asking the minister, you must know to date: Are you reviewing the legislation? Do you think there needs to be an amendment made? A simple question.

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

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. Member wants me to suppose what will transpire in the fullness of time.

We are considering whether or not, what that project means to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We're considering the impacts it will have on energy rates in this province. We're considering how they may export power. We'll consider all those options when the full project is laid before us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Education went from proudly beating his chest yesterday over school board elections to stating he is relieved they are over.

I ask the minister: You've been planning this election for over a year, why were there so many issues which led to less than 2 per cent of the voting population turning out to vote?

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

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Member might want to review the videotape of yesterday. I don't recall beating my chest over here, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know what he's talking about, this percentage he has just thrown out on the floor. According to the preliminary numbers, and they are preliminary, that I've seen from the returning officers for both of the school districts, there has been a marginal increase in the numbers of people who participated in this election in comparison to 2009.

There were half the acclamations – last time half of the candidates were acclaimed. This time there were far more people contesting elections, and far more candidates within those contested elections. So we'll have the final numbers before long, but what the Member has stated here is incorrect.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: I do ask the minister that he check his numbers; and, he's right, there were many more people contesting them and there's a reason for that. The ultimate reason was people wanted to go out there to fix the mess that he had created over the last year (inaudible).

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: I ask the minister: Will you take responsibility for the lack of organization and planning for this election?

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, under the previous administration the public was denied the opportunity to clean up their mess. This crowd basically outlawed or got rid of the whole practice of having democratically elected trustees.

In the election last year, we committed to having a democratically elected board of trustees. We have two now. This is the first time the French has been elected in this manner, and we are committed to having regularly scheduled elections for school board trustees into the future.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: No doubt, you made a mess of the election process. There was a mass report of confusion, a lack of organization at polling stations, as well as issues with the website. People have described the process as a mess.

Considering you were aware of the impending chaos for days prior, why did you sit idle rather than try and fix the process?

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, the only chaos I see is the chaos over in the Opposition benches.

There was no chaos yesterday. Yes, there were a few bumps in the road along the way. There have been seven years – people were denied the opportunity to vote for seven years under the previous administration. There are learnings that will come from this, as will come from any process that we engage in. I'll be having conversations with the returning officers for both of the districts to try to find ways to improve things going forward. But, as I said, we think that there's been a marginal increase in participation based on the preliminary numbers. There are more people participating, fewer acclamations. So there are bright things about this election, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: The only positive here is that there is a good slate of candidates here who, no doubt, will keep the minister honest when it comes to improving the education system.

Can the minister confirm that the former Liberal candidate who was appointed to oversee the school board's election quit prior to the election?

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, it's all very rich coming from a Member who, when he was minister, bought a ferry and didn't buy the wharf to go with it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KIRBY: The individual he's referring to, Mr. Speaker, found other employment in August and took a better opportunity. I wish that person all the best. That person helped us out quite a bit. It was a temporary hire. He did a lot of good work and rather than calling that person's work a mess, I commend them on their effort, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: The mess here started with the Minister of Education and how he was running the education system.

I do ask: How much money was this member paid?

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, in the House of Assembly last spring, we allocated – we, the government – \$400,000 towards the school board election. Those monies that paid anybody – there were actually six coordinators who were hired: four with the English School District, one with the French district, one in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Again, it is all very interesting after the fact to have all this criticism. We had extensive debate about all matters relating to the budget here in the House of Assembly and the Opposition didn't raise one question; there was no suggestion.

The Member had between June and now, I don't think I have received a single piece of correspondence from this Opposition critic for Education. It wasn't like that when we were sitting on that side.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I just want to remind all hon. Members the only person that we wish to hear from is the person identified by the Speaker to have the floor.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development: In comparison from 2015 to 2016, how specifically are seniors better off than they were last year?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Well, Mr. Speaker, we are working on putting an office of the seniors' advocate in place right now. The income benefit for seniors has increased.

So, Mr. Speaker, seniors are better off.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: The minister should take a look at her own website. The supposed increase in the Seniors' Benefit and the Income Supplement actually replaced the home heating rebate, which was cut by the Liberals, and the provincial HST credit.

Can you tell the people of this province how much less seniors are getting this year in comparison to last year?

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

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

Just for clarification purposes, what the Member opposite said is inaccurate. A new Newfoundland Income Supplement was introduced. The Seniors' Benefit was enhanced to provide seniors with even more income than they would have received under the former administration.

We did replace the home heating rebate, but there is a significant number of dollars invested in those new programs in the tune of \$74 million I believe is the number, Sir.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: Well, I can tell the minister, Mr. Speaker, that some of our seniors are actually losing hundreds of dollars – some of them up to

\$300. I'm getting calls to my office on a daily basis. The increased cost of gas, home heating fuel, insurance, taxes, over-the-counter medications, cuts to home care and over 300 increased fees, they are gravely worried.

So what are you going to do, I ask the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development? What are you going to do to address these concerns of seniors, and how is this a stronger tomorrow for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the Member opposite, who would be very aware of this during the debate earlier this year, that our government, and more importantly the people of the province, have been faced with a financial crisis that was in no small part due to the poor administration of the former government.

Mr. Speaker, seniors in this province are deserving of the seniors' advocate that we promised and the minister indicated that we were working on that. They are deserving of an understanding of where power rates are going to be, which the Minister of Natural Resources has spoken to earlier today of commitment to mitigate rates as a result of the Muskrat Falls Project.

The Member opposite is speaking very eloquently about the importance of seniors' issues. I can tell you that this side of the House is taking action to take care of that, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, first responders have contacted us worried about emergency transportation in St. John's in the middle of winter.

I ask the minister: Without 24-hour snow clearing, how will emergency vehicles get to our trauma centre?

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd just like to let the hon. Member opposite know that 24-hour snow clearing was something that was implemented between December and March, and obviously not for the entire province. There were only 11 areas that actually had – and it wasn't even 24 hours, seven days; it was five days a week.

So what we have done, Mr. Speaker, we are putting measures in place that we will address these. We are actually as well looking at the forecasting that will be done. My department and my staff are well aware of the issues and challenges that are being faced. We will address these. We will have, certainly, measures of the amount of snowfall that is required and our staff will be out to address these issues. We will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker, so we're not anticipating any issues with that.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. HAWKINS: 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 hearing too many stories of people, especially seniors, being sent home from hospital before any assessment for post-acute home care or long-term care has been carried out.

I ask the Minister of Health and Community Services: Is the practice of sending people home without long-term care or home support in place one that is approved by the Department of Health and Community Services?

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

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With regard to post-acute care, that actually begins the minute the patient or the client arrives in the emergency department. There is a plan put in place for their care from the physicians and nurses involved at the outset. Part of that involves social work consults. These folk are in a situation whereby what they need to allow them to go home is put in place before they leave the building.

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 really ask the minister to meet with his different regional health authorities and find out what really is going on because what he has said is not happening as a regular practice. I would suggest he look at all the areas and find out what is going on in this province with regard to post-acute care.

Mr. Speaker, the Deloitte report on home care pointed to inconsistencies in coordinating the care of home support and long-term care clients. It's called for integrated care plans, so they found they weren't any.

I ask the minister: When will this government introduce the case management for home care and long-term care it promised so seniors won't fall between the cracks?

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

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you very much for the question and somewhat erroneous statement at the beginning of it. The situation, quite frankly, is that if the Member opposite has specific details of specific individuals who have been disadvantaged, bring to me and bring them to my department.

We've seen over the last couple of days cases of hyperbole and names that may not seem to exist in reality, other than the Member's imagination opposite. We have not just received any details of these, and I welcome those.

With regard to the Deloitte home care report, there are 24 points in that report. They are broken down into four groups for immediate action, early and late. Those are being implemented as we speak, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Ministers of AESL and Health what they were going to do about the situation of very vulnerable people living in deplorable boarding houses that are paid for hard-earned taxpayers' money.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I visited some of those places again today and I have some pretty disturbing pictures. This is a systemic problem and a scandalous misuse of public funds. This is not a single case.

I ask the ministers again: What are they going to do to make sure these vulnerable people are better supported and public money is better invested?

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

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite reported to this House that she was of an individual by the name of Tom who is placed in a situation where their health was left vulnerable, where their safety was left insecure and that there was need of action.

I ask the hon. Member to bring forward the name of that individual. We only know them by the name of Tom. Now, I ask the hon. Member to bring forward the name of the individual so that their needs can be responded to.

It is unacceptable that after asking that question to bring forward the name of the individual so that we can provide for their care, this hon.

Member did not. Either Tom does not exist, or the hon. Member left the individual in a state of vulnerability. What is it, Mr. Speaker?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, I have Tom's case right here. I've used a different name to protect his privacy. As a matter of fact, there are dozens and dozens and dozens of Toms in exactly the same position all over this city, and there are no social workers taking care of them because of what this government –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: – and the previous government has done in terms of taking care of vulnerable people.

Mr. Speaker, they know the problem with boarding houses across the city. It's been almost five years since –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Speaker's having difficulty hearing the Member for St. John's Centre. I would ask all hon. Members to respect the individual that's been identified to speak.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, it's been almost five years since the review of the *Residential Tenancy Act* and we still have no new act.

I ask the Minister of Service NL: He's had a whole year to work this out; where is the new *Residential Tenancy Act* and will he commit to include regulating these types of rooming and boarding houses in the act?

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

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, 24 hours has passed – 24 hours has passed when an individual that we only know by the name of Tom has been left in a state of vulnerability. Where they are apparently, allegedly living in a state of cockroaches, where they're facing malnutrition, and their health and safety is compromised.

I ask this Member to exercise her duty to provide us, me and my department, with information. We have social workers, we have case officers, we have individuals that can provide care to an individual, if we know that their needs are not being met.

Mr. Speaker, 24 hours has passed and an individual has been placed in jeopardy. Either this individual has not received a duty of care from this Member, or there is a fictitious account which has been raised on the floor of this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The time for Question Period is expired.

MS. MICHAEL: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi, on a point of order.

MS. MICHAEL: My first point of order regards comments by the Minister of Health and Community Services. In response to my question he said both that my information was erroneous and, secondly, that I must be speaking out of my imagination. I don't think that shows respect for the Speaker and for what I presented in the House in my question.

I'm now calling a point of order on the Minister of – it's such a long title, but let's use the whole title – Advanced Education, Skills and Labour for using similar disrespectful language with regard to my colleague for St. John's Centre.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: I will not respond to the first one. I'll let the Minister of Health speak to that, but as it relates to the second point of order, I'm unsure which Standing Order that would fall under. It was not referenced as per the Standing Order. I would like to hear that first and why it is a point of order.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

MS. MICHAEL: I'm looking for these –

MR. KENT: Forty-nine is offensive language.

MS. MICHAEL: Forty-nine has to do with offensive language, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

MR. BYRNE: Could the hon. Member report to the House what the specific language which was offensive?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

MS. MICHAEL: Mr. Speaker, first of all, section 49 says that no Member shall use offensive words against any Member of this House.

The language I heard from the minister to the Member for St. John's Centre implied that the Member wasn't telling the truth, implied the case she was talking about didn't exist and implied her of a dereliction of duty. I think all of that shows disrespect.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

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

With respect to my comments, I withdraw them.

MR. SPEAKER: On the issue of the comments by the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, I'm not sure if it's a disagreement between two Members. I will take time to review the statements to determine whether or not the Chair considers them to be offensive. I'll report back to the House either later this afternoon or tomorrow.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act to Amend the Emergency Act, the Emergency Services Act and the Protection Services Act. (Bill 51)

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

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

I give notice, pursuant to Standing Order 11, that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, November 28.

Further, pursuant to Standing Order 11, I give notice that this House not adjourn at 10 o'clock p.m. on Monday, November 28.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for Which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl – Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS many students within our province depend on school busing for transportation to and from school each day; and

WHEREAS there have been a number of buses removed from service over the past few weeks for safety reasons, calling into question the current inspection and enforcement protocols for school buses in this province; and

WHEREAS there have been concerns raised by members of the busing industry regarding government's tendering practices as it relates to the provision of school bus services in this province; and

WHEREAS there are many parents throughout our province who have raised both scheduling as well as safety concerns regarding the English School District's 1.6 kilometre policy, the courtesy seating policy, the new double bus run schedule, as well as overcrowding on school buses;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to strike an all-party committee on school busing to consult with stakeholders and make recommendations to

government for the improvement to the school busing system in our province.

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

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to present this petition once again. As indicated, I will continue to do so throughout this sitting of the House of Assembly. Obviously, this is an important issue for parents, for students attending school.

There are a number of issues, as I've outlined. I, once again, want to just concentrate a little bit on the 1.6 kilometre rule. Certainly, when we're talking children, especially young children, K to six in particular, this 1.6 kilometre rule is a concern for parents and for their safety in terms of having to walk these distances, walking in the nighttime. It's dark in the morning, I should say, it's really dark this time of the year; walking in adverse conditions, areas where there are no sidewalks or no crosswalk lights, where they have to travel across four-lane roads and so on. Even in areas where there are sidewalks, such as my area, they're not always cleared. So that is a safety concern in itself.

Of course, we know there are concerns about the new double bus runs and all the headaches that that's causing families as well. So there are numerous issues around busing. Some of them, it seems they're going to be addressed in terms of inspections and so on – I'm hearing, which is a good thing. I certainly congratulate government on that.

Hopefully, the new procurement act will help with some of the concerns expressed by bus operators; I hope it will. Unfortunately, where everything seems to be contained within the regulations it's really hard to know, which is an issue that we have with the act.

Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, there continues to be numerous issues and concerns from parents all throughout the province and I think that the best way to deal with it is through an all-party committee. We could put all the issues on the table, we can work together and, hopefully, come up with solutions that work for all of the children who are attending school.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune has less than two minutes to present her petition.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS *Budget 2016* introduces over 50 new fees and increases over 300 fees; and

WHEREAS *Budget 2016* asked the people of this province to pay more for a decrease in government services; and

WHEREAS these fee increases negatively impact the financial well-being of seniors, youth, families, students and individuals;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to immediately reverse fee increases as introduced through *Budget 2016*.

Mr. Speaker, I think the vast majority of people in this province were horrified on Budget Day this year after listening to the promises that the government opposite campaigned upon and then the stark contrast to the budget that was actually brought down. It was quite a shock for people of this province. As the year continues to go on, they're feeling it in their pocketbooks; they're feeling it in their ability to buy groceries. This winter they're going to feel it in their ability to pay the light bill.

I see that my time is quickly running out on the clock, Mr. Speaker, so I will get back up and speak to this most important issue. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador deserve better.

Thank you so much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Orders of the Day

Private Members' Day

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Being Private Members' Day, I call on the Member for Topsail – Paradise to present his private Member's resolution.

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

I move, seconded by the Member for Ferryland, the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that any and all agreements respecting Churchill River hydro power shall be brought to the House of Assembly for public debate and Members' vote prior to ratification.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there has much debate in recent days over Upper Churchill, more so than we have been. It's been a matter that's been discussed and debated for 45 years. It's come back to this House on numerous occasions. It's a matter probably better understood and better known by more people in the province than any other subject matter in the history of Newfoundland by citizens who have an interest in this and also know the history of it.

Some may say, well, why this resolution? Why the resolution that any agreements that the Premier and the government today reaches should come to the House of Assembly? Well, it's a matter of trust, Mr. Speaker. The reason for this resolution is a matter of trust.

Mostly, if you recall, and we all recall, the people of the province don't trust – and we know this quite well – Hydro-Québec to look after our province's best interests. The question is about: Who's going to look after Newfoundlanders and Labradorians? Who's going to look after our province and our best interests? Why would they? Why would we expect people to trust them?

Hydro-Québec is a public energy company. It's a company owned by the people of Quebec; very similar to Nalcor is owned by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. They have a

vested interest in gaining the very best deal they can for the people of Quebec, for their own people. The job of looking out for the best interests of the people of the province is not their responsibility. It's our responsibility, ours, as a House, and the government's responsibility as a government of the day.

Every single Member of the House of Assembly has a responsibility, and a matter so important to our future. If we want to understand how important it is to our future, we only have to look at the past, and the relationships we've had with Quebec in our past. It's every Member's responsibility to have a say. Not simply to trust the government and the Cabinet to do what they believe is right for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, but for the Members of the House of Assembly to have a say, to understand what the deal is and to speak on behalf of their people.

Now, I expect Members opposite today are going to say, oh, back with Muskrat Falls you wouldn't do a debate in the House. There was a private Member's resolution came here on Muskrat Falls but you wouldn't have a separate debate in the House. There was one back in 2002.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we did more than that as a government, because we went to the people of the province. We campaigned an election on it. In 2011, the main thrust and importance of our campaign was on the future energy of Newfoundland and Labrador. We campaigned on it. New Energy was the slogan. We went to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and asked them to elect us to develop our hydro resources.

Now, Members opposite, I suspect the minister and others will speak to it today and they'll say, but you wouldn't do a debate on Muskrat Falls. We didn't do a debate on Muskrat Falls; we took it to the people of the province. There was a private Member's debate on it, but we went to an election and asked the people of the province.

Development of hydroelectricity, hydro resources, partnership Quebec was not a part of their campaign. They talked about openness and transparency. They talked about we're going to take the politics out of appointments, their signature bill. That was the thrust of what they

were going to do. We're going to manage better and smarter. We're going to be wiser and better. No job losses, no tax hikes.

That's what they campaigned on, Mr. Speaker. That was the campaign. In 2011, we campaigned on the development of energy resources and the people elected us to do that. There is the significant difference. That's the difference of what happened before and what's happening now.

Back in former Premier Grimes's government they almost signed a deal with Quebec in 2002, and then there was a debate – there was. But what happened back then, the circumstances have changed. There are some similarities and there are much differences. We're much closer to 2041, and Quebec knows that. Quebec knows that. They know exactly what's coming and what's getting closer for them.

Let's go back to the history of Quebec and talk for a minute, just a couple of minutes, about what happened. Because the development of hydro resources in Quebec actually goes back to the '30s; it was back in the 1930s that Quebecers were outraged that the province and the people had no control over their electrical systems – kind of sounds like we are today with the Upper Churchill.

They were very upset that other entities were gouging them for profit. Kind of like we've been gouged over the last 45 years. They wanted to take control of their own destiny by creating a public energy company. They laid the groundwork, and in 1944 that's exactly what they did because it was 1944 when they created Hydro-Québec. They started to explain and understand the capacity and potential that Hydro-Québec could have, project by project. Until that they had increased from 661 megawatts up to 3,661 megawatts.

By the '60s, it was still not the full, province-wide utility that we know it to be today. They were still working on it. But in the '60s it became known as Quebec's quiet revolution. That's what the '60s became known as in their energy development: Quebec's quiet revolution.

They started talking in far-reaching terms and Quebec starting talking about how we can do

heavy investments today, put significant debt loads today to have generation ability and sales ability in the future. They said how can we take ownership of this in the '60s so we can earn money off it and profit from it and Quebecers can get the lowest rates possible and we can earn billions of dollars off it – how can we do that? That's what happened in the '60s to Quebec's quite revolution.

They talked in terms of masters of their own house; that's what they did back in the '60s. It encompassed all areas of society in Quebec, including their energy. Premier Lesage appointed a young Cabinet minister by the name of René Lévesque – he became premier of Quebec later – to oversee the Hydro-Québec portfolio and to develop their assets and to leverage the benefits for Quebec. It began to develop a strategy, one that was to nationalize the remaining electricity companies in the province. They called an election in 1962 on the theme of masters of their own home, including electricity.

They won a mandate and that launched what became the hostile takeover of 11 electricity companies, including Shawinigan Water and Power. Shawinigan Water and Power is of particular interest and importance here because when they took over Shawinigan Water and Power, they also acquired a 20 per cent share of a facility that was then known as Hamilton Falls.

Now, we know back in the '60s Liberal premier of the day, Liberal Premier Smallwood, went over to England, met with Prime Minister Churchill and he took under his arm a roll of plans from Labrador. He went over and saw Churchill and when he saw Churchill, they had a discussion and he was the representative for Newfoundland. Anything else do you want to talk to me about? Liberal Premier Smallwood laid it all out on the table. He said look what we have in Labrador; we have huge assets.

He was so impressed and wanted to be part of it, BRINCO was formed. And the Premier Smallwood saw fit to change the name of Hamilton River to Churchill River and Churchill Falls. That's how that name came about.

But Hydro-Québec said this fits right into our plan. They were hard-hitting, hard bargainers and they reached a deal because BRINCO and the developers needed to cover the operational debt that existed in the development of Upper Churchill.

Newfoundland and Labrador was on its knees and needed help and needed assistance and along came Quebec; we know how to do this. And they took the bulk of the power and control in exchange for dealing with the cost of building the project. Who's benefitted from it for 45 years? Quebec. Quebec benefitted from that for a very, very long time and they did an exchange for the power plants output at very low rates for a very long time and that was the deal that they did on the Upper Churchill.

But it didn't take long, Mr. Speaker, before Newfoundlanders and Labradorians started to tune in and said there's a problem here because as rates change, our benefits stay the same and Quebec profits continue to increase. For 45 years, that has taken place.

Now, it seemed like a good deal at the time. When it was done everybody said oh, a great, wonderful deal that the province had done at the time. How wonderful was it for Quebec to assume all that debt because debt was a problem. And that's the concern that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have to this very day, that Quebec now wants to come in and say, well, let's talk to you, Newfoundland and Labrador – because here's what's happening, Mr. Speaker; 2041 is not far away.

Muskrat Falls has been worked on – I know there are people over at Nalcor, at Hydro, who are retiring and the only project they've ever worked on was Muskrat Falls. Muskrat Falls has been worked on for 30 years or more. It takes a tremendous long time to develop significant hydro assets, years and years and years. So in the big scope of things, the 25 years remaining on the contract is not a big window. Quebec knows this, and Hydro-Québec knows this.

They also know that there are cost overruns on Muskrat Falls. They know that there's a debt problem. Déjà vu, Mr. Speaker, the same thing over again. It does sound very familiar to have

debt. And we're hearing a lot of talk from the government opposite about debt, debt in the province, how they manage it and doing – we had a discussion today in Question Period about seniors and we heard from the Member opposite. When they were asked are seniors better off, the Finance Minister got up in her place today and talked about, well, we had a terrible financial situation so we had to deal with it.

So seniors are worse off today because of the challenges they faced and what decisions they had to make. But Quebec remembers how someone else's debt problem opened the door to incredible opportunity for them. And we as a Legislature and as elected Members of the House of Assembly representing all corners of Newfoundland and Labrador have a responsibility to ensure that history does not repeat itself.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: We absolutely do.

We have a responsibility to our constituents. As I said very early in my remarks, I don't think there is a topic or an issue or a resource better known and understood by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians more than the resource that exists on the Churchill River in Labrador. And I don't think there's a topic or a matter that's better feared, or more feared and more worrisome to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians than our resources on the Churchill River, and it's for a very good reason. It's a matter that should be taken very seriously.

Now, I've asked the Premier several times if he will provide the details of the full deal to the people of the province before it's ratified. So far, until today in Question Period, he has said no. Well, he didn't answer the question, which generally is a no. Unless he's going to do it, he would say yes, but it's generally a concern.

I've heard from lots of people from around the province about it – why didn't the Premier answer the question? If he was going to do it, he would have said it. If he's not going to do it, he's going to dance around the answer.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (Warr): Order, please!

MR. P. DAVIS: He's going to dance around the answer, and that's what we had. Now, we heard a comment from him today that it will be brought to the House. So we'll make sure we get a record on him – I am glad they do. That sounds like they're going to speak to it today. Again, as I said earlier, I anticipate what they're going to do today and say, well, we wouldn't do a vote on Muskrat Falls. What we did –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. P. DAVIS: But we didn't do a vote in the House of Assembly. We did a vote in the entire province, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: We brought it to the entire province in 2011. It was the signature of our campaign in 2011 –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. P. DAVIS: – on energy in our future and our Energy Plan. That was what we went to the people on.

So they're going to get up today and their going to say, well, we wouldn't do a vote in the House, or the government of the day and the premier of the day wouldn't do a vote in the House and that was our party. They're going to do all of that.

But what's important is how we deal with our negotiations with Quebec. Back then that wasn't part of the factor, because Quebec wasn't talking to us. And Quebec said, well, unless you get rid of your lawsuits, which we weren't prepared to do, we're not going to talk to you.

I've asked the Premier today: Are you going to ensure there's going to be redress on the imbalance? And every dollar profit created by the Upper Churchill, do you know how much Newfoundland and Labrador gets? Two cents. For every dollar profit, Newfoundland and Labrador gets 2 cents. That was the deal done by Liberal Premier Joe Smallwood back in 1969 that looked like a good deal for the day, but

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have regretted for 45 years.

What we want to do is make sure it comes to the House for a debate, that there's full disclosure on the matter so we can have a debate here in the House so we, as legislators, can review it, we can talk to our constituents and we can do everything in our own power to make sure a mistake is not made that's going to negatively impact future generations for years to come.

That's simply what this is about. We couldn't get an answer from the Premier in Question Period, but we've asked it several times, so we're going to ask the entire House of Assembly today: Do you agree that the matter should come here for a full debate, a debate here in the House, a public debate, and a vote by all Members of the House of Assembly? And that's why this private Member's resolution is here on the floor of the House of Assembly today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise on this private Member's resolution today. It's a very important debate today. I believe it really speaks to the role of the House of Assembly. It really speaks to what types of debates we should be having, discussions that should be held in the House of Assembly. It is essential, in my view, to the function and form of the House of Assembly to have informed discussions around these debates.

Mr. Speaker, the development of the hydroelectric potential is certainly most important to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. It's certainly a very important decision and one that should be fully debated and discussed, examined and reviewed.

Now, the Member opposite did mention and he well remembers that, of course, the issue of Muskrat Falls never really was debated in the

House. It was a focus of many questions. It was a focus of much debate as we sat in Opposition, as the Liberals sat in Opposition, lots of discussion around it. The premier one many occasions rose in this hon. House to ask that the Muskrat Falls Project be scrutinized, and time after time after time that was not to happen in this House.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm rising today to say I think that is not right. I think we should be debating these important matters in the House. Our government has made a commitment, Mr. Speaker, to be open and transparent. We welcome debate and discussion on these issues.

In my mandate letter as Minister of Natural Resources and in the mandate letters of every minister in the Cabinet of this government and, indeed, spoken to all of caucus, the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador says "I expect you to follow ..." – and I'm quoting here from my mandate letter that is available online, should anyone wish to see it. It is a public document.

"I expect you to follow the principles of openness, transparency and accountability. It is my intention to ensure policy decisions in government are informed by research, evidence, and evaluation so that citizens can understand how and why decisions are made."

Now, Mr. Speaker, compare that to the former administration. A former PC leader and premier had this to say about the House of Assembly. I don't find it a place for a very healthy, open, constructive debate in the first place. Now compare those two administrations.

The former government and my hon. colleague, the hon. colleague opposite, just stood up and said he doesn't want history to repeat itself. I think that's a very important lesson to be learned. We don't want history to repeat itself either, not on the Upper Churchill Project, nor on the fact that debates of importance are not held in this House of Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Dwight Ball did say – my apologies – the current Premier did say at the time that he thought it was really difficult and really an insult to democracy that the debate was not held here in this House of Assembly. And I think it would be an insult to democracy if we

continued in the vein that the former administration was going, that important debates around important subjects were not being debated in this House of Assembly.

Now, I will note – and I'm just checking the time, Mr. Speaker, because of course we only have a few minutes, and that was one of the concerns when I think the hon. colleague did mention that there was a private Member's resolution on Muskrat Falls previously. I believe that debate did occur back around 2012, brought forward by the government of the day. So it did allow just six or seven speakers to stand on their feet that day to talk about the very important subject of the sanctioning of Muskrat Falls.

So I'm cognizant of the time of the day because, of course, I want to get as many people to speak to this important issue, the important issue of ensuring that major discussions regarding the Churchill River, hydro power projects are brought to the floor of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I noted when the hon. colleague opposite did speak he talked about a matter of trust. He talked about a matter of trust in that he had much concerns about trusting Hydro-Québec. The responsibility, a matter so important to our future, would be discussed in the House of Assembly, and I completely agree with him. The responsibility of a matter so important to our future should be discussed in the House of Assembly. That is the differentiation, I say, Mr. Speaker, between this government and the former government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, I have read the resolution and I have reviewed the notes around the resolution and the intent. And the spirit and the intent of the resolution is so that matters concerning future development on the Churchill River will be brought to this House, matters concerning, I believe, as the former speaker did say on the renegotiation, or any potential renegotiation, of the Upper Churchill power contract being debated in this House.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has risen time and time again, I've risen time and time again, and said there were no ongoing, there have been no ongoing – there have been really no discussions

at all, except for one that was held this week. Because of the discussions that have been going on both in Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec, the Premiers of both provinces have agreed they're going to have a further discussion on issues of interest between our two provinces.

We do, as the Premier said earlier today, share a border. I know that my hon. colleague, for example, in Labrador West knows very well the types of involvement around the Labrador Trough that goes on between Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador. There are other matters of importance between the two provinces because we do share a border, Mr. Speaker.

I will say, however, the issue of the Upper Churchill contract has been one that has been very, very difficult for this province; one that we all would like to see amended. As a Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, we should be the primary beneficiaries of our resources.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have moved forward with an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. We did give notice that we will appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada under what's called the good-faith case. That is continuing today, Mr. Speaker. We are going to continue with that appeal; though it has cost this province millions of dollars, I will say that, Mr. Speaker. Because a substantive amount of money has been invested in the good-faith case, we will be appealing that to the Supreme Court of Canada because we all feel there should be improvements or changes to the Upper Churchill contract. I think the hon. Member spoke passionately about the impacts to this province of the Upper Churchill contract.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say as well, that it is time for us to have an adult conversation with our neighbouring Province of Quebec. I think that's exactly what's going to happen. There are no conditions; the Premier said that today. There are no conditions put forward by the Premier of Quebec in having that conversation.

I look forward to, and I'm sure people in this House and around the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, look forward to finding if there are ways we can have a good

conversation, an adult conversation, one that will bear results for this province. As the Premier said repeatedly, time and time again, it will be for the best interest and benefit of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, the spirit and intent of the resolution, I think we all support and agree with. There are, however, a couple of things I will say to my hon. colleagues that I think they didn't mean to capture when they put forward their resolution.

In their resolution they talk about "any and all agreements respecting Churchill River hydro power." Now, if you're talking about "any and all" that could be – on a daily basis, through Nalcor Energy, there is an energy marketing that goes on that does create agreements on a daily basis of surplus power being sold. There could be labour contracts that could involve an agreement. There are daily issues, what I'm going to call operational issues, that I'm sure do not need to be debated in the House of Assembly, do not need to use the time and the resources of the House of Assembly for debate. They are routine matters.

So I will say to my hon. colleagues opposite – this is very friendly – to help clarify and ensure that we do address the concerns that are being expressed and agreed to, I think, in full spirit, I will propose an amendment to help solidify and clarify, and I hope they take it in the friendly manner this is put forward.

I would like to move that the resolution be amended by deleting the words "any and all agreements respecting Churchill River hydro power" and by substituting the words – and I have a copy here for my hon. colleagues – "all future agreements respecting Churchill River Hydro Power developments and renegotiation of the Upper Churchill Power contract."

I'll read that again just for clarity, because I stumbled a bit. So delete the words "any and all agreements" because that would capture any and all including those energy marketing; delete the words "any and all agreements respecting Churchill River hydro power" and replace with "all future agreements respecting Churchill River Hydro Power developments" – which I think they're trying to capture – "and

renegotiation of the Upper Churchill Power contract."

I guess you'll call the seconder, and I would like to lay this before you by resolution.

MR. LETTO: (Inaudible.)

MS. COADY: I beg your pardon?

MR. LETTO: Seconded by me.

MS. COADY: It's seconded by my hon. colleague, the Member for Labrador West.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. COADY: May I table this, please?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. COADY: And I have copies here for you as well.

MR. SPEAKER: It's been moved by the Minister of Natural Resources and seconded that there be an amendment to the private member's resolution.

The House will now recess for a short period of time in consideration of that amended resolution.

Recess

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

In consideration of the proposed amendment, the Chair finds the amendment in order.

The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you for ruling the amendment – it is a friendly amendment. We wanted to make sure we had clarity, really specify the types of contracts.

Mr. Speaker, it is very, very important to the people of this province and very important to the Members of the House of Assembly that we do have the opportunity to have fulsome debate. That is why I think there have been so many concerns around Muskrat Falls.

I've spent the last year, Mr. Speaker, really trying to put Muskrat Falls on track, really working hard to make sure that we are moving in getting that done and getting it done as cost effectively as possible, because of course the project was sanctioned in 2012. We're now at the end of 2016, Mr. Speaker. By the time we entered into the picture, a lot of things had to be done.

As the people of the province know, we brought in EY and we looked at the cost and schedule. It was found to be unreasonable. We've implemented the recommendations of the EY report. We have come out with a new cost and schedule. We have a new CEO, a world-class CEO. We are doing all the work.

Mr. Speaker, there are those who say that the Muskrat Falls contract and the development of Muskrat Falls will actually be more detrimental to this province than even some of the other projects that have been underway.

Mr. Speaker, we did put this amendment, as I said, in a friendly manner forward so we could clarify and specify the types of agreements that this House should, would and could analyze, should anything ever occur on development on the Churchill River or should anything ever occur on the renegotiation of the Upper Churchill contract.

Mr. Speaker, it's very important to the people of this province. We are very open, transparent and we think it's important; therefore, we wanted to be supportive.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is certainly a pleasure to rise today to speak to this particular motion put forward by the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

Just to review it: “BE IT RESOLVED that any and all agreements respecting Churchill River hydro power shall be brought to the House of

Assembly for public debate and Members' vote prior to ratification.”

Now, I've certainly listened to the prior speakers and the Minister of Natural Resources in regard to some of her commentary on the actual motion and some of the issues she identified in the amendment in clarifying – in her perspective, I guess, and their side – how the attributes as outlined aren't more clearly defined. We'll go through that as we proceed through debate here this afternoon.

As my colleague from Topsail – Paradise mentioned when he was up, he went back and talked about some of the historic context of this particular motion. Obviously, it relates back to a development of Churchill Falls, previously the Hamilton River, and how the evolution of that dating back to the '50s in regard to Quebec and some initiatives they have taken in economic development and developing assets, and certainly electricity through hydro was a key pillar in their evolution as a province and in terms of driving their activity.

I think it's important to look back in that context and see where we've come, certainly leading up to the '60s, putting a letter of intent in order and then securing an agreement. I think it was in '69 in regard to how the project would operate from the perspective of ownership, who was going finance it and what were the long-term returns for the investors in that project.

We know what happened just recently on August 31, 2016. We saw the renewal of this kick in for an extra 25 years. Originally, it would have ended this year, in 2016. We know what that would have meant for our province if that had occurred. Now we're looking at 2041 in regard to the actual project.

When we look back, what transpired back then in regard to the reason for that renewal – I think my colleague had touched on that – it was the parameters and conditions that existed at that time. When you look at what had happened to the nationalization of hydro development and companies in Quebec in the '60s and how Premier Lesage, with his Minister of Natural Resources, René Lévesque, had looked at nationalizing, as I said, those hydro assets in Quebec.

Through that process down the road, they had gained I think it was about a 20 per cent share in BRINCO, which was the entity that was basically financing the project. Having members sit on Hydro-Québec and sit on BRINCO, obviously they had good insight into the finances and how the project was going.

So through that, through the information they'd acquired, and the project, they knew there was trouble in regard to looking forward and completing the actual project and greater finances needed to be raised. So, as I said, within that context in terms of Hydro-Québec and sitting on BRINCO they had that information and, in so doing, were able to commit to picking up some of that cost and, in return, demanded that they receive an automatic renewal in 2016. That was granted and, unfortunately, we've seen that occur just a few months back, thus we look to 2041 in regard to this agreement that was signed, I think, in '69.

So we look to 2041 and folks will say, well, at that time all of the energy is coming back to Newfoundland and Labrador. Actually CF(L)Co, which is the operator of the project, holds Newfoundland Hydro for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, holds roughly 64 or 65 per cent of the shares; Hydro-Québec and the Province of Quebec hold somewhere around 34 or 35 per cent of the shares as well. So when we get to 2041, there's no automatic kick in that all of a sudden this is all going to revert to Newfoundland and Labrador.

As shareholders in a corporate entity there are obligations, certainly rights of Hydro-Québec and that will all have to be worked through in regard to what it looks like going forward. Now, let it be assured that the rate that's been paid and the rate that comes back to Newfoundland and Labrador for our 65 per cent share in CF(L)Co will be far greater than it is today and will be market rates.

Right now with the renewal clause that just kicked in, if I remember correctly, it's almost 0.02 of a cent that Hydro-Québec – we're getting in return for our water and power that is running through the generators, which is really amazing when you think about it, but that's the deal that was struck and that's accumulated tremendous wealth for Hydro-Québec.

Back a couple of years ago – I think there was an assessment done and it was well over \$20 billion that is being accrued to Hydro-Québec, and ultimately dividends paid to the Quebec government. So when you compare to what we have gotten, at that time, for that period we were under something like \$1 billion that we had received.

As I said, with the renewal agreement that kicked in just this year, and the extension, that rate dropped again. So not only was there not an escalator clause in the contract that, based on energy, based on the market, based on what happened with a variety of energy going forward that the clause or that the contract would be adjusted accordingly with an adjuster rate, actually when the renewal kicked in the rate went down. So we're getting less money now than we did when the contract started.

So certainly looking at all of that, the contract itself has been very limited in terms of the benefit to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Obviously originally – I have relatives, and we all do, at some point when the construction was going on in Labrador that folks went to Labrador, got employment, much-needed employment at the time, but the big difference is the equity and the investment. That you not only get the upfront returns but over a period of time you invest, you take risk, much like Muskrat Falls, in terms of building the project, but in taking that risk and putting the equity in, you draw down on that over an extended period of time, dividends are paid back to Nalcor, which is in turn going back to the government and to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and it's long term.

That's how you need to look at these projects. Obviously when this was financed by BRINCO and Hydro-Québec back in 1969 that was the long-term approach, and they knew to 2041 what they had and what the revenue was going to be. Now certainly never again in history I don't think will you ever see this type of contract ever agreed to like this, and certainly recognize it never should be.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. HUTCHINGS: And I hear my hon. Member on the other side. I ask him to extend

the same courtesy that I extend to him when I'm speaking, and will certainly look forward to hearing him speaking in debate.

The other crucial issue in regard to this contract when we look at it, and the issue is in regard to discussions now, we could be or maybe or could be having with Quebec – we're not really sure. It seems to change from day to day, week to week. We hear the Quebec media telling us that discussions are ongoing. We're hearing the Premier saying we're not there yet. And then we hear, well, there are no discussions going on; there's nothing to talk about.

The fundamental issue in regard to our water resources and hydro in Labrador has always been transmission. Even from the original project, the Upper Churchill, the major restriction was we needed transmission. And for a big project like that that's over 5,000 megawatts you need to move that and it had to go east to west. Unfortunately, federal governments since that time, Progressive Conservative, Conservative, Liberal governments we've always struggled with our constitutional rights in regard to 92(a) and the ability to wheel power in this country from province to province.

We talk about in the country today there are a lot of discussions going on about pipelines, and going west to east with upgrading gas, natural gas/oil pipelines. But it's unfortunate at the federal level we've had some but there's nothing definitive, from any federal government to date, to mandate that a province meet their constitutional obligations and any province be allowed to wheel power, from our perspective, from east to west.

When you look at section 92A(1) of the constitution with regard to non-renewal natural resources, forestry resource and electrical energy: In each province, the legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to, and it talks about exploration for non-renewable natural resources; development, conservation and management of non-renewable natural resources; development, conservation and management of sites and facilities in the province for generation and production of electrical energy.

Subsection (2) says: "In each province, the legislature may laws in relation to the export from the province to another part of Canada of the primary production from non-renewable natural resources and forestry resources in the province and the production from facilities in the province for the generation of electrical energy, but such laws may not authorize or provide for discrimination in prices or in supplies exported to another part of Canada."

And when you look at what's transpired over the last 40 to 50 years, specifically related to Labrador, it's always been that we have been confined in our ability based on the fact that we can't wheel power from east to west because that's a decision that Quebec made, and consecutive federal governments have not interceded to say you must adhere to the constitution and what is written.

So if you take that in that context, we're left always to say the partner to developing Labrador must be Quebec. And that's what we've said and certainly the Leader of the Opposition and our party has said in the past number of weeks. The conditions of discussing anything with Quebec, number one, should look at redress of the Upper Churchill. I was happy to hear the minister say that they're proceeding to the Supreme Court on the good-faith clause and no matter what happens, from what I understood from her, that's going to go ahead. So that's not up for negotiations. She did say that was going to the Supreme Court. She can correct me if I'm wrong but that was my understanding when she was up. So that's not up for discussion. That's going and we agree with that and it should go.

It's interesting that Quebec now is coming to say they want to bury the hatchet once we got this finally – the good-faith clause, which has gone through the Quebec court, gone through the Appeal Court and now it's going to make it to the Supreme Court of Canada. That's good. We need to make sure it goes and it's heard. Many believe we have a shot, so we need to make sure that we follow through on that and certainly do what needs to be done to see that through.

The other key component of that is, as I said, the transmission. Any discussion with Quebec should be preceded that they acknowledge and they confirm in writing that we have the right to

wheel power from east to west on the transmission grid. Like any other transmission grid that's used, you pay a fee to transmit power. If there's ability to or a requirement to build infrastructure, whether it's upgrading current transmission or building new transmission, that's all part of it. We understand that, we always have. There's a cost to pay.

The restriction, the frustration and the concern we have now with current government saying, yeah, we're all on with Quebec and they're the ones we're going to deal with, we're limiting ourselves to the opportunity. We're limiting our possibility of past mistakes and repeating them.

There's the whole Eastern Seaboard, there are provinces in Atlantic Canada with the federal government just saying now they're going to phase out coal-fired electric generation. We know there are plants in New Brunswick, plants in Nova Scotia, so they need to make some decisions quickly about what their needs are going to be. If we can wheel that power, we can meet their needs outside of Quebec if they can't meet what we want to do.

We're in the driver's seat now and there's no need to give it away. The Eastern Seaboard; again, they've moved away from small hydro, they'll move to big hydro. They're looking north for access to hydro development and electricity. So the markets are there and we should not be limiting ourselves with one player and that being Quebec.

So that's why this motion is so important, that it comes to the House so that all Members here have time to reflect on it and know the details. There's openness and transparency to it which will lead for solid choices for Newfoundland and Labrador, as we certainly continue to use the vast resources we have in Labrador for Labradorians and certainly for all of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LETTO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a pleasure for me to rise today to speak on this private Member's resolution.

The Leader of the Official Opposition and the Opposition House Leader have given us a very good lesson in the history of the Upper Churchill. A lot of what they're saying is right. I can't argue with that and I agree with the fact that it was not a good deal. But I will say, go out on a limb, that Muskrat Falls – I can't see where it's any better.

Anyway, I'm going to continue on with a bit of history because they would lead you to believe the only people who benefited from the Upper Churchill was Quebec. Well, I beg to differ, because Labrador West has benefited greatly. Because Labrador West has benefited, so has this province benefited from the Upper Churchill.

In 1960, when the Iron Ore Company was being built and constructed, they built the Twin Falls development; 225 megawatts of power in 1960. It was commissioned in 1963. It provided power to Western Labrador for the mines, for IOC, for Wabush mines, for the town sites and all the surrounding areas. It was good, cheap power. It was because of that, that we had many, many successful years of mining in Labrador West.

Now, when the Upper Churchill came on stream, or before it came on stream, there was recognition that in order to get the full potential and the full capacity out of the Upper Churchill, we would need the water that was going into the Twin Falls development corporation, into the Twin Falls project. Because of that, an agreement was signed at the time that would give the Churchill Falls Corporation at the time, that power from the Ossokmanuan Reservoir which was powering the Twin Falls. That would go into the Smallwood Reservoir. In return for that, Labrador West continued to enjoy the power rates that would have been developed through Twin Falls. That was the agreement that was signed.

We can say that, yes, they missed the boat on the power rates and what was sold to Quebec, absolutely. An escalation clause would have solved that. But in all fairness, I see a lot of talk on Premier Smallwood of the day and how he made some bad decisions. Well, they made

decisions for the day. I'm not here to defend that, but I will say to them and because of technological changes at the time, power rates were actually declining when that agreement was signed. So they had all good reasons to do what they did, even though we're paying for it today and we're paying for it dearly.

We understand the Opposition's desire to see to it that major agreements involving development of the hydroelectric potential on the Churchill River should be discussed in the House of Assembly. We totally agree. When we were in Opposition, we thought the Muskrat Falls agreement should have been discussed in the House of Assembly as well. But what we got from the former administration was a debate over a private Member's resolution, like the one we are having here today.

Today is different. We actually agree with it. They didn't.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: We believe in the role this House should play in major developments of the type we envision on the Churchill River. Our amendment is a friendly one. I'm glad it was accepted. It clarifies, through a change of wording, exactly what it is that we as a government and the Opposition desire to see.

There is a need to make sure that agreements of that type, that can have a significant impact on ratepayers and taxpayers, is fully examined and reviewed by the elected representatives of the people who own the resources being developed. That's exactly what we're doing.

There's also a concern regarding the renegotiation of the Upper Churchill contract, which I think has spawned all this debate today. When the time comes to deal with it – and that no doubt will be a time and it will come long before 2041 – it should be understood that such a decision would take place here in the people's House. The Premier has committed to that. Our amendment is a friendly one and better defines what it is we want and need to discuss. I think it better reflects what the Opposition was looking for in their main motion.

We also know the Official Opposition had some concerns related to recent comments coming out of Quebec regarding the Upper Churchill contract. This amendment will allay all those fears. What this amendment says is that any development or any progress that our Premier and Premier Couillard of Quebec would agree to or develop or even discuss will be discussed in this House.

We have no intention of entering into discussions with Quebec on the Upper Churchill, or any other major development for that matter, and agreeing to a deal that is not reviewed, not debated and not discussed in this House. Our amendment speaks directly to that concern by us including the Upper Churchill into the amendment.

That's not how things worked with the previous administration. Muskrat Falls went ahead without any real debate in the House of Assembly. Now they want to reverse that original position and join with us and have any future developments of this type debated by the Members of the House of Assembly. Now they want us to do what they were never prepared to do. Mr. Speaker, they have seen the light. No pun intended.

Now the Opposition wants all kinds of full disclosure in the House of Assembly, especially if we should ever hold discussions with Quebec on future energy developments. But they had no compulsion to provide that kind of transparency and accountability when they were in government and we were asking to debate the Muskrat Falls Project.

Shortly after sanctioning Muskrat Falls, the former administration made another move without advising the House of Assembly. They entered into a new agreement with, guess who, Emera, because they didn't want to deal with the big, bad boogeyman of Quebec. They amended their deal on the Maritime Link to provide even more electricity to Nova Scotia, and they did it all without once informing this House of what they were at.

Let me take you through the steps that happened to get this Emera deal on the way. This new agreement was negotiated with Emera without the House of Assembly having any knowledge

that talks were even taking place. The agreement gave Nova Scotia the lion's share of the available power from Muskrat.

In July of 2012, the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board – the UARB better known – said that Muskrat was not the lowest-cost option for Emera. The only way it could be deemed as the lowest-cost option they said was if they had access to more power at a low rate beyond the original 20 per cent. All this came up after we had sanctioned the project – or they had sanctioned the project – and before Emera had even signed anything. Guess what? It put us in a very weakened negotiating position.

Nova Scotian politicians felt the project was too expensive for Nova Scotian families. Why? Well, it was projected at the time that they would have to pay as much as \$1.50 – just imagine, \$1.50 – more for power to cover their capital costs on average over the first five years of operation.

Now look, what are we going to have to pay? A lot more than \$1.50, I can guarantee you that. And they still claim that Muskrat Falls was the right thing to do and with the least-cost option. So what did the government of the day do? They agreed to give Emera up to 60 per cent of the power from Muskrat.

AN HON. MEMBER: Where was the debate then?

MR. LETTO: Where was the debate then? There was no debate. Government at the time argued it would have no impact on the province because it was excess power meant for sale outside of the province anyway, but this arrangement means no profits can be derived from that power.

It has a huge impact on this province, Mr. Speaker. It has a huge, huge impact. All of that was done with no discussion in the House, no information provided to Members beforehand and, once again, it was approved by Cabinet in secret.

Here they are today talking about transparency and accountability and how we're not following through. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would venture to say that we are upholding our promises to the

people in this province to be more transparent, to be more accountable and to let the people know that any deals – and that's what the Minister of Natural Resources quite clearly said in her amendment. Any future agreements on the Churchill River, including, by the way, Gull Island, and any future discussions on the redress of the Upper Churchill would be discussed, reviewed and debated in this hon. House. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't think you can ask for much more than that. Our Premier has stated quite clearly that's going to be the case.

Now, in the interest of time, I'm going to close with a personal observation and opinion because I, as a person, since the day I was born and until today, I happen to live and lived next door to the great Province of Quebec. We had a good relationship. The iron ore towns of Wabush and Labrador City enjoy a marvelous relationship with the Province of Quebec. Now, it could always improve through the labour mobility.

AN HON. MEMBER: They're not boogeymen.

MR. LETTO: They're not boogeymen.

I grew up on the Straits of Labrador, next to the Quebec-Labrador border and the Quebec North Shore. There was nothing wrong with those people either, I can guarantee you.

So for those people over on the other side to suggest that we're dealing with the bad, bad Quebec – and if you look at the geography of this land, it's a great land of Labrador, which I know quite well – and I know my colleague here from Torngat Mountains knows, and my colleague from Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, as well from Lake Melville – that you have to be pragmatic with any future developments.

If we're going to develop Gull Island, it's no other way to go. I fly over that transmission line every weekend, or every week I return to my district. I see it. I see the line going from Churchill Falls out to Quebec. I see the line going from Churchill Falls to Labrador West.

Now, if we're going to receive the benefits from any future development in Labrador, it's the natural way to go. As the Premier has stated quite clearly in this House, any future development on the Churchill River will be done

in the best interests of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise and speak to this private Member's motion today that was put forward by our Leader, the Member for Topsail – Paradise. For those who may be just joining the debate, I'll read the motion one more time. It's only two lines.

“BE IT RESOLVED that any and all agreements respecting Churchill River hydro power shall be brought to the House of Assembly for public debate and Members' vote prior to ratification.”

Now there has been an amendment put forward by the Minister of Natural Resources. I appreciate the intent, and I would tend to agree that it's somewhat friendly. It does appear to be about clarifying intent and I'm happy to speak to that a little later in my remarks if time permits, but I have a lot of other things to say in the meantime.

The Leader of the Opposition started today by indicating this is really a matter of trust, and I believe that to be true.

I was pleased to hear the Premier in Question Period today finally agree to a debate in this House about any future agreements related to Churchill River hydro power. That in itself was progress because that's something we've been calling for, for some time.

If it was today's private Member's motion that helped bring him to that conclusion and to that commitment, then so be it. I'm just glad to hear him say those words in Question Period today because this is an issue that affects everybody in Newfoundland and Labrador. It's an issue that affects future generations in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Right now from the Upper Churchill, for every dollar of profit, Newfoundland and Labrador gets only two cents. We have seen billions of dollars going to Quebec that could have been coming here. And Ottawa has played a role in that, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ottawa has played a role in that by not insisting on giving us a transmission corridor across Quebec and locking us into a difficult bargaining position; but, Ottawa was no doubt spooked by Quebec's Quiet Revolution of many years ago and not willing to risk a breakup of the country. I understand that. So we have no corridor. We got the Upper Churchill contract instead.

Mr. Speaker, years later, we are still under its grip. It's continuing to siphon money out of this province and into the coffers of Quebec. They pay less for electricity than they ought to be paying on the principle of fairness. They obviously don't want to relinquish that sweetheart deal. Why would they? That's why they fight us when we challenge them in the courts even if everybody privately recognizes that it's not a fair arrangement and it's not a just arrangement.

For decades, while we were a poor, have-not province, struggling to provide basic services to our people, they were reaping profits by marketing Upper Churchill power.

Let's go back to 2002, which is not that long ago, at that point Quebec was ready to bargain with us to develop the Lower Churchill. The Liberal government, led by Roger Grimes, was in a similar position to the one the current government finds itself in after only a year in office: fiscally struggling, lacking any economic plan, buried in debt and in the political dog house.

So Quebec, back in 2002, saw an opening. They were ready to buy us with our own money. Quebec was ready to buy us at the time, in 2002, with our own money. We didn't allow it to

happen then and we can't allow it to happen now.

They might well have got their deal, but the chair of our Hydro board at the time, and others, decided to protest the sellout by resigning and walking away from their own government. These were people who were appointed by the Liberal government.

So we don't know for sure where that failed deal might have led. It certainly couldn't have been good and if it led to the Hydro board chair to break ranks with a government of his own political persuasion and publicly walk away, then it couldn't have been good.

We were spared the consequences then, but Quebec is a competitor with infinite patience. They know better than anyone else in Canada that mastering the electricity sector can lead to enormous wealth and self-reliance.

Electric supremacy was the foundation for the campaign to become maîtres chez nous – masters of our own house. The Leader of the Opposition referenced that earlier. Quebecers know their history and they have every right to be proud of it because they are master strategists; second to none in this country.

So we shouldn't demonize the Quebec government or Hydro-Québec. We shouldn't demonize the people of Quebec. We ought to admire them and emulate them and learn to take control of our own destiny, just as they have taken control of theirs. The one thing, Mr. Speaker, we must not do is let ourselves be outmaneuvered by them. It's critical that we not let ourselves be outmaneuvered by them.

When we hear that our own government today is quietly meeting with them – Mr. Speaker, I'm having difficulty hearing myself.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask all hon. Members to respect the hon. Member who has the opportunity to speak.

Thank you.

MR. KENT: When we hear our own Liberal government today is quietly meeting with Quebec, so quietly in fact that the Premier is reluctant to let us know what he's up to, then all of us can be forgiven for being a little suspicious that something is afoot. The master strategist in Quebec is up to something. I'm certainly not referring to our own Premier as a master strategist.

We have a Premier who has already earned a nickname for dodging. He's earned a reputation for not being completely forthcoming with the facts, to put it very politely in the hon. House. Mr. Speaker, he's a Premier who's at 16 per cent in the polls. So would he be prepared to do a deal if it means perhaps ensuring his political survival? Would he sell out Newfoundland and Labrador if it means ensuring his own political survival?

I sure hope not, Mr. Speaker. But based on history, and we only have to look back as far as 2002 and we only have to look at what's happened under this administration in the past year, I think we have every right to be suspicious and to be concerned.

Whether it was the involvement in the severance decision for the former Nalcor CEO, or the existence of a policy on something as simple as flying flags at Confederation Building, or anyone in his office being involved in having posters removed out on the parkway, we hear one thing from the Premier only to find out later that the facts were somewhat different from what he told us they were.

So when the Natural Resources minister of Quebec says that the premier of Quebec and the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador have been discussing Churchill power for months, that's very concerning and the denials of our own Premier now don't reassure me that the discussions aren't ongoing, Mr. Speaker.

When the Premier says there are no discussions but then, on the other hand, says what's wrong with discussions, and then when he says there's no deal yet. Well, it sure sounds like something is going on.

When the new CEO of Nalcor brings Hydro-Québec officials into Muskrat Falls for a tour

and when our Premier gives a courtesy call to the Quebec premier to tell him nicely that we're taking them to the Supreme Court, it sure looks like something is going on.

This year, the Upper Churchill contract entered the renewal phase when the lopsided deal got even worse, even more unfair to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and even more lucrative for the Province of Quebec.

So we have every right to be even more outraged than we were a year ago because of Quebec's failure to provide redress and to right the long-standing wrong. But now with the happy relationship apparently between our two provincial governments, instead of hearing outrage and condemnation, the kind of condemnation we heard from Liberal Premier Brian Tobin, the kind of condemnation we heard from PC Premier Danny Williams when they were in office, instead we're seeing the current Premier offer olive branches.

Instead of the strong stance of an able competitor, we see nothing from this Premier but some sort of courting ritual, trying to curry favour and probably to ensure his own political survival.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Bonavista is out of control again today. I know he's a far distance from the Chair but I can certainly hear him loud and clear. I wish his constituents could see his behaviour in this hon. House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. KENT: Exactly, Mr. Speaker.

Let's not forget that we are a stronger competitor now than ever before in this federation. The Muskrat Falls Project breaks the geographic blockade and the economic stranglehold that Quebec has used against our province since the days of that quiet revolution many years ago.

The Muskrat Falls Project is a project that I am fully prepared to defend and fully prepared to support. It gives us a new power export route

into the Maritimes and into the New England States. No longer are we at the mercy of a Quebec utility that refused to grant us fair wheeling rights, even though they were obligated to do so by the Americans to whom they are supplying power.

Historically, Mr. Speaker, Quebec has used every trick in the book against us. They even tried to buy New Brunswick Power, which would have effectively extended the blockade of our province to the American border. But fortunately, the people of New Brunswick tossed out the Liberal government that tried to make that secret deal.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: And it will be interesting to see what happens in this province in the next few years. Secret deals may look good in the back rooms but when the people see them, and when the spotlight is shown on them, these wonderful deals may no longer look so wonderful.

So given the magnitude of the implications of what we're talking about in this House today, which can extend for generations and mean tens or even hundreds of billions of dollars in the long run, how can we be faulted, how can anyone be faulted for wanting to be careful about what specifically gets signed.

I do have a few minutes left. I will speak to the amendment that has been put forward by the Minister of Natural Resources. The resolution, as amended, would read: "Be it Resolved: that all future agreements respecting Churchill River Hydro Power developments and renegotiation of the Upper Churchill Power contract shall be brought to the House of Assembly for public debate and members' vote prior to ratification."

So upon reflection on this, I think I'm prepared to accept that. It is, in fact, an effort to clarify intent, but the question I pose to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Premier and to the government opposite, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that they give us assurance – if we're going to support such an amendment, which I think is made in good faith, give us some assurance that there have been no new agreements, or amendments to existing agreements since they came into office, because what we're talking

about today is what happens next in this story. But we also need to be concerned about what's gone on over the past year that may not have been brought to light.

So I recognize the Minister of Natural Resources won't have an opportunity to speak further in debate today, but I do hope that at the next available opportunity she can assure us that there have not been any new agreements since they came into office. I think if that concern could be addressed, I personally would have no trouble supporting the amendment that's been presented. I wish you had an opportunity to rise right now and speak to that, but unfortunately on Private Members' Day we're fairly restricted in the format and flow of debate.

Any government that denies our right to see, debate and vote on a deal before it is finalized is showing utter disregard for the people of this province and for the people's House. So it's not just about bringing it to the House once everything is –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KENT: – ready for final signing. It's about providing an opportunity for us to know in principle what's been negotiated and how it may impact the future of this province.

What are they prepared to risk, Mr. Speaker, is one of the concerns that we have. Will they let the people decide for themselves what is in their best interests? A government that hides is ashamed of what the light of day will reveal. Any deal that cannot withstand public scrutiny is not a deal that we should sign.

There's actually a story in the *Bible* about a man who sold out his birthright for a bowl of stew because he was hungry. To fill his own belly he bequeathed a different kind of hunger on the generations of people that followed him. So let's be wary of those who are hungry for a quick deal, because in their desperation they might strike a bargain that generations of people in Newfoundland and Labrador will live to regret, just as we regret the deal that was made generations ago.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KENT: That's what's at stake, Mr. Speaker. And unfortunately there are a few Members in the corner that don't take that seriously. On this side of the House we take it extremely seriously.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: So it's fine for the Member for Bonavista and the Members for Labrador West and Terra Nova to catcall and howl. We're having a very serious debate about an issue that affects the future of everybody in this province and future generations, Mr. Speaker. I wish they'd show a little bit more respect for this hon. House.

The Liberals have been calling out about past debates on the Muskrat Falls Project. They turned down opportunities to debate, Mr. Speaker. There was indeed, finally, very open debate and an enormous amount of disclosure and scrutiny by independent bodies with expertise as well.

Let's not forget the Muskrat Falls Project wasn't a deal with Quebec. A deal with Quebec is a whole other kettle of fish because of the history and the shackles we continue to wear, because of an un-redressed Upper Churchill contract that is costing us fair returns right now, this year, next year, the year after and the year after that. When it's Quebec that we are dealing with, the level of scrutiny and openness that we brought to the Muskrat Falls Project is the very least we need. We need even more than that, Mr. Speaker. That's what we're calling for today.

I hope the Minister of Natural Resources or the Premier will be able to answer the question I've raised to give us some assurance that there haven't been agreements negotiated over the past year that may affect the very issues we're talking about today. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your attention and for the opportunity to participate in debate today.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I am glad to have the opportunity to speak to the private Member's motion that has been put forward today and to speak to it as it has been amended. I never know on Private Members' Day, unless it's the day that we bring forward one, whether or not we'll get a chance to speak because of the way things go, but luckily I am able to get up.

What I wanted to speak to, in speaking to the private Member's motion as amended, is not so much the content of agreements that could come to the House, but to the whole process. I think it's an important process that we need to think about.

While I agree, I have no problem with the motion or the resolution either as it stands or as amended – because the principle of things coming into this House for discussion is obviously one that I believe in. I think I showed when we had the filibusters in this House over Bills 60 and 61 that I absolutely thought everything should be debated in this House around what was going on at that time.

Naturally I stand for this motion. However, I think there's something else we need to be thinking about with regard to the process around the agreements – whatever we call them, as we have it in the motion: agreements respecting Churchill River hydro power developments – and that is the fact that with Muskrat Falls, the government in power changed something that has been in practice in this province which is, I think, an essential part of democracy, just as much as our sitting here in this House, and that is the role of the Public Utilities Board.

When this project was taken out from under the responsibility – when I say this project I mean Muskrat Falls. When it was taken out from under the responsibility and the purview of the Public Utilities Board, I think a major error was made in this House of Assembly.

We have with the mover of today, the Official Opposition, which was the party that made that

happen. And we have in the government a party that is continuing to allow that to happen. I think this is a wonderful opportunity to talk about the role of the Public Utilities Board and why we think that, along with discussion in the House of Assembly, all of the agreements that have to do with energy in this province should be going to the Public Utilities Board.

I want to read now a couple of things to back up what I'm saying because a lot of people don't know all of these details. One is what is in the *Electrical Power Control Act*. That's the act that outlines the PUB's responsibility. In section 3(b)(iii) it says: "all sources and facilities for the production, transmission and distribution of power in the province should be managed and operated in a manner (iii) that would result in power being delivered to consumers in the province at the lowest possible cost consistent with reliable service."

Managed and operated; all sources and all facilities for the production, transmission and distribution – this was extremely important and still is. We have, in this House, two parties who have obviously decided that the PUB should not be involved. So what I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, is yes, bring discussion into the House. Yes, bring the agreements into the House; however, bring back into the picture the PUB. Bring it back in for Muskrat Falls and bring it back in for anything else that happens in this province with regard to energy; energy as its being developed and energy production, energy transmission.

That is its role. If we really want the ratepayers of the province, the people of this province to be protected when it comes to the cost of electricity, the body that has been given that responsibility under the *Electrical Power Control Act*, is the PUB. That's the body that is there to protect the people of the province and to make sure we have reliable and sustainable power in the province. So I have never agreed with the fact that responsibility with regard to Muskrat Falls was taken away in bills that we discussed in this House. I will never agree with it.

Now what happened during that time was that we decided, as the NDP, to try to get a sense of what people in the province were thinking. And so there was a petition that was put together that

literally thousands of people signed, Mr. Speaker – literally thousands. Here's what the main points of the petition were that people said they agreed with: The PUB is the entity responsible for the regulation of electric utilities in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Muskrat Falls Project proposes potentially the single largest expenditure the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has considered. Well, we certainly know that's true. The PUB is an independent quasi-judicial regulatory body capable of providing an unbiased and apolitical decision on the Muskrat Falls proposal and the government is breaking its own commitment to greater transparency and accountability by not allowing the PUB to review the Muskrat Falls proposal.

Thousands of people signed that petition. Thousands of people showed what they thought. I would have been happy if that was the motion that was brought into this House today, a motion to revert; but, of course, the Official Opposition was the ones who threw the PUB out. So I suppose I couldn't expect them to bring it back, but I'd love to see this government show itself as recognizing that the PUB is the place where we should be having these discussions.

Now, if we bring them into the House, here is the challenge. If you want to have these discussions here in the House of Assembly we need a process where it's not just us as MHAs voicing our opinions, but where expert opinion is involved. That would mean that we have a legislative committee, one of our statutory committees where the discussion would take place, where we would actually bring in experts into this House and speak to us.

Right now as we are structured in the House, right now the way we operate – and I know I'm a Member of the Standing Orders Committee and we're looking at this, but right now the way we operate, this is not the place where you're going to get a full discussion looking at the expertise around any power agreement. It's not; not the way we're structured.

Even if we bring in our statutory committees, our legislative committees, standing committees that operate the way I think they should operate, even if we can have open discussions of those

committees and we can call in experts to speak to us, it still wouldn't be a regulatory body. It still would not be a body that would be able to make sure that things are going to run well. What it would do, would be make public the whole process and would make sure that we would be better informed in making decisions in the House when we have, as the decision makers, that responsibility to make decisions, but it doesn't take away from the role of a public utility.

It's very interesting that in Nova Scotia; while we're going through the process here, Nova Scotia had to go through a process as well. Because as we know, a key part of the Muskrat Falls Project was an agreement with the Government of Nova Scotia to build a cable from the Island of Newfoundland to Cape Breton, connecting both provinces so that there would be access to the electricity markets for Muskrat Falls.

The difference with Nova Scotia was, of course, that the company that was going to be doing the work and which is doing the work, Emera, is a private company. However, at the time, the Government of Nova Scotia recognized what needed to be done in Nova Scotia. Nalcor's deal at the time was to give Nova Scotia – this is really important information that I'm not sure everybody in the House knows. At the time, they were to give Nova Scotia 20 per cent of the power from Muskrat Falls free for 35 years. In return Emera, the private electricity provider, would pay to build the Maritime Link.

Nova Scotia's government – at the time was an NDP government – introduced legislation that made certain that the Maritime Link would be reviewed by the utility and review board. That's their equivalent of the PUB. The government said at the time, Nova Scotians need assurance that it will be built – meaning the Maritime Link – in their best interest.

The UARB, which is their equivalent of the PUB, did look at the deal. They didn't like what they saw, and here's what's really interesting. They ruled that without having a guaranteed price for surplus Nalcor Energy, the Maritime Link was not the lowest-cost alternative for the people of Nova Scotia. So what happened? We

know what happened but I want to remind us what the UARB did.

They made a ruling that made things better for the people of Nova Scotia. They refused to sanction the project until guaranteed access to additional electricity to meet Nova Scotia's needs at market rates until 2041. They made that ruling. Without the Maritime Link, however, Muskrat Falls couldn't go forward. Muskrat Falls had to have access to Nova Scotia. It had to be able to sell power to Nova Scotia. So the UARB, Nova Scotia public utility board, ensured that Nova Scotians would get cheap electricity prices.

We were held ransom on that deal because of the ruling of their public utility board. That's what a public utility board does; it takes care of the people of the province. That's why it is absolutely essential that we do more than making sure we have debates in this House. We do more than making sure that we have a legislative committee, which the amendment doesn't speak to but which I put forward, needs to be in place. We do more than having a discussion in Committee with experts coming in. We let the PUB do its work. That is what has to happen.

The PUB recently released its thorough investigation because of DarkNL – that none of us will forget. The report details how “widespread and extended supply disruptions in 2013, 2014, and 2015 were the result of multiple failures by Hydro across various aspects of its operations over the course of a number of years.”

The report says, “Hydro failed to meet the standard of generally accepted sound public utility practice and failed to fulfil its obligation to provide an adequate and reliable supply of power to customers.” Now that's the cold, hard truth the people of the province waited far too long to hear. They didn't want to have to hear that but they knew that it was a reality.

The PUB has made recommendations for NL Hydro which we hope will continue to be implemented. That's the role of the PUB. That's what we have to put in their hands. Yes, bring the agreements into the House. Yes, we'll vote for this amendment; but, I am asking this

government to look at their responsibility to undo the damage that was done in this House by getting rid of the PUB and to ensure the future protection of the people of this province by bringing the Muskrat Falls and all other future developments back into the PUB. Nothing around energy, energy development and energy production should be taken out of the hands of our Public Utilities Board for the good of the people of this province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Osborne): The hon. the Member for Stephenville – Port au Port.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

It's certainly a pleasure to join today in the debate. Of course we're debating the private Member's resolution brought forth by the Member for Topsail – Paradise, with the Minister of Natural Resources making one minor amendment.

Just to read it into the record here: “Be it Resolved: that all future agreements respecting Churchill River Hydro Power developments and renegotiation of the Upper Churchill Power contract shall be brought to the House of Assembly for public debate and members' vote prior to ratification.”

I think our amendment was quite friendly, as was pointed out. I believe the Member for Mount Pearl North also said they would perhaps be agreeing with the amendment. It's just interesting that we're hearing this type of debate today.

We certainly, on the government side, understand the importance of openness and transparency and accountability. And we're certainly committed, as the Premier as stated, as the Minister of Natural Resources has stated, to debating things that are of importance, specifically things of this magnitude. We're talking about the development of power and we're talking about things that are going to

affect all of the citizens in our province. So we're certainly open to debating this stuff in the House of Assembly.

What was pointed out by the Member for Lab West in commentary to the subject, there is really a great bit of irony in seeing this being brought forth today when we're hearing that they want us to debate this type of legislation in the House of Assembly. The Members opposite hadn't had any public debate on Muskrat Falls in the House of Assembly. There was no debate. The only debate that did occur was based on a private Member's resolution brought in by then Premier Dunderdale suggesting that the government would support the sanctioning of the Muskrat Falls Project.

And so, that was the only type of debate we heard on the subject, despite cries from the Opposition Members of the time, despite cries from the public at the time, and this is the only type of debate we heard. So we've clearly stated we're more than willing to debate this in the House of Assembly.

The other thing that took place, I guess, was around the energy agreement and the agreement with Emera, and that was something that also didn't take place in the House of Assembly. That's another important component to the Muskrat Falls Project that did not take place here in the House of Assembly.

We heard today from Members opposite all about the history of the Lower Churchill and we've learned a little bit about the history, and we can understand and respect that. And they're still quite upset with Quebec about that. We've made it quite clear that Quebec is province in this country and so is Newfoundland and Labrador, and that as long as we can speak with other provinces, and our Premier can negotiate with other premiers, and there's going to be a benefit to the Province of Newfoundland, we'll continue with that type of dialogue.

But the Premier has also been very clear that he would not remove the appeal to the Supreme Court for the good-faith clause, and I'm not sure if the Members opposite were present all week during Question Period but I think the Premier was quite clear. I was here; I heard it loud and clear last week and again this week as well.

We also heard this afternoon about some of the risks. And, of course, the Member for Ferryland had mentioned getting involved in hydroelectric projects is with great risk. Certainly, when they got involved with the Muskrat Falls Project there were risks involved as well. And, of course, that's why when there are risks involved in something to the magnitude of hydroelectric projects they should certainly be debated in the House of Assembly. I believe they should certainly be debated in the House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FINN: So I think this PMR is coming forward now on the whole notion based on questions in Question Period around our Premier speaking with the premier of Quebec. I believe that is kind of what they are hinting at here because they want to make sure that nothing gets done, I guess, without them knowing about any of the conversations. As I've said, we've been very clear, the Minister of Natural Resources has been very clear, but for some reason this Opposition has a great bone to pick with Quebec. The Member for Topsail – Paradise even just said the other day that Quebec was holding us to our knees, and Quebec is still holding us to our knees now.

That type of language and that type of dialogue and that type of conversation doesn't encourage any good conversations with premiers from other provinces. They're so ticked off with Quebec I think that's where some of the rushing of the Muskrat project came from. There's no greater overcorrection for the Upper Churchill Project than Muskrat Falls.

They were so determined to put that through, because they no longer want Quebec to determine the fate of Newfoundland and Labrador. They were so determined to force that through. There's one thing to be mad at Quebec, it's another thing to rush through a project, \$11.4 billion – \$11.4 billion, the most expensive project in the province's history was not debated in this House of Assembly, and now they have the gall to introduce a private Members' motion suggesting that any future conversations around the Upper Churchill should be debated in the House of Assembly. It is just complete irony and it flies in the face of everything that the previous

administration had said and done with respect to the Muskrat Falls Project.

Mr. Speaker, I understand my time is getting short and there's just a minute or two here. As I understand, the Members opposite will get the opportunity to close. But as I said, it's just certainly something to hear that they want to now debate things in the House of Assembly coming from an administration – were there any fall sittings in the House of Assembly? I think there were a couple of instances – did Premier Williams have a fall sitting? I think they were open for 34 days or something in 2008. And then Premier Dunderdale didn't have a fall sitting as well. They're not a fan of doing things in the House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Stephenville – Port au Port.

MR. FINN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the protection there. I know the Members opposite are getting a little hostile, but they certainly have all afternoon to close debate. I was enjoying the fact that I could contribute to debate. I think the Member for Mount Pearl North enjoyed most of his time picking on the Member for Bonavista, which had no due course in the subject of debate here.

Again, the point being, some complete irony here this afternoon. We have an Opposition now that wants to discuss things in the House of Assembly, and as I said, we're more than welcome to doing that. Our Premier has committed to that and the Minister of Natural Resources has committed to that. And I look forward to being a part of that process.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition Leader is now speaking and will close debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

It's always good to have a little bit of entertainment in the House of Assembly. I say to the Member for Stephenville – Port au Port, I thank him for his input on the bill this afternoon, but it was the Member for Bonavista who was interrupting you, not Members over here. It was the Member for Bonavista who was calling out fear mongering, yelling out fear mongering when the Speaker rose, I say to the Member opposite. It was your own Member that was interrupting. We're glad the Speaker rose and shut that down so we could hear what you were saying because you wanted to have valuable input.

I thank the Minister of Natural Resources for her comments today, also the Members for Ferryland and Labrador West, Mount Pearl North, St. John's East – Quidi Vidi and finally the Member for Stephenville – Port au Port.

The only thing the Member for Port au Port didn't answer – when the Member for Mount Pearl North rose today and he talked about the amendment. If people are just tuning in, we brought forward a motion to the House today that says: “BE IT RESOLVED that any and all agreements respecting Churchill River hydro power shall be brought to the House of Assembly for public debate and members' vote prior to ratification.”

The government has brought forward an amendment. So if passed, it would change the resolution that all future agreements respecting Churchill River or hydro power developments and renegotiations of the Upper Churchill contract shall be brought to the House of Assembly for public debate and Members' vote prior to ratification.

So “any and all” is changed to “all future.” The Member for Mount Pearl North raised that as a bit of a concern and asked Members opposite when they rose, and that happened to be the Member for Stephenville – Port au Port, to confirm are there any other deals been done that we don't know about. Have any agreements been entered? Have there been any MOUs, any understandings reached and so on? The Member for Stephenville – Port au Port didn't respond to that during his time up. He was the only last Member from the government side to speak in

the latter part of the debate who could have responded to Mount Pearl North.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to say now I hear the Minister of Natural Resources over saying no, no, no, no MOUs, no agreements and so on. What the Members across the way are asking us to do is to trust them. Trust them that there are no MOUs. They never spoke to it in debate, but they are saying across the floor here now.

With all respect to Members opposite, I hope that's the case. I really do. I really hope that's the case. When I look at the amendment I have to – I heard the comments by the Minister of Natural Resources as to why they brought forward the amendment but to say that all future agreements versus what we had said that any and all agreements respecting Churchill hydro be brought to the House, it kind of changes – I'm not sure why the change. We're having a little bit of difficulty saying why they would do that. She gave an explanation for it, but I ask Members opposite to forgive me for being a little bit suspicious, concerned about the intent of the amendment. I ask you to forgive me for being a little bit skeptical, because it was Members opposite who campaigned last year and said trust us. It was the Premier who campaigned last year –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. P. DAVIS: – and said trust me. He said trust me. He campaigned to the people of the province and said, elect us and trust us. He said there'll be no tax increases. He said trust me, no job layoffs. That's what he said.

He said this year, after he became the Premier, trust me, there's no flag policy. Through ATIPP and other means we find out, well, there is a flag policy. He said trust me; I didn't know there was any severance for Mr. Martin. I didn't know that. And we do ATIPP and get records and find out, well, he did know. He said trust me. Trust me, he said, no one in my office did anything to remove those posters; yet, we find out well, yes, someone did.

He said, trust me, our government will have no more political appointments. That's what he said

to the people. He campaigned last year, no more political appointments. I will take the politics out of appointments. That's what they campaigned on.

I ask Members to forgive us to be a little bit skeptical when we're being asked to trust you, because the people of the province are having a bit of a difficulty with that.

I hear the Member for Labrador West laughing, but I say to the Member, I'm not one that relies heavily on polls. I'm not. I always say well polls change and they move and they reflect how people feel at the time, but the 16 per cent where the leader is today – the Premier today is at 16 per cent approval rate; 84 per cent of the people of the province, according to that poll, don't approve of the Premier's work and what he's done as the Premier – 84 per cent – because people have become skeptical.

They've been asked to trust the government, they've been asked to trust the Premier. And because of their own actions over the 12 months they've been in power – relatively a short period of time in many ways, but as the pollsters have indicated, the fastest, quickest, unprecedented in modern times fall from being elected as a government to a very, very low level.

They're asking us to trust them on this amendment. We have trouble with that, and for a very good reason.

The reason we brought forward this private member's resolution today is because I've stood here in the House of Assembly over the last week and this week and have asked the Premier several times if he would commit to disclosing any deals – that if they reach a deal with Quebec, would he disclose it publicly, would he bring it here to the House of Assembly to have a full debate by Members and a vote by Members of the House of Assembly; Members of the House of Assembly, elected by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to represent their districts and to do what's right for their province and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Premier has had lots of opportunity to answer that question, Mr. Speaker. Many, many times he could have answered the question, and

the first time the Premier gave any indication that he would bring it to the House was today in Question Period, minutes before this resolution came to the floor of the House of Assembly.

It kind of reminds me of last week when, for three months my colleague from Ferryland, August 1, wrote the Minister of Natural Resources asking for: Can you give us the groundwork of the update on Muskrat Falls as presented by the CEO in June – in June publicly gave an update. On August 1, he wrote the Minister of Natural Resources and asked can you give us an update? Three-and-a-half months later – I think it was 12 minutes before the House opened for the fall session – he received a reply.

So it's the same kind of thing that happened today. A few minutes before we go to debate this resolution, the Premier makes a comment in Question Period that he intends to bring it to the House of Assembly. Trust me, trust me.

Again, I almost feel like I need to apologize for it but I don't need to apologize for saying, well, I have trouble trusting you. I sometimes trust people too much, sometimes to a fault and then criticized for it later. I want to trust you. I want to believe what you're telling me, but when you have so much that has happened in 12 months of governance by Members opposite – we are not going to increase the HST, no job losses.

Members opposite, the minister opposite there had graphics posted through social media during the campaign saying no job losses. The Premier used words like, not on my watch. Now they want us to trust them on what is likely the most important issue that this government may deal with.

The resources of Labrador, the resources of the Churchill River are significant to every Newfoundlander and Labradorian, every current Newfoundlander and Labradorian and for generations to come, because Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that live and love this province, and live in this province today are paying a price for the decisions made back in 1969. In 1969, when people thought there was going to be great deal. It was going to be a great project for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Today, for every dollar of profit realized from the Upper Churchill, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians receive two cents. I think it's 17 times – I don't think, Mr. Speaker, there has been a Premier in the history of our province who sat in the Premier's Office on the eighth floor here in the Confederation Building and never said to themselves, or said to others, and thought in their own mind: I need to fix this. This is significant. This is the biggest loss – tens of billions of dollars of lost profits to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. If Quebec was to do a deal with Newfoundland and Labrador – think about this. If Quebec was to do a deal with Newfoundland and Labrador, how are they going to fund it? From the money they earned off the Upper Churchill that should be ours in the first place.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: Think about that. It's significant, Mr. Speaker. It cannot be overstated.

The government opposite wants us to trust them. Trust them that they're going to do the right thing. After countless questions on this matter over the last week or so, when we found out from the minister of Natural Resources in Quebec that for several months the premier of Quebec and the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador have been having discussions about the Churchill River – that's what the minister in Quebec has said.

Now, if that's not so, the Premier has now had lots of time – he's spoken to the premier of Quebec. The Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador has had lots of time to say: Well, the minister withdrew his comments or apologized for his comments or misspoke or misunderstood or whatever. That hasn't happened.

Even though he spoke to the premier – I think this Monday he spoke to the premier, at least two days or so ago he spoke to the premier of Quebec, but we haven't heard that. So I can only take from that that the minister of Natural Resources in Quebec was speaking honestly when he said there have been discussions ongoing between the two current premiers, the premier of Quebec and the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, for several months. I can only take him at his word because

I haven't heard anything substantial from Members opposite to say that's not so.

I'm sure they would have wanted to put this out as quickly as they could, to correct the record as quickly as they could. I'm sure they could have, because that's what the Premier is going to do. He wanted to speak to the premier of Quebec so he could find out why this comment was made and why he would say this. The Premier stood here in his place and said there are no discussions taking place, but we haven't heard anything corrected, and we are just to trust him. We are to trust him.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. P. DAVIS: Well, I say to the Member for Labrador, the Premier has given us reason to be hesitant to trust him. That's the whole point of my conversation here today. The Member asked me if I don't believe him.

Well, it's up to the Premier to tell us the way it is. It's up to the Premier. The same Premier who said I'm not going to raise the HST. The same Premier who said there's no flag policy. The same Premier who said he didn't know that Mr. Martin was going to get severance. The same Premier who said he was going to take the politics out of appointments.

So do you blame me because I have a trust issue with the Premier of the province? I can tell you, I know lots of people, not only here, I got calls from people today saying: I'm some glad you brought this forward because I'm having problems with this government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. P. DAVIS: Oh yes, really.

There's the Member for Terra Nova –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. P. DAVIS: Oh, we got lots of calls about you, I'd say to the Member for Terra Nova. We got lots of calls. Don't worry; we have a file piling up on you. Don't worry about that, I say

to the Member for Terra Nova. Now I just caused the phone to ring again.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

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

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

So, Mr. Speaker, I will tell the Members opposite because of the trust issue that is growing and the pattern issue, that is the concern we have with their amendment. I will support their amendment today. I will take the minister at her word today – I will – and we'll support the amendment because I believe, even amended, it serves the purpose that we set out to achieve today.

The purpose of ensuring that a deal done that could potentially impact Newfoundlanders and Labradorians for generations to come, a deal regarding our assets in Labrador, the Churchill River, a deal if it be the Upper Churchill in Churchill Falls, if it be Gull Island or if it be Muskrat Falls, if the government opposite is to do a deal involving that, especially Quebec now that we know you were talking to them, a deal involving the Churchill hydro assets that they'll bring it to the House of Assembly. That's what we want, Mr. Speaker. We want all Members, Members opposite, Members in the government side, Members from the Third Party and us as an Opposition want a chance to know what the documents contain, to know the full disclosure on it and have a debate.

I'll take them at their word that even amended as it is, it will still accomplish that. So we will support the amendment and support the motion here today. I ask all Members to do the same.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Is the House ready for the question?

Do the Members agree with the amendment as put forward by the Minister of Natural Resources?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

The private Member's resolution, as amended.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

I declare the motion, as amended, approved.

It being private Members' day, this House now stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.