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Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

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Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Admit strangers, please.

Order, please!

I'd like to welcome all the Members back to the House of Assembly and I'd also like to welcome all those who are watching. We put out a press release last week, but I would also like to welcome all those who will appreciate the fact that, now, for the first hour of each session, we provide our broadcast with closed captioning.

I'd like to thank all Members of the Management Commission –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: – and, in particular, all those in the House of Assembly staff who made this possible. I think in the spirit of accessibility, it's definitely a great step forward.

Welcome to all of you.

In the Speaker's gallery today, I would like to welcome Mr. Trevor Paine and Ms. Janet Paine. Trevor is an inductee of the Newfoundland and Labrador Soccer Hall of Fame and was most recently recognized as a honorary lifetime member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Soccer Association – one of only 10 people who have been bestowed this honour.

Trevor is retiring later this summer from the public sector and has spent his career supporting recreation and sports development in Labrador.

Welcome to both of you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: In the public gallery I just had the pleasure of meeting, and I'd like to welcome, Mr. Joshua Parsons, who is the subject of a Member's statement this afternoon. He is joined by his girlfriend, Christina, and his parents Velma and Randy Parsons.

Welcome to all of you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Today, we'll hear Members speak from the Districts of Ferryland, Humber - Bay of Islands, Mount Pearl - Southlands and Placentia West - Bellevue.

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize the Goulds Lions Club. On Saturday, March 21, I had the privilege of attending their 43rd annual charter night. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Goulds Lions Club, past and present, for the outstanding contribution they have made and are making to the Goulds and the surrounding region.

I've had many opportunities to work with the Goulds Lions Club and see their efforts improving people's lives. The club raises funds through a well-known outdoor summer bingo and supports numerous community events such as the annual student speak off, the Goulds Lions arena, the annual Santa Claus parade and many other events and charitable donations. The Goulds is no doubt a better place because of the tireless effort of all those involved.

I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate the award winners from charter night: Danny Ridgeley, the Lion of the Year, Melvin Jones Fellowship award and Judge Brian Stevenson award; Charlie Phillips, Jim Linthorne and Pat Putt also received Brian Stevenson awards as well; Theresa Aylward, Rookie of the Year award; John Kinsella, President Appreciation award, as well as Doug Clarke with President Appreciation award.

I would like to ask all Members of the House to join me in congratulating the Goulds Lions Club and all the fantastic work they have done over the past 43 years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Corner Brook Senior Hockey Association.

Wanting to give back to the community for the tremendous support of the fans and the business community in supporting the return of the Corner Brook Royals, the organization decided that when the hockey season was over last spring and all operating expenses had been taken care off, any monies left over would be given back through a funding programs to sporting groups.

Proposals were invited from the Corner Brook and surrounding area from any sporting group, not just hockey. The proposal could be for upgrading sport venues, assisting with registration fees for children who may not otherwise be able to participate, purchasing of equipment for other individuals or team needs, or any proposal which promoted and developed minor sports.

Seventeen organizations were approved to share the \$30,000 available in grant funding, ranging from \$300 to \$3,000. Some of the successful applicants included the Special Olympics, Meadows Recreation Committee, Corner Brook Minor Hockey, Corner Brook Minor Soccer, Corner Brook Minor Baseball, the Humber Valley Speed Skating Club and the Atlantic Girls Choir, just to name a few.

I ask all Members to join me in recognizing the Corner Brook Senior Hockey Association and the Corner Brook Royals for their generous gesture and proving that they truly have community spirit.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to stand in this hon. House to offer congratulations to two individuals who have made a significant contribution to sport in my community.

The Mount Pearl Sports Hall of Fame was founded in 1995 by the Mount Pearl Sport Alliance, and since that time has inducted 84 tremendous individuals. Today, I would like to acknowledge the achievements of two others who have been inducted in the athlete category.

Lana (North) Burns has been inducted for her many accomplishments in the sport of soccer, including being part of 10 provincial and one Atlantic championship team, not to mention her many individual awards and recognitions both in Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as during her time at Acadia University.

Cindy Greening is a very accomplished multi-sport athlete, and while primarily being inducted for her many accomplishments in the sport of both ice and ball hockey, she has also competed in squash, softball and volleyball.

I would ask all Members of this hon. House to join me in congratulating these amazing individuals on this significant accomplishment and wish them all the very best in their future sporting endeavors.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue.

MR. BROWNE: Mr. Speaker, Joshua Parsons attended St. Francis Xavier in Nova Scotia to pursue matriculation in music school, and faced a choice to go elsewhere to pursue a career in music or return home to Marystown. He did just that, and opened up the Marystown School of Music this past fall, offering lessons in piano, voice, guitar, drumming and dance, and has already employed others in his business to assist with his over 100 students and reduce his wait-list.

Mr. Speaker, while he displays his deep musical talents, it is not this that garners the affection of his students or the attention of our community, it is his drive to do good, to spread his love of music and to see his students succeed. This is what makes Josh stand apart.

Mr. Speaker, his partner, Christina, a nurse at the Burin hospital, and Josh have both chose to return home to Marystown. They are both an example for all young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that you can succeed and live happily in rural communities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating Joshua Parsons on opening the Marystown School of Music, and thank him for enhancing the economic, cultural and musical tapestry of the Burin Peninsula.

Bravo!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Before we do proceed, it has been brought to my attention that we do have representation from the Canadian Cancer Society today in our gallery, and I suspect they're here for a Member's statement.

I'd like to extend a great welcome to you.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to speak about the success of the Labrador Winter Games, which took place from March 17-23 in Happy Valley-Goose Bay area.

It was a tremendous experience taking part in the opening ceremonies alongside community and Indigenous leaders, my colleagues and many other guests. I was especially honoured to recognize Mr. Boyce Bessey, an outstanding volunteer who had a long history with the Labrador Winter Games ever since they began in 1983, and he is dearly missed today.

During the games I enjoyed watching incredible action on the volleyball court, exciting races from the snowshoe course, and the expert marksmanship from the target shooting range. I

especially enjoyed leading an invigorating snowshoe trek with an enthusiastic group of Special Olympians and youth. And, Mr. Speaker, yes they did beat all of us.

Mr. Speaker, this incredible event, the Labrador Winter Games, brings together athletes, officials, volunteers and supporters for a week of competition, camaraderie, cultural events and a celebration of the traditional Labrador lifestyle. Athletes are proud to represent their communities and to compete in the spirit of friendship and respect.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is proud to support the Labrador Winter Games. I want to commend the board of directors, along with the event officials, partners and volunteers for putting off a successful series of events.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating Happy Valley-Goose Bay for winning the Labrador Cup, as well as Sheshatshiu for receiving the Premier's Cup, and to all those who participated in this year's Labrador Winter Games.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We, on this side of the House, gladly accept the Premier's invitation to join with him in congratulating all the winners and participants at the Winter Games, and I thank the Premier for an advance copy of his statement.

Passionate volunteers, excited spectators, and of course the thousands of athletes there to compete have marked the games now 36-year history. The Winter Games provide an excellent opportunity for young Labradorians to engage in friendly competition and a wide variety of athletic pursuits.

Some of our finest provincial athletes found their beginnings on the trails and in the gymnasiums of these games. They forge friendships and even the occasional rivalry that

can last a lifetime. It's no coincidence that some call these games the Friendship Games.

For all those who participated, we wish them congratulations and hope that the memories will last a lifetime.

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 Premier for the advance copy. Congratulations to Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Sheshatshiu for winning their respective cups and to all the athletes who represented their communities at the 2019 Labrador Winter Games. Also, the staff, volunteers and family members who helped organize the many competitions, cultural activities and other events that took place. It's a tremendous amount of work.

The Labrador Winter Games provide a valuable opportunity to celebrate the culture of Labrador and its people and I congratulate all those involved.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in this hon. House to congratulate William Bruce-Robertson of Corner Brook, who is this year's recipient of the Lester B. Pearson Scholarship for Newfoundland and Labrador. Awarded annually, this scholarship recognizes outstanding students from around the world, including international students studying at Canadian high schools.

William is currently a level II student at Corner Brook Regional High. He was selected based on

his outstanding academic achievement and his school and community involvement in extra-curricular activities.

The scholarship is valued at \$50,000 over two years for pre-university study in the International Baccalaureate Program at Pearson College, a United World College in Victoria, British Columbia. The provincial government contributes \$34,000 to the scholarship, which offers a life-changing opportunity for exceptional young people and will provide incredible support in helping William fulfill his long-term goals.

I congratulate William and hope his time at Pearson College enriches his life, solidifies the foundations for his academic future and opens doors to new and exciting opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating William and to wish him every success in his future endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. I join with the minister in congratulating William Bruce-Robertson of Corner Brook on receiving the Lester B. Pearson Scholarship for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Pearson College is a pre-university school with a mission to make education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future for up to 200 students from more than 150 countries. This scholarship is truly an honour and we wish William the best in the next exciting stage of his academic pursuits.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy. Congratulations to William Bruce-Robertson on receiving this prestigious scholarship. Pearson College is part of the United World College network of schools offering a unique global learning environment, and it's very good that government continues to support this scholarship.

I commend William for his achievement, both academic and otherwise, and wish him success in the opportunities this scholarship will open up for him.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

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

I rise in this hon. House to acknowledge Cancer Awareness Month and the Canadian Cancer Society's annual Daffodil Campaign.

Daffodils are resilient. They survive harsh winters and are among the first flowers to bloom in spring. Daffodils are symbols of strength, courage and life. For the Canadian Cancer Society they are also a symbol of hope for those affected by cancer. Their annual fundraising campaign, which carries throughout the month of April, gives us all an opportunity to make a difference.

Since the 1950s, the overall cancer survival rate has increased from 35 per cent to over 60 per cent, thanks in large part to research funded by flower sales.

By purchasing fresh daffodils or daffodil pins, we are helping fund vital research, prevention programs and support services so no one has to face cancer alone.

On Wednesday, April 10, Confederation Building will be lit yellow in recognition of Cancer Awareness Month and the Daffodil Campaign.

We have all been touched by cancer in one way or another, and I encourage all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to support this important cause.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. I join with the minister in acknowledging Cancer Awareness Month and the Canada Cancer Society's annual Daffodil Campaign.

Cancer doesn't discriminate between age, race or gender. It is something that has likely touched the lives of everyone in our province. Supporting the annual Daffodil Campaign is an excellent way of providing vital funding to cancer research in our country.

I encourage the people of our province to support this campaign during Cancer Awareness Month. Let us help the Canadian Cancer Society create a world where no one fears cancer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister.

How lucky are we to have a whole host of staff and volunteers working with the Canadian Cancer Society on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador? How very lucky are we, at the tables around the province they will once again sell daffodils in their communities.

They sell not only daffodils, but also hope; hope that is based on research, prevention and support. As someone who has breast cancer, I know how important that is.

Daffodil Place is a crucial support and service to the people who have to travel to St. John's for cancer treatment, and for their families. It is imperative that there is more public funding to help keep that resource going for the people of the province. Let's keep the lights on there.

Again, bravo to all the staff and volunteers of the Canadian Cancer Society of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, this is the first opportunity we've had to ask questions on the announcement that the Premier and our federal minister made on April 1. The claim was that the deal had a \$2.5-billion value. This morning, on *Open Line*, the Premier stated that the value in today's dollars is less than \$1 billion.

Will the Premier confirm this to this House?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, that is not what I confirmed this morning.

What I said based on today's dollars – as matter of fact, it was confirmed by Mr. Cadigan, if you remember the call, that in today's dollars the value of the 8.5 per cent Hibernia shares would be around \$1.3 billion. As a matter of fact, Mr. Cadigan made a comment that it would probably be less than that.

What we've been able to do is take that value to the \$3.3-billion value, for a net gain, guaranteed revenue stream for the people of this province – we could use it as we see fit – of \$2.5 billion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: I take it, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier does agree that the face value of \$2.5 billion is actually considerably less.

Can the Premier explain how he can claim that he can immediately reduce net debt by \$2.5 billion when the value of the deal is considerably less?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, this is a situation where facts matter – where facts matter.

It's a guaranteed revenue stream of \$2.5 billion. Nearly \$2 billion of that is in the first 11 years of this agreement.

Mr. Speaker, yes, it has an arbitration clause that anything that is connected to this agreement or arising from this agreement, there is an arbitration clause in place. It also deepens joint management; it adds certainty to the offshore and a guaranteed revenue stream of \$2.5 billion to the people of our province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, I think we all get the idea and know the point that arbitration can't change the terms of the deal, they can only interpret them.

Section 3(a)(ii) of the agreement indicates that the provincial taxes collected from the Hibernia Project will account toward the yearly transfer from Ottawa.

Will the Premier admit that this is money the province is already receiving?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, the taxation, if we had to have taken the 8.5 per cent route as the Leader of the Opposition believes we should have, which would've assumed a lot of risk, no decommissioning cost, no liabilities, that all stays with the federal government through the course of this agreement.

There is an arbitration clause that is in place for matters that will arise or connected to this agreement, which is substantial. So, all of this is guaranteed revenue, joint management, Mr. Speaker.

The tax situation – if we had taken the 8.5 per cent, it would not have come to the people of this province, as he suggests. Mr. Speaker, that is the taxable amount, which is a very minimal amount. So it's a guaranteed revenue stream of \$2.5 billion to the people of this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: I would again ask the Premier: How much in provincial taxes is included in the \$2.5 billion? Does this, not again, reduce the value of the deal?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, it's the \$2.5 billion which is guaranteed and used at the discretion as we should see fit. What is also not included in the \$2.5 billion, Mr. Speaker, is the nearly \$100 million that will actually come to the province from the interest that would be gathered.

Going back to his previous question, that would be one around net debt. Mr. Speaker, this comes

off the books of the people of this province immediately. So we have now reset the financial situation of this province from a net debt calculation to 2015 levels, and included in all of that, we cleaned up a nearly \$2.7 billion deficit, which the Tory administration didn't tell the people of this province and we've done that too, as we lead the country in GDP.

Mr. Speaker, this government is turning the province around. This agreement will help us even more.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask for co-operation.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, those sound like fighting words. On that subject, the Premier told *Open Line* this morning that he does not like federal Bill C-69, which would slow down offshore exploration and development.

On a scale of one to 10, where 10 is ready to fight, just how opposed is he?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to fighting for Newfoundland and Labrador, make no bones about it, the Leader of the Opposition, I read in a publication just last week, he said he is a Canadian first, a Newfoundlander and Labradorian second. Well, I'll guarantee you, this Premier is a Newfoundlander and a Labradorian first. You can put that on a scale as 10.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to leave questions about secession from Canada to another time. Bill C-69 is the no more offshore bill, and has the potential to restrict exploration and development in the oil and gas industry. It challenges the joint management principle entrenched in the Atlantic Accord.

Why did the Premier fail to negotiate protection of exploration and development?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the recent Accord discussions that we just had, we have deepened joint management. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the industry has been very clear about one area that they've wanted to make sure that there was increased certainty. There's been a significant amount of investment that is made in the Northeast Slope. There is always concern whether the federal government would come in and put a marine protected area there. We have now taken that restriction out. So there is certainty with that.

I can assure you, the Minister of Natural Resources and myself, we appeared in front of the Senate in Ottawa making sure the position of this industry – Bill C-69 must change. You want to come back to CEAA, 2012, which Harper put in place, which now gives us a thousand days, literally a thousand days, to get an exploratory drilling permit in place.

I ask the Leader of the Opposition –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER BALL: – is that what you're supporting, Stephen Harper's CEAA, 2012?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: The Premier should know, Mr. Speaker, that Stephen Harper and I have had our disagreements.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CROSBIE: The federal Finance minister, the Liberal one, under Mr. Trudeau, met with the Premier for two hours on Friday.

How much money for rate mitigation did the federal government agree to provide?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I'll remind the Leader of the Opposition it wasn't his disagreement with Harper, it was Harper's disagreement with you. He's the one who said no to you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: You still wanted to go, if I remember, put your name out there for the nomination to run for Stephen Harper and he quickly came back and said no, we don't want you.

So, Mr. Speaker, what I will say – I need to continue on with Bill C-69 because this is an important decision and discussion that we need to have. We have stood by industry. We want to remain competitive, Mr. Speaker. *Advance 2030*, carving out the oil and gas industry – let's be very clear when it comes to Bill C-69, this province is asking for changes with the federal government. It is not working for the people of this province.

I ask the Leader of the Opposition: Is he supporting CEAA, 2012 like some of his other colleagues are?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: I'm not sure what colleagues of mine are supporting the legislation the Premier referred to. That certainly isn't anyone in my caucus.

The Premier said on *Open Line* today that his plan for Muskrat Falls rate mitigation needs about \$500 million per year. He stated he has \$300 million, needs another \$200 million from financial restructuring.

Can the Premier confirm this information to the House?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: That is what I said on *Open Line*, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, it's what I said Friday at another news outlet, NTV, on *Issues and Answers*, that was played a few times over the weekend. Yes, that's the analysis that we've seen, but I will tell you this mitigates Muskrat Falls. It mitigates the impact of Muskrat Falls.

The plan that was put out, the Crosbie hydro CHEAP plan, mitigates rates just to 17 cents which is higher. His plan takes rates to 17 cents which is even higher than the pre-sanctioning of Muskrat Falls, Mr. Speaker.

So, we've got to do better things. Mr. Speaker, it's \$200 million –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

PREMIER BALL: Yes, it is, Mr. Speaker, I hear him chirping at me. It's 17 cents –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER BALL: – that's what they think people can pay.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier knows very well that our plan would fully mitigate the effect of Muskrat Falls on top of –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSBIE: – increases now already in the pipeline that have nothing to do with it.

Would he explain why, in relation to this financial restructuring he discussed with the Minister of Finance, he is celebrating an arrangement that will place additional financial burden on our children?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, what we had discussed on Friday was achieving rate mitigation. The PUB said that we needed to get at this urgently. We have started the process. Mr. Speaker, the PUB also said that this is the single – the significant greatest potential to achieve rate mitigation in our province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition speaks about passing financial burden to our next generation. Mr. Speaker, you must be kidding me. We wouldn't even need rate mitigation if it wasn't for the Tory Muskrat Falls project. That is the reason why we're having rate mitigation.

Mr. Speaker, I've heard Members opposite just last week talk about this was a fallacy that rates would double. Just a few days ago the Leader of the Opposition and his group said that this was a fallacy.

Mr. Speaker, we need rate mitigation because of Muskrat Falls, and we do not want to put the burden on the next generation.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Order, please!

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, yes, we need rate mitigation because of Muskrat Falls.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

MR. CROSBIE: The Premier said we could have walked away with the big cheque but the stability, the consistency is more important to me.

I ask the Premier: If you'd walked away with the big cheque from this deal you announced, what would it have been?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't walking away with the big cheque because what I was looking for was a guaranteed income stream so that we can actually reduce net debt in this province.

I would say to the Leader of the Opposition as he just stood up there a few minutes ago, did he just actually forget what his Members were saying just a few weeks ago? When people in his caucus today – and you stood there or you sat there and listened to those comments, Mr. Speaker, nodded your heads and agreed to them, when they were saying that doubling of rates in Newfoundland and Labrador as a result of Muskrat Falls was a fallacy. That is what your Members were saying just a few days ago.

We need to mitigate rates, Mr. Speaker, working with the federal government. The PUB explains this; it's our greatest potential to achieve that rate mitigation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Well, you can tell the Premier doesn't like questions about cheques, because what he's been able to accomplish is that they're all in the mail.

In defending having to pay Ottawa \$800 million

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CROSBIE: – the Premier said that the province is facing a fiscal crunch.

Is this agreement the best solution for the province's fiscal crunch, or the best solution for his re-election campaign?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I like the thought that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians would seek and consider re-electing us as a government, Mr. Speaker, because we have done a lot of good work.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, when he talks about the financial crunch of this province, he need look no further than the decisions that the Tory government left this province in.

It is very clear, we have put in place a clear financial plan; return this province back to surplus by 2022, 2023. We have taken this province from a looming \$2.7 billion deficit in 2015 and turned that around. Mr. Speaker, that is not a financial crunch. We are working our way through this, putting this province back on track, creating jobs for Newfoundlanders. And, yes, Mr. Speaker, I will say one more time, we will lead the country in GDP next year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: Amongst that list of accomplishments, the Premier might consider adding: And stonewalling questions in the House of Assembly.

Under the fixed election date legislation, first introduced more than a decade ago, specific election dates have been legislated and placed to promote transparency and fairness.

Will the Premier bring an amendment to the House specifying the spring election date for 2019 before the writ is dropped and respect the principle of fixed election dates?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I sense that the Leader of the Opposition is now starting to backtrack, because it was only a few days ago that he was sitting in that chair and saying: bring it on, call the election; let's have the election.

So I wonder today if he is backtracking on those statements, Mr. Speaker. He's saying his party is ready. He was actually challenging me, as Premier of this province, to bring it on, call the election. That is what he is saying. So, as I say to the Leader of the Opposition today, is that not what he's saying today? Indeed, he is not ready for the election, because that is what he was telling the people of our province.

I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that when the writ is dropped – there are certain things we would need to do, commitments that we have made – the public will be very aware of the financial situation of this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROSBIE: I heard an answer which, again, stonewalls the House of Assembly and disrespects the spirit of the legislation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CROSBIE: The House recently amended the Elections Act to shorten the period to become a candidate after a writ is dropped to just eight days. While the date may not be important to the Premier – and our party is ready – it is very important to prospective candidates who are considering running.

And speaking of running: Why is the Premier running away from the principle of fixed

election dates when it matters to such good people who want to run?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Well, Mr. Speaker, the changes in the legislation that the Leader of the Opposition is talking about, matter of fact, was by the former Tory administration.

They did this around the same time – when you remember in January of 2015, when they changed the boundaries in this province to be of benefit to themselves. They were going to carve out districts in Labrador, as an example. That is the legislation that he's saying right now is wrong, is the very legislation that the Tory administration brought in and fought hard in this House of Assembly.

So he is now saying that that legislation that they supported, his colleagues supported, was wrong?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Order, please!

MR. CROSBIE: The legislation of which we speak goes back considerably farther than the last administration, and again, the principle is to fix the date.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

MR. CROSBIE: In view of that, why is the Premier afraid to be transparent and set a spring date in stone through an amendment?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, if you look at the section of the Elections Act, it is clearly outlined what the rules are. That is the process that was put in place by the former administration.

So, Mr. Speaker, there you go. Just a few years ago it was a Tory administration that brought in

this very piece of legislation that he's now saying is not working.

Mr. Speaker, we will be very fair to the people of this province. And like the Leader of the Opposition who said to me so many times, bring on the election, I am looking forward to the election so we can get to the people of this province, give them the opportunity to see the work that we have done as a government, and once and for all – I hear the Members over there chirping. Yes, indeed, as they said just a few weeks ago that it was a fallacy about doubling electricity rates, I am sure that will be one of the topics of discussion in this campaign.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Liberal fiscal forecast as released in *Budget 2018*, forecast a deficit of \$507 million in fiscal 2019-2020.

With the release of the provincial budget on April 16, I ask the minister: Is a \$507 million deficit still the plan?

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The budget will come down a week from tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, and we will lay forward for the people of the province –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

MR. OSBORNE: – exactly what the fiscal situation is in this province and the fiscal forecasts.

I will remind the Members opposite, that we are far ahead of what they projected in 2015 in terms of jobs today. We've exceeded their forecast in terms of capital investment today. We've exceeded their forecast in terms of retail sales. We've exceeded their forecast.

So we'll stand on our record, because we've exceeded what they projected 2018-19 would look like.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In *Budget 2018*, the Liberal government promised a return to surplus in 2022-23.

I ask the minister: Does your fiscal forecast, to be presented in budget 2019, show that you're on track to meet that target?

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

MR. OSBORNE: As I said, Mr. Speaker, the budget will come out a week from tomorrow. But I can absolutely assure you, we will put forward to the people of this province exactly where this province stands from a fiscal situation, which is something they refused to do in 2015, because they refused to tell the people of the province what the fiscal situation of the province looked like. They refused to put forward a mid-year update. They refused to respond to our party's demands to tell the people of the province what the fiscal situation looked like.

We will very clearly outline what the fiscal situation of this province looks like, Mr. Speaker, because we have made significant progress from where you've left the province in 2015.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's not what the Auditor General is telling us, and it is four years later. We'd just like to get some answers of where we are. Are we still on target to meet the targets outlined in the last number of budgets?

Last year, concerns were raised that the Supply Act didn't require that transfers out of the contingency reserve be tabled in the House and thus made public.

I ask the minister: How much has been transferred out of the contingency reserve to date?

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We haven't used the full contingency that was put aside. The contingency reserve is something that's been a long-standing tradition in this province. When you see issues like the flooding on the West Coast that required emergency funding, that's what the contingency reserve is for, Mr. Speaker.

I can assure you, this government did not abuse that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On May 24, when concerns were raised, the minister said: If the funds are drawn upon, the reasons for that and the information will be provided to the public. To date, no details have been tabled in this House, nothing has been made public.

I ask the minister: What is being hidden?

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There is absolutely nothing hidden on this side.

Again, unlike the former administration who hid the fiscal realities of the province, refusing to put a mid-year update forward, refusing to respond to our party's request to provide the people of the province, prior to the 2015 election, where the province stood fiscally, Mr.

Speaker. They were leading the people of the province to believe there was a \$1.1 billion deficit, only to find out it was far more than double that when we actually got a look at the books. When we look at the books, high-ranking officials in the Department of Finance informed the government that we would not even make payroll without an emergency release of Treasury bills.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're not hiding anything, unlike the party opposite.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, it is four years later. Will the minister commit to tabling a full list of transfers out of the contingency fund, and why hasn't he to date?

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

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, we'd be more than delighted to give full details of that.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, we don't hide things on this side, unlike the Members opposite who are very quick to hide the fiscal realities of the province. The fact the province couldn't even make payroll shortly after the election in 2015; something that party knew and refused to tell the people of the province or even to tell the incoming government. As the former premier walked out of the office and the new premier walked in, we were hit with that news.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, they sure did a great job of hiding the 300 tax hikes and 50 new taxes. Hopefully, we won't see that happen again.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government admitted –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

MS. PERRY: – that they could not develop their own plan to develop the economy when they hired McKinsey & Company to develop a strategy, costing taxpayers of this province over \$1 million. We are still waiting to see the results of this report.

Now that we know the budget will be tabled on April 16, will the Minister Responsible for Economic Development immediately table the report in this hon. House?

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

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, I am not ashamed of the fact that we invested a million dollars to try and diversify and look for ways to diversify the economy in this province. It was something that was ignored by the previous administration.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, their economic diversification plan was putting the province billions of dollars in debt as a result of Muskrat Falls. So the one million dollars we spent on this project pales in comparison to the billions of dollars they wasted on Muskrat Falls.

This report, Mr. Speaker, I said would inform budget 2019, it will. I also committed to releasing the report shortly after the budget, and I will.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune for a quick question, please.

MS. PERRY: Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: What is the updated cost for this economic diversification report, and will you table the updated cost here in this hon. House?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board for a quick response, please.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We've been very clear right from the outset, it was a fixed cost. That cost did not change. It was \$1 million.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

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

Last week, we learned the new Atlantic Accord agreement includes an \$800 million loan which a future generation will have to pay back to the tune of \$100 million a year starting in 2045.

I ask the Premier: Knowing what he knows about the lopsided Upper Churchill agreement, how could he make such a financial commitment 25 years out from now?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, the rationale behind that – and I will say to the Member opposite, that is a very good question. The rationale behind all that was get the guarantee of the revenue stream, the \$3.3 million – or \$3.3 billion. In order to get the guaranteed stream, that came from the 8.5 per cent shares of Hibernia, Mr. Speaker, the revenue stream.

Mr. Speaker, I just said a few minutes ago, based on today's oil price that would be at \$1.3 billion. We got a significant uplift and a significant increased value to \$3.3 billion.

So, Mr. Speaker, in order to guarantee that, the federal government felt it was necessary to actually maintain control of the operations who control that revenue stream. That is the reason why in 2045 the aid instalments would start totalling \$800 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

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

Well, our party has been calling for the return of the federal government's 8.5 per cent share in Hibernia since 2003, as would be proper if we were to be the principle beneficiary of the offshore instead of begging from the federal government.

I ask the Premier: Why did he sign an agreement that did not include those shares being returned to the province's control? Then he wouldn't have the problem he just talked about.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, a good question.

It needs clarification, because if we had taken the shares you would have had a value today of \$1.3 billion with the known reserve. Mr. Speaker, we got \$3.3 billion. But one of the issues around taking the shares means we would have taken the decommissioning costs, we would have had to actually come up with capital investment along the way, too.

I can assure the people a guarantee \$2.5 billion from those shares. What we took, Mr. Speaker, instead of the shares, was the value of the shares so we could put it right in the bank account of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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.

If we'd taken the shares we'd also be sure of getting the revenue when the price of oil goes up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. MICHAEL: And I can guarantee you, in the next 38 years it's going to go up and we won't get that revenue.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier's Atlantic Accord deal includes a highly secretive \$800 million loan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. MICHAEL: Now, he's just tried to explain it, but we didn't get any explanation before today.

Also, last week there was a meeting with the federal finance minister on rate mitigation. A meeting so secretive we were not even allowed to know who was going to be at the meeting, and that's what was said publicly by the Premier.

So I ask the Premier: What happened to his promise to make government more open and transparent?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER BALL: Well, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to open and transparent, I want to remind the Member opposite, that the \$800 million question, I've answered that about six or seven times in the last weeks. So, Mr. Speaker, that's been out there for a long, long time.

On the meeting, Mr. Speaker; on Friday, I made it quite clear it would be with Minister Morneau as he came into St. John's on Friday. I announced that last week, that Minister Morneau would be coming to St. John's for a meeting on how we work together to achieve rate mitigation, being very open and transparent. That came right from the public document. That's right in the Public Utilities Board that they released on February 15.

So I don't know how much more information you can put out there. The genesis of why we needed to get at it urgently, where the greatest potential is, Mr. Speaker, and on Monday of last week announced that I would be meeting with Minister Morneau on Friday afternoon here in St. John's. So that is pretty transparent (inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

MS. MICHAEL: Mr. Speaker, I point out to the Premier, he was asked specifically by the media who else would be at the meeting, and he wouldn't say.

The Premier, when asked about an independent safety authority for the offshore, is always quick to say safety is government's first priority, yet the new Atlantic Accord has no mention of the independent agency recommended by Commissioner Robert Wells in the report into the inquiry of the Cougar helicopter crash.

I ask the Premier: If safety is his first priority, why did he do nothing to ensure this agency was part of a new Atlantic deal?

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

MS. COADY: Thank you very much.

This is indeed an important question. As we have said repeatedly, and I think it's on behalf of all Members of this House, safety and environmental protection is a priority for everyone in this province.

The Member is referring to a potential for a separate safety regulator. Mr. Speaker, I can say we do have someone who is responsible for safety offshore Newfoundland and Labrador, and that person reports directly to the chair of the board of the C-NLOPB, and is responsible.

The Justice at the time did indicate that was appropriate and sufficient and there is appropriate and sufficient safety regulations offshore Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions has ended.

Thank you very much.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. George's - Humber.

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As Chair of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, I am pleased today to present our final report on the development of a Legislature-Specific Harassment-Free Workplace Policy. This work was ordered to the Committee by a private Member's resolution unanimously passed in the House of Assembly on May 2, 2018.

Our final report includes a proposed harassment-free workplace policy applicable to complaints against Members of the House of Assembly and the recommendation that it be adopted by the House.

In addition to the proposed policy, the final report includes a recommendation for changes to the principles of the Code of Conduct for MHAs, as well as a Code of Conduct provisions outlined in the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*. There are also recommendations for other consequential statutory amendments to that act, to give effect to the proposed policy.

As Chair, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize my fellow colleagues on the Privileges and Elections Committee: the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi, as Vice-Chair; the Member for Ferryland; the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave and the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port, as well as the House of Assembly staff who supported the Committee. I thank them all for their dedication and commitment to this work over the last several months.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Presenting further reports by Standing and Select Committees.

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MS. PARSLEY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Select Committee appointed to draft a reply to the speech from her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, I am pleased to present the report of the Select Committee, which reads as follows:

To her Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor, the hon. Judy Foote, PC, ONL:

May it please Your Honour, we, the Commons of Newfoundland and Labrador in Legislative Session assembled, beg to thank Your Honour for the Gracious Speech which Your Honour has addressed to this House.

I move, seconded by the Member for Placentia West - Bellevue, that the report be adopted.

MR. SPEAKER: When shall the report be received?

MR. A. PARSONS: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, report received.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Harbour Main that the debate be deferred.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Further reports by Standing and Select Committees?

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

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

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In accordance with the *Energy Corporation Act* and the *Hydro Corporation Act, 2007*, I table the 2018 Business and Financial Report for Nalcor

Energy, as well as the 2018 Consolidated Financial Statements of Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. George's - Humber.

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice that I will on tomorrow move the following motion: That the House of Assembly concur in the final report of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections on the Development of a Legislature-Specific Harassment-Free Workplace Policy.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Member for Windsor Lake.

MR. CROSBIE: Thank you, Sir.

As the Member for Windsor Lake, I rise to move the following private Member's resolution:

WHEREAS the intent of the Atlantic Accord is that offshore development approvals should be completed within 270 days, and such approvals are currently taking in excess of 30 months;

BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to press the Government of Canada to affirm that the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board, established under the Atlantic Accord, should be the responsible authority for conducting environmental assessments of offshore projects under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*, CEAA, and that exploration wells should be removed from the CEAA project list.

This will be seconded by the Member for Ferryland.

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just to confirm that the private Member's resolution just read into the record by the Member for Windsor Lake will be our private Member's resolution that we will debate on Wednesday, Private Members' Day.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

Firstly, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Automobile Insurance Act, Bill 3.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Insurance Companies Act, Bill 6.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The background to this petition is as follows: WHEREAS the Bay d'Espoir Highway and its branch roads Routes 360, 361, 362, 363, 364 and 365 have become overcome with very dangerous roadside alder growth; and

WHEREAS the Coast of Bays region is a very busy area with a high volume of industrial traffic for aquaculture, the fishery and hydroelectricity; and

WHEREAS the region has a transient workforce that requires workers to travel the highway at early morning hours and late at night, often in foggy, dangerous weather conditions with no cell coverage; and

WHEREAS there have been weekly incidents of moose accidents in this region, some very serious and on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker, there are very close accidents; and

WHEREAS all residents are very concerned and worried to drive the highway due to a fear of a moose accident; and

WHEREAS every effort should and must be made to protect the safety of residents and reduce unnecessary road hazards for travellers.

Mr. Speaker, I have here 12 pages of petitions signed from the community of Harbour Breton. This is the one issue, Mr. Speaker, that each and every single community in the Coast of Bays region is certainly in consensus on that we have been overlooked by the Liberal government over the last four years and they have not given consideration to the lives and safety of the residents of the District of Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

Mr. Speaker, we heard in this hon. House last fall when I raised this petition that we would be getting some good news on the brush clearing and we're still waiting for it, Mr. Speaker. I certainly hope that it's not something that we have to wait another six months to a year to see because this is about people's lives. This is not about playing politics, Mr. Speaker, this is about doing what's right and the Code of Conduct that's all about us, as governors, here in this hon. House being sure that each and every area of this province is treated equitably and fairly in the best interest of the people, not in the best interest of politicians.

I seek to hear from the minister that they will honour their commitment to address the serious, serious problem with brush in the Coast of Bays

region and in the District of Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works for a response, please.

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

I thank the hon. Member for the petition. Towards the end of her remarks she talked about priorities and MHA priorities. I just want to read a little section of a 2014-2015 Auditor General's report: MHA priorities resulted in a lower priority of roadwork being performed ahead of higher priority roadwork. MHA priorities made up 46 per cent of the 2015 priorities for provincial roads, while projects that were assessed to be essential made up only 23 per cent. Mr. Speaker, that's their legacy of how they did their roadwork.

Mr. Speaker, we introduced a Roads Plan and it's been tremendously successful. You only have to go and talk to people in the industry and they will quickly tell you how good our early tendering has been. The process of getting work done, our ability to add extra funding towards to end of each construction season. We're doing earlier tenders with brush cutting. We've committed to \$2 million a year for brush cutting and we'll continue that commitment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The background of the petition, I say to the Minister of Transportation and Works: WHEREAS the successful proponents for the new hospital in Corner Brook are scheduled to

be announced this spring with construction anticipated to begin in the fall and, as this is estimated to be a four-year construction period, and as there are experienced local tradespeople and labourers in the area;

THEREFORE we, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly as follows: To urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to encourage companies that are awarded the contracts for the new hospital to hire local tradespeople and labourers, at no extra cost to the taxpayers, so that they can work in their own area, support the local economy and be able to return home to their families every evening.

Mr. Speaker, we know the government is planning on making the announcement in the spring. This is the spring, so we're hoping that the announcement will be made soon. Also, we know the election now is going to be before the summer and the anticipated construction start of the new hospital will be this fall. We're hoping that government will make an announcement that there will be local workers hired, not have them anticipate and wonder if it's going to happen like they brought in people from last year, with the full commitment, I have to add, Mr. Speaker – people know this, that the person I was dealing with when I was an independent that there were going to be local tradespeople hired, local people hired, working with someone that was appointed by the government, with the commitment made that it will be done, and they even asked me to go up and ask people to put their résumés in.

So I'm anticipating that there's going to be a good-news announcement on the hospital this spring. I'm also anticipating that there will be a good-news announcement that the local workers will be hired by the local companies, and I encourage the minister to keep up the work that he's doing to work with TradesNL and all the prospective proponents, the two proponents left, for this. There are people from all over the province; we have people here signing this from Paradise, from Witless Bay, Random Island, all over. We have Gillams, Gallants, Meadows, McIvers, all people in Newfoundland and Labrador who want to support the local tradespeople.

As I said before on many occasions, there's enough local tradespeople and labourers in western Newfoundland that's going to be supporting in the Corner Brook area, and I know the Member for Corner Brook would love to see local people hired out as far as Port aux Basques, the Port au Port Peninsula, Green Bay, that area Mr. Speaker, a lot of the Northern Peninsula, would mean a lot of the local people would be able to work at this project.

So, I'm hoping, collectively, that we can find, in our own hearts, to make sure that local people are hired and working through the tradespeople and labourers so that they all stay home. Four years is a long while to not have to go away. It'd be nice to see.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works for a response, please.

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

I thank the hon. Member for the petition. When it comes to Newfoundland companies, Newfoundland workers, we always do everything we can to ensure their success. We're working with TradesNL right now on a CBA, community benefits agreement. It's something that you've seen in other jurisdictions in the country, and it's certainly something that we look to be able to work with TradesNL and adopt in our province.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to just go off for a second and talk about the great success we've had with our infrastructure plan in this province. Similar to my earlier remarks about our Roads Plan, we've had tremendous success with our infrastructure program. You see a new long-term care centre in Corner Brook, a new acute-care hospital coming for Corner Brook, new long-term care facilities in Grand Falls-Windsor and Gander.

Our commitment to finally replacing the Waterford Hospital, one commitment that we're planning to keep – and I can assure people that next week in our budget you will see more great

investments in infrastructure in our province. We're committed to Newfoundland and Labrador workers, Newfoundland and Labrador companies, and we'll make sure that we look after our good infrastructure plan in our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

MR. LESTER: Mr. Speaker, the cancellation of the jawbone collection program for moose and caribou in the province in *Budget 2016* has resulted in the loss of important data and research about big game. Jawbone collection represents the entire moose population province wide.

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call on the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to reinstate the jawbone collection program for moose and caribou in the province.

Mr. Speaker, the jawbone is basically the first indication of animal health. And, this is second, maybe third time I've presented this petition. I know the minister did give the grace of standing up and replying to it last time, but some of the facts were now very representative of what actually happened. I know he did kind of try to put it back onto the previous administration, but this program in itself was cancelled in *Budget 2016* under this administration.

North American-wide the populations of moose and caribou are under major pressure to regenerate. Basically, right now, what we're doing is we're hunting the existing population. So, we can see, in the very near future, mass reductions in licences, which probably should happen now until we figure out what's actually happening to the herds.

There's just not enough scientific data being collected. I know there's a big pressure because of the cost of that but the jawbone program is a very effective way to collect a random sample of

all animals harvested province wide and it should definitely be a requirement of a licence that this jaw bone program has to be participated in if they wish to get a licence the following year or the next time their pool is selected.

So, Mr. Speaker, I wish the government would reconsider this program in the upcoming budget, as it is very valuable for scientific data collection and it can be done in a very cost-effective manner.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources for a response, please.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BYRNE: Thank you very, very much.

This deserves a big, cool drink of water. This is an excellent opportunity to talk a little bit about what we are doing in Fisheries and Land Resources to improve the status of our knowledge, our capacity and our management of our big game resources.

Mr. Speaker, I can say to this hon. House and to that hon. Member, you're right. There was a problem – a deep, deep, dark problem. We had moose jawbones that were piling up, that were just collecting in a corner without being processed. They were piling up because there was insufficient lab space in Corner Brook. We did not have the personnel or the space to be able to do it.

So, yes, Mr. Speaker, there is an acknowledgement. There is an admission that I will offer on the floor of this House right now, they were sent away to be done. Do you know why, Mr. Speaker? They were piling up; they had to be done.

Now, what I can report to this House is that we are investing \$350,000 in new lab space in Corner Brook, and we are going to get the job done, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further petitions?

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

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

There have been numerous concerns raised by family members of seniors in long-term care throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly those suffering with dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive debilitating conditions, whereby loved ones have experienced injuries, have not been bathed regularly, not received proper nutrition and/or have been left lying in their own waste for extreme periods of time. We believe this is directly related to government's failure to ensure adequate staffing at those facilities.

THEREFORE we petition the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to instate legislation which includes the mandatory establishment of adequate ratio of one staff to three residents in long-term care and all other applicable regional health facilities housing persons with dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive debilitating conditions in order to ensure appropriate safety, protection from injuries, proper hygiene care and all other required care. This law would include the creation of a specific job position in these facilities for monitoring and intervention as required to ensure the safety of patients.

Mr. Speaker, I bring forward this petition which comes from – it looks like mainly the central area of the province. I see Triton, Grand Falls-Windsor and Badger, Norris Arm, Botwood, et cetera. So, from Central Island.

I'd like to point out, Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity to take leadership in this country because the issues here are in other parts of the country as well. It's only today I read a letter from a woman whose child, actually, is in long-term care, and this woman was 79 years old. She was speaking specifically about younger adults in long-term care.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

It's difficult to hear.

Thank you.

MS. MICHAEL: But the issues she was identifying are the same as the issues that are identified here, Mr. Speaker. She was begging provincial and federal politicians to start working together to really look at the issues of long-term care in our whole country.

We could give leadership here, I say to the minister. In the context of meeting with other ministers of health, bring out the issues of long-term care, how our health care system is going to deal with the issues that have been brought forth here in this petition – issues which are real.

We all know the things that this petition refers to are things that are happening and we should bring a stop to it right through our whole country, and let's become the leaders.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further petitions?

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Newfoundland and Labrador is the only province to still require an assessment and referral from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, CAMH, Gender Identity Clinic in Toronto. The wait time for an assessment at CAMH is approximately two or more years. In recent years, other provinces have improved their in-province assessment and referral processes, in addition to increasing coverage and funding for gender-affirming surgeries. Without adequate MCP coverage, these surgeries can cost thousands of dollars.

The Department of Health and Community Services is already engaged in investigating an in-province assessment and referral process. Long wait times for gender affirmation surgeries often contribute to prolonged gender dysphoria and worsened mental health. Among

transgendered youth aged 14 to 25 in Canada, 65.2 per cent considered suicide – an incredible number, Mr. Speaker – and 36.1 per cent made at least one suicide attempt in the last year, according to a 2014 Trans Youth Health Survey.

THEREFORE we, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to develop an in-province assessment process for gender-affirming surgeries that would eliminate the need for an assessment by CAMH as the sole referral option. Increase funding and coverage for gender-affirming surgeries through MCP and expand the types of surgeries covered to better reflect national standards.

Mr. Speaker, I've stood and presented this petition a number of times, and over the past few years I've pushed for this. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I've presented to the previous minister of Health and to the current one, names of doctors and health care practitioners who were eligible, skilled and had the expertise to be able to do this in-house assessment. No other province in the whole country of Canada requires their people to go to CAMH anymore; no one else. Not even Ontario requires their trans folks to go to CAMH for an assessment.

The minister has said things are in place. Mr. Speaker, there is a psychiatrist here in this province who used to do the assessments at CAMH in Toronto, and a few years ago she was willing to do those assessments here. I don't know why the minister is dragging his feet. I'd ask the minister to stand up and respond to this.

He's not listening to me right now, but I would hope that he would stand up and respond to this and tell us why, even in the light of the fact that 65.2 per cent of our trans youth have considered suicide and that 36.1 per cent attempted suicide in the past year. There's no longer any reason not to do this.

Will the minister speak to this, please?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There have been numerous concerns raised by family members of seniors in long-term care throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly those suffering with dementia, Alzheimer's disease or other cognitive debilitating conditions, whereby loved ones have experienced injuries, have not been bathed regularly, not received proper nutrition and/or have been left lying in their own waste for extended periods of time. We believe this is directly related to the government's failure to ensure adequate staffing at those facilities.

THEREFORE we petition the hon. House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to instate legislation which includes the mandatory establishment of an adequate ratio, one staff to three residents in long-term care, and all other applicable regional health facilities housing persons with dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive debilitating conditions in order to ensure appropriate safety, protection from injuries, proper hygiene care and all other required care. This law will include the creation of a specific job position in these facilities for monitoring and interventions required to ensure the safety of patients.

Mr. Speaker, I present this petition today on behalf of the Advocates for Senior Citizens' Rights. My colleague for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi also just presented one, and this is very important. It should be very important to us all because we all have family members who are senior citizens, whether they be our parents, our grandparents and perhaps, one day, us.

In the case of seniors who have dementia and Alzheimer's disease and so on, they require special attention in our long-term care facilities, because a lot of the things that a person without that disease is able to do, such as feeding oneself, as an example, a lot of times these people are not able to do it. So it's not just as simple as saying we're going to provide food. They have to be fed. There are situations where these people have to be changed on a regular basis because they can't do it for themselves.

So, it's very important. It's critical that we think of our seniors, and think of our seniors that are

in these facilities, that we want them to receive the best possible care. This is not in any way to suggest – as I've said many times, not in any way to suggest that the people working at these facilities are not doing the best they can with what they have, but it comes down to staffing; having enough people on staff at all times – that's an important point – at all times to take care of our seniors.

It's one thing to have it on the books that they're going to have X number of people scheduled but if there're not always there, if we're not replacing people when they call in sick or not replacing people on holidays and so on and our seniors are left in this condition, it doesn't work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services for a response, please.

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

This rather scattergun petition which the Member opposite keeps on bringing up raises important issues. The prime concern of our long-term care and our home support strategy is appropriate care for seniors.

With respect to the Member opposite, his statements fly in the face of the last part of his delivery. This is, unfortunately, seen by staff in long-term care as a direct aim at their skills in compassion and caring. I have heard on frequent occasions – in my own district, particularly – about this. And it's ironic that while he stands up there with the best of intentions with this petition, he does so with an approach which actually counters that of others. We have awards being won in Central and in Western in this province at a national level for care of seniors.

They are no different in their feeding requirements, whether they're diagnosis is dementia or stroke, Mr. Speaker, and the gentleman opposite obfuscates that whole issue. I really would love to take another hour to dispel his arguments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: I call Orders of the Day, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day, Sir.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Correctional Services Act, Bill 2, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Correctional Services Act, Bill 2, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Correctional Services Act," carried. (Bill 2)

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act To Amend The Correctional Services Act. (Bill 2)

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

When shall the bill be read a second time?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 2 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting The Regulation Of Real Estate Trading In The Province, Bill 4, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting The Regulation Of Real Estate Trading In The Province, Bill 4, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador to introduce a bill, "An Act Respecting The Regulation Of Real Estate Trading In The Province," carried. (Bill 4)

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting The Regulation Of Real Estate Trading In The Province. (Bill 4)

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

When shall the bill be read a second time? Tomorrow?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 4 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would call Address in Reply.

MR. SPEAKER: Address in Reply.

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's fantastic to lead off the address to the Speech from the Throne this afternoon. I am so, so enthused and encouraged by what's written within the speech, some of the highlights, some of the higher points that have occurred over the last term of office of this government.

I want to say how deeply appreciative that I am and my team at Fisheries and Land Resources are to have such special mention, such appropriate mention to some of the great work that the team within our forestry and our fisheries, our aquaculture, our agriculture, our Crown lands, our protected areas, our wildlife, all of the avenues that are so dear to each and every one of us in this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador are held so tightly by my senior officials, by my team within Fisheries and Land Resources. This year's Speech from the Throne, this current Speech from the Throne, really did a fantastic job of capturing that incredible momentum. Because, Mr. Speaker, there is truly a renaissance that is occurring within our renewable natural resource industries.

It is phenomenal to see it; it is even more incredible to lead it. I cannot say how just incredibly pleased I am that the people of the province are taking leadership and they are driving this with us, with our government, creating a new environment, a new atmosphere and a new energy around farming our food and our food security.

We've teamed up with people, with organizations such as Food First NL, the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture, our numerous food producers whether it be the Newfoundland and Labrador Beekeeping Association, our agriculturists or the Newfoundland and Labrador horticultural

association, our sheep producers, our cattle producers, so many organizations which have played a key role as we really brought forward some of the major initiatives to promote food, food security and creating that culture around food that blends in with our incredible tourism industry, Mr. Speaker. This is a renaissance, a new way of approaching, a new of thinking about it and it is succeeding.

How is it succeeding? Well, first off, Mr. Speaker, as the Speech from the Throne indicated, we have targeted and we are succeeding at growing our food supply in this province, increasing it by doubling it, doubling the amount of food that we produce in this province. We need to take our food self-sufficiency to much higher levels.

As we know, Mr. Speaker, we only produce 10 per cent of the food we consume and we have set an ambitious objective of doubling that by 2022. Well, that is ambitious, but we can do even more, and we're on track and on course to doing even more.

How so? Well, look at what we've done. The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador was the only province in Canada that did not have a post-secondary training program in agriculture technology. Since 1949 to the present, we were the only province in Canada that did not have a post-secondary program in agriculture to promote not only the skills of farming, but also the entrepreneurship behind farming to create the interest in farming and the confidence in farming. Because without that capacity, without that post-secondary education opportunity, of course, some would not necessarily gravitate to this as a career, as a vocation.

Now with this program set to have its first enrolment in September of 2019, we have on track an incredible vehicle to get people more enthusiastic and have greater confidence in farming as an opportunity. And to help mitigate some of the human resources, some of the labour shortage and labour skills shortages within the agriculture sector. Because, Mr. Speaker, the agriculture sector is not our grandfather's industry. It still comes with the same tenacity, the same level of hard work and commitment that's required in it, but it is a very high-tech

sector now. That's why having post-secondary educational involvement is so critical.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, Memorial University of Newfoundland, with a target footprint at Grenfell Campus, is looking at introducing a Ph.D. program, a post-doc program in agricultural sciences. We already have several masters' students doing incredible work in the field and in the laboratory on agriculture and agricultural developments. We're using our resource station in Pynn's Brook, but now we have that cluster, that synergy of post-secondary education and post-secondary research, post-secondary developments that will aid and assist our farmers on the ground. That's really important.

Another thing that we're doing, Mr. Speaker, is we are promoting Wooddale. Wooddale, of course, was the primary centre for our silviculture programs, growing tree seedlings for our planting program, our silviculture program. Well, of course with two of our three paper mills closing back in 2008, there left an opportunity, a void, yet an opportunity in the greenhouses that exist there and the expertise that exist there. We're producing seedlings now for farmers to be able to advance their cold-climate crop rotation, their cold-climate sowing season to be able to take advantage of the technology and the infrastructure at Wooddale.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, we set approximately 225,000 seedlings and various root crops and other vegetables. This year, we are producing over 1.5 million seedlings. It's an incredible amount. It's going to advance our food production incredibly, advance the capacity of our farms and create a better rate of return for our farmers. This is very important.

What we're doing in Wooddale is above and beyond that. We're using this as a research centre as well, coupled with Pynn's Brook, to do cold-crop climate research. That's becoming very, very effective, too, Mr. Speaker.

Some other advancements we're doing in agriculture – because I do really want to get to forestry and to fisheries and to aquaculture as well – but some of the other advancements, we're making land readily available. We identified 64,000 hectares of agricultural areas

of interest. Why that's so important is not just making that land immediately available to farmers as we grow the number of farmers in our province, we've already seen – based on the metrics of our funding programs – 50 new farmers come in to develop farms in our province based on the metrics of our funding programs, but we're seeing even more farms come in place as farmers look for this land base to be able to develop farms.

Now, it does not have a single, immediate value of providing land for farmers today. It has an additional value of ensuring that that land base is protected and understood and allowed to be used for farming in the future. One of the greatest threats to farming in North America – in fact, in Western civilization – is the erosion of our agricultural land base, of North America's agricultural land base for suburban sprawl and for other industrial uses.

We are in a very unique situation, in that we are somewhat green field in this regard. By protecting that land base, by identifying it, protecting it and ensuring it's there for the future, it has two formal, fundamental roles. One is to make the land available for farmers today, as they adept and they grow they become entrepreneurs in the farm business; but, two, it's also to identify it for future protection, so that we always have food security in our province. A very, very important point.

In the St. John's agriculture development area, we saw just over 60,000 hectares of land identified for protection. Over the years, Mr. Speaker, 20,000 of those acres have been removed from the land base. Most of it during the Peckford administration, during the Frank Moores administration, and just recently, in 2013, the last time the St. John's agriculture development area – land was taken from our agricultural use and turned into another use was 2013, when 1,600 acres was removed from the zoning for requirement for agriculture. So I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, we won't be perpetuating that trend, I can guarantee you.

On forestry, Mr. Speaker, we have introduced several new initiatives to encourage increased utilization of fibre. We've amended our permitting system, our permitting program. We've adopted to a use-it-or-lose-it program

because, as we know, there are annual permits that are issued.

The annual permits should be based on utilization by the harvester, by the forester. Often, however, those permits were just simply renewed without an analysis of whether or not the fibre was actually cut. So there was a notion that there was a property right that was associated with the permits. That does no one seeking a job in the forestry industry any good when forest is left unharvested that was meant to be harvested, but left unharvested and unutilized – underutilized or unutilized – that does no one any good in our rural communities that are dependent on our forest resources because it's left fallow.

The second thing, it does no good for anyone looking to expand. An entrepreneur, a forester of a lumber company, someone engaged in the forestry sector who is looking for additional fibre who cannot get access to it because it is tied up by someone who is not using it. Very important, fundamental, somewhat simple, but difficult change to make, in that it had to be done. Sometimes you just got to look at a problem with fresh eyes and investigate it and do what needs to be done.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I could tell you that this has gone over extremely well. Now those who look for access to forest resources, who previously could not get access to them, they're now seeing a new opportunity to be able to grow their business – those who are entrepreneurial.

In our fishery sector, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing new opportunities emerge. You know, we are challenged often with less resources because of quota cuts by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. We are seeing those challenges. We see those challenges every day, but we also see great opportunities.

Even though there may be less volume of fish hitting the wharf or the stage head, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing increased value from our fisheries resources. Even though the volume, the weight of product coming over the wharf is less than what it was before, we're seeing greater value extracted from it. We're seeing greater value because of increased quality; emphasis on

quality of our fish products, emphasis on greater value being added for our fish products.

That's why this year, in the past year 2018, while there was less volume of fish landed in Newfoundland and Labrador, our value still maintained at \$1.3 billion, Mr. Speaker. An incredible achievement. How was that able to be done? Well, in large measure because of our success with the Atlantic Fisheries Fund. We have several initiatives already underway and more to come, developing increased value within the value-added chain, within the logistics chain of our fish resources.

We're working to make sure that fishermen are extracting the greatest matter of value from our fish products, and, as a result, Mr. Speaker, that has to come down to the harvesters. As sellers extract greater value from our fish resources, that, of course, increases the opportunity for increased price.

As we just saw, Mr. Speaker, the fully independent fish price setting panel, after hearing various arguments or various positions on what the price of crab should be, came forward and said the price of crab for the start of the season of 2019 will be \$5.38 a pound. Never in the history of the fishery has crab been at that price.

While we took a 9 per cent reduction in overall crab landings, overall crab quotas in 2019, we will actually see an increase in value to fishermen of that crab. So that's very important for the enterprise holders, the fishermen that will still, even though volume is down, value is up, and the total economic value to them is still up.

We still have a concern, Mr. Speaker, about our shore men, our crew members and, as well, our plant workers. Because while the value is up for fishermen and value is up for the plant owners, the amount of work that's achieved in a plant by four plant workers is dependent on the volume.

So today, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment and I, for the first time ever, since the introduction of the program many, many years ago, we announced at the beginning of the season that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador will stand tall with our plant workers. We have

heard the call that we need security, they need security and they need confidence in their future to be able to grow and be part of their communities. For the very first time ever at the beginning of the season, recognizing many of the challenges that are in front of us for the fishery, in terms of reduced volumes, we announced today a \$2.5 million plant worker assistance program for 2019.

That is very important and sends a strong signal to all those plant workers and all those communities where plants are located that their government, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Members on this side of the House, are very much in step with their needs, their concerns and are acting on their needs and their concerns.

They can feel much more comfortable that they will have a secure future for 2019 and beyond. Because as we grow, as we grow our fishery, as we grow the value of our fishery, as we grow our aquaculture sector, one of the key things that I've heard time and time again – and I readily adapt to it and agree with it – is that the trick to ending precarious employment in our aquaculture sector is to grow the volume of fish that's being produced.

Now with the introduction of a new company into Newfoundland and Labrador, Marine Harvest, that purchased Northern Harvest, and now has rebranded under Mowi, with the introduction of Grieg NL with the strength of Cooke Aquaculture, and with new interest in our trout industry on the South Coast of Newfoundland we will see huge, huge growth in our salmonid aquaculture industry. And on the Northeast Coast and other parts of the Island, our shellfish sector will continue to grow and to expand. We'll use the Atlantic Fisheries Fund as well, Mr. Speaker, to be able to facilitate this.

Our natural resource sector is strong. Our renewable natural resource sector continues to be a major driver of the economy, of our province and, in particular, rural Newfoundland and Labrador. But never let it be said that these industries are exclusive or unique to our rural areas. The fishery drives the prosperity and well-being of every community, town and city of our province. Our forestry sector drives the prosperity of every town, community and city in

our province. The aquaculture sector drives the prosperity of every town, community and city in our province. Our forestry sector is the same; our agriculture sector is the same.

Every renewable natural resource that we have benefits each and every one of us. It cannot be left unsaid or understated, however, that obviously where the resource is extracted, where the harvesting occurs and where the growing occurs, that's where you see a real fundamental value and importance to those industries and that's why we nurture them. It nurtures us all, but we also maintain a very strong, vibrant footprint in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased that the Speech from the Throne highlighted the Liberal government's leadership in helping to create a renaissance in our renewable natural resource industries. If you were to survey, if you were to ask the people of our province do you support, do you have greater confidence, do you have greater trust, and do you want the continued growth of our farms, our fishery, our forestry, our aquaculture sectors, do you support our renewable natural resources continuing to be developed in our province, the answer, universally across this entire province would be yes, we understand better now what these industries mean to each and every one of us. We support them and, by doing so, we support each other.

I'm delighted to get up and speak on behalf of the incredible professionals at the Department of Fisheries and Land Resources. I'm delighted to speak on behalf of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that our resource sector is in good hands. It's being led by real, solid professionals. It's seeing leadership; it's being given attention which has never been given before. And now, Mr. Speaker, we are prepared, as we move forward into the 21st century, into the years ahead, to see that dividend being produced.

God bless, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to rise on this 8th day of April to speak to Address in Reply. I had a little bit of a preamble designed, but I guess in following the former speaker, the minister, I feel empowered to address a couple of situations right away.

The reality is the agriculture industry, not only in this province, but in the Atlantic Canadian provinces is in peril. Largely, it's caused by the downward pressure of prices combined by the upward vacuum of costs of production. Doubling production is a great target but, as a farmer and as an industry, we have to look at doubling our market share. While I understand the minister has little or no experience in marketing a product, he has to realize that those markets are currently being filled by somebody else. So if Newfoundland product is to move into a marketplace, it has to push some other market-filling product out.

That's not going to be that easy. So in simultaneous action we need to focus on not only doubling our production, but we need to double our market access. What we're going to find, if we double production – and I know it's been quoted we only produce 10 per cent of the food we eat. Producing that 10 per cent in a short window of opportunity to sell it is going to result in a lot of bankrupt and out-of-business farmers, a lot of heartbroken people who invested their lives, who invested their whole fortunes in developing their farms.

So while I'm encouraged by this administration's focus on putting programs into place within academia, putting a focus on making land available, the problem is they're not doing it in a sustainable way. It's not happening. What's happening is it's going to be haphazardly developed. There are going to be existing farmers that are pushed out of business and, like I said, a lot of broken-hearted young people in particular with broken dreams because the government is not supporting their talk with their funds.

With all this extra pressure from new entrants, from academia, from existing producers, we need to double the funds. How do we expect to double our agricultural industry and subsequent food output without increasing the funding to agriculture? Last year's budget seen a reduction

of over \$500,000 in our own provincial Agrifoods Assistance Program and it's scheduled, to the best of my knowledge – and I hope I am wrong – to be reduced again this year.

We often heard about the federal-provincial partnership called CAP. Well, prior to that, there was Growing Forward 1, Growing Forward 2, Growing Forward 3 and, prior to that, there was the EPP program. See this is a continued part of our share as a province, of federal money. It has really very little to do with any one particular government fighting tooth and nail. It's basically our part of the federal pot.

Now, how we spend it is where our province has to stand up. We, in Newfoundland and Labrador, are in a position where we have to clear more land. We have to put more land in production; whereas everywhere else in Canada, Atlantic Canada included, we have farms and fields growing back up and trees and alder bushes because markets are no longer there, it's no longer sustainable for farms to produce on that scale, whatever it may be, but the farm land reserve in Atlantic Canada is declining.

That puts a bit of a challenge to us because not only are we clearing land, conversely to the rest of Canada, we've got to make the argument that in addition to doubling production, we are actually trying to carve out our own marketing system and, ultimately, our food security of the province. Because many other provinces look at the amount of funding that we put towards our agriculture industry as unfair subsidization.

So we need to look at more market access. We need to look at more creation of our storage facilities, for one, so that we don't have that big glut of production at the one time. In non-supply management, in particular, horticulture, beef and sheep, we're lacking the infrastructure needed to break into the market to displace existing products. There is very little reason for people to be hungry in Newfoundland and Labrador because there is an abundant supply. So, as I said, what has to happen is we have to make our industry more competitive.

This administration's focus has been on the creation of jobs in agriculture; yet, according to CFIB, a report that was released just prior to Christmas, the number of jobs in the agriculture

industry in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has decreased by 80 per cent over the past three years. But, do you know what? As a farmer, I realize that that's a reality, because as farmers we have to find efficiencies. We have to find efficiencies in replacing labour with machines, and that's been the way since the Green Revolution back in the 1940s.

The idea of making an industry inefficient, creating more human resource opportunities in the form of labour, is not going to create a sustainable industry. Yes, it is fantastic to create more opportunities in agriculture for business people, supply chains, that kind of activity, but as far as creating manual labour jobs in agriculture, it is a step backwards. It is not going to provide a sustainable industry and it is not going to provide food security for this province.

Again, we hear the 64,000 hectares – and I was corrected on that last time, I said acres. But do you know what? I still have not got the number of hectares that have been released to actual farmers. I know personally of a situation where there are farmers waiting over 18 months and haven't even heard anything yet. I know personally of a farm that through an ill-guided bureaucracy, reduced their employment by 25 per cent on account of a land allocation.

Now, I hear the Member for Bonavista chirping me over on the side; I think that he should maybe get out on a farm himself and do a little bit of work and he'll realize what it takes to work on a farm and create a piece of productive land.

Now, I'd like to know – maybe it's just my own personal knowledge of the industry and these particular situations, but I can remember recently in two newspaper articles, two young ladies who – their biggest impediment to developing a farm is access to agricultural land. Yes, you don't necessarily need a large amount of land to produce a lot of food, because there are lots of opportunities to produce food in other ways. In greenhouse situations, which don't necessarily need agricultural capacity soil. It can actually be built anywhere, as long as you have access to hydro and water. But, again, in order to be successful you have to have market.

The minister got up and spoke of how much the agricultural land base has been eroded. And, yes, continually the agricultural land base has been eroded, especially that in the St. John's region. Actually, as of recent, of this past year under the minister's own hand, there were appeals overturned and agricultural land was taken out of the agricultural zone for other purposes. It was actually only the municipality that finally put a stop to it and said no, this project is not going ahead.

So while he gets up and stands and says how this government does this and this government does that, we need to see those actions in place. We don't need to see political theatre. Political theatre will not feed people, it will not create a sustainable industry and it will not create employment or economic activity for the people of this province.

Now, on to another role that we've been speaking about, and that's the forestry industry. I, in my limited time here, have been aware of three potential activities and proposals for Central Newfoundland and the aging and over-maturing, what we call, the Abitibi stand. They did not go ahead because they could not get access to fibre. They could not get access to the resource. Very sustainable plans. I read two of the three from cover to cover.

Not only did they look at harvesting the resource, they looked at maximizing the value of the resource. Unlike the new deal that's been allocated on the Northern Peninsula – which, by the way, not one tree has been cut yet; which, by the way, there's no infrastructure on the ground. But do you know what it's done? It's tied up a resource on the Northern Peninsula that could be used by local sawmills to produce high-value lumber, to create a sustainable model of economic development. Not only for the short time frame that the deal is going to basically rape our whole Northern Peninsula of wood, turn it into low-value pellets and ship it overseas for someone else's benefit.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. LESTER: I'm hearing from the other side about a previous administration's attempt to do the same. But do you know what? That is a project that still belongs to the taxpayer of

Newfoundland and Labrador. That is a project that still holds potential. That is an asset of the people of this province. But instead of incorporating that into this deal, this administration, once again, decided to use it as a political game piece, as a political billboard at the expense of the taxpayer of this province and at the expense of the people of Roddickton-Bide Arm.

When you look at the economic model and success of a sawmill or a lumber operation, which there are many successful throughout the province, we're not looking at what it actually takes to make a business successful. It basically means that you have to obtain maximum value for every product that's on that piece of land. You can't walk over a log. Basically, that log has to be turned into something. The sawdust from that log, the slab from that log, the top of that tree has to be turned into something in order to make a sawmill viable.

The lumber industry is very, very competitive. It's very, very competitive because of the scale that we compete on. There is not one reason why we should be importing lumber into this province while we're grinding up sawlogs to send across the ocean to be burned to create electricity – not one reason. It should be all used right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. It should be used here to create wood, to create lumber for construction, create fuel, create paper, create all sorts of products that we can employ Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in.

Another thing we hear from the side opposite is the GDP. So let's look at a small country like Kuwait. Kuwait has an absolutely massive GDP, but most families live in an area, their whole domicile occupies a space of probably your bedroom. So, really, GDP means very little for the people of a country. When it's translated from GDP to economic activity, that's what we have to look at. Continued overspending and inability to manage our spending has created us hungry all the time for more revenue, more revenue, more revenue.

While we hear that the fiscal situation is in order on account of their activity, unfortunately it's not. I would love to say, yes, it is; keep it up. But do you know what? The only thing that's

changed our fiscal reality has been the price of oil, which we absolutely have no control over.

In a time in our world and in this millisecond of existence as it pertains to the total life span of our planet, we are now facing downward pressure on the use of carbon fuels such as oil. We, as a province, are looking, as a way forward, to *Advance 2030* to increase our oil production. Yet, our oil industry is so, so small.

Do you know what? While those plans are ambitious, they are totally out of our control. It is going to be the effect of climate change, the effect of pressure to reduce fossil fuel consumption, it's going to be the appetite on world market that is going to provide financial stability for our price of oil. We need to now start looking at going outside.

But we don't need to look far. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are wonderful, resourceful people. Despite our climate, despite our geography, despite our challenges of being the newest member of the family of Confederation, we've persevered. We have many businesses run by families. We see resurgence in areas where we thought all was lost.

So, we don't need to go out and hire consultants who could tell us better what we can do. We have those answers right here in our own province. All we have to do – yes, we've done lots of listening, we're always listening it seems, we're always seeking consultations and we're always seeking input. Yes, that's important, but what's more important is what we do with that input, and that's something that governments have not been good at.

We waffle around on issues. A prime example is the plastic bag ban. We'll debate that in the coming days. We've been told loud and clear by the people of this province that this is something we have to do; this is something that is wanted by the public. Yes, it may create a little bit of inconvenience for a lot of people getting used to it, but there is no half way about this.

On Friday, which was a very windy day, I happened to go down to dumpsite A, which is the main dumpsite of Robin Hood Bay, which is probably the largest collector of waste in all of Newfoundland. At that time, they were allowing

one truck to dump at a time. Do you know why? Because as soon as that truck dumped, I would say 20 per cent of it flew off into the air out over the ocean. So they could not get it covered up as soon as the wind was taking it and putting it in our ocean.

Driving along the side of the road going down to the dump site, there were snow banks on the side of the road, still here because they were covered in plastic. There was that much plastic on it, it was insulating the snow. So, there is no half way about this. It's only a small step.

I know I did receive communication from the former minister of Environment that it's only 2 per cent of the garbage that we produce, but we need to start making a step. We need to start making a step for future generations. Once you make that first step, the second is a lot easier. So that's what we all have to concentrate on doing. Yes, there will be people who are not pleased with it, but we have to do it for the future.

Which brings us to the last couple of minutes I'm here standing, talking about the future. I guess in my main career, outside of politics, I'm Farmer Jim and part of operations on our farm is we entertain a lot of children. Do you know what was on my mind the whole time this past weekend? I was looking at all these kids with such excitement and running around enjoying our farm and all I could think was: \$800 million. But not only that: \$1 billion that we're going to collect upfront and spend.

What are we going to spend that on? Are we going to continue to spend it on our unsustainable management of government, or are we going to try to make things better? Are we going to try to reduce the cost of government, provide more efficient services and spend wisely? Spend wisely, that's another thing we're not doing.

I have seniors in my district who are going to go blind and become 100 per cent dependent on the province for their care. Right now, they're living independently. Why are they going that? Because this administration has put a limit on how many injections they can get to prevent their eye condition from getting worse.

How can it be more efficient to cut out a \$1,500 injection once every two months to prevent somebody from going blind, versus taking that person who will now not be able to look after themselves at all and put them in an institution?

I have seniors who are going to emergency departments because the government has cut out the seniors' dental care program and low-income dental care. Why? Because they just cannot afford it. Do you know what? Seniors and the most vulnerable are often the most quiet because they're embarrassed of their situation. They're embarrassed. This government has placed embarrassment on the most vulnerable sectors of our society.

Now, how can we do that? How can we say it is not good spending to keep someone healthy, to reduce the costs on our health care system? How can we not say that? Why do we still do this?

This government got elected on a promise that they were going to do better for the people. We're 3½ years in and we're still waiting for them to make good on that promise.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave.

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

It's always an honour, of course, to stand in our place here in this hon. House, the House of Assembly, our Newfoundland and Labrador Legislature to represent the people who elected us. I represent the strong District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave and I got to say I had a great weekend on the ground at many community events throughout my district from Bishops Cove, Bay Roberts, Harbour Grace, you name it. It's always a good time in Harbour Grace - Port de Grave.

Just to quickly refer to my colleague opposite here, who I consider a good friend, Famer Jim, a.k.a., he made a comment about not looking after our vulnerable population. Well, I have to say and I can only speak for myself here on this side of the House, I can say the argument was

the same thing for the vulnerable, young student population in Coley's Point Primary.

For years we know, Mr. Speaker, that promises have been made. Money has been allocated by the previous administration but nothing materialized. We talk about a vulnerable population. I would argue that our youngest students as well as our seniors are indeed the most vulnerable members of our society.

I'm happy to say that it's this government –and I'm grateful that it's happening in my time as MHA. As everybody can attest to here in this House, I talk about it every time I stand in this hon. House. I'm happy to say that our government has awarded \$16.2 million to JMJ Holdings. It's a Newfoundland and Labrador company, of course, that are going to take action. I'm told that the physical work can start tomorrow, right from the minister's mouth, Mr. Speaker, right here. So we can expect good work to begin on that long overdue school replacement.

The student population varies between 350 to 400 in that area. It services children all the way from Port de Grave, Hibbs Cove, Bareneed, Bay Roberts, Coley's Point, Shearstown, Butlerville, some from the Clarke's Beach area and Bay Roberts attend that school. That's the feeder school right there. That's where they start. A lot of my friends have their children currently enrolled at Coley's Point. I'm happy to say I visit the school frequently, but I look forward to visiting that new building, with the doors scheduled to open in 2021.

So let's bring that on. Can't wait to see that physical work begin on Coley's Point Primary school replacement. It's going to be located on Eric Dawe Drive, which is adjacent to Amalgamated Academy in Bay Roberts, another great school, another great educational facility in the strong District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave.

Mr. Speaker, and there are more students at Amalgamated Academy than there are at Ascension Collegiate, the high school there in the area. So let me tell you, there's lots of learning, lots of bright minds that will come out of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave District.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about roads. Roads are a problem everywhere. I hear a lot in particular from folks in Port de Grave area – Hibbs Cove, Port de Grave, Bareneed – and I have to say the road conditions are pretty deplorable in that area. We're all competing for roads and for maintenance on our roads throughout the province. I'm happy to say that some good roadwork has been done on Cranes Road and the Thicket Road in Upper Island Cove, Spaniard's Bay and Riverhead, near Harbour Grace, in my district, but we need to do more with our roads.

It would be great if we could fix all the roads, Mr. Speaker, but we have significant kilometres of highway in this province. I have made a promise, of course, to the constituents in this area that I will lobby and do my best to advocate for roadwork in that area. As we know, the provincial government is responsible for the roadway in Port de Grave and in Bareneed, and I will continue to advocate and do everything I can to get road maintenance down there.

Also on the Lighthouse Road in Port de Grave, there's a lot of exciting things happening in this particular area of Port de Grave. Just recently, my colleague, MP Ken McDonald, and I were at the boat-lighting festival in Port de Grave, the annual boat lighting. That same night we were able to announce a joint funding announcement of \$154,000 to be invested in Lighthouse Road, to create the Green Point light station as a world-renowned tourism destination in Port de Grave, a beautiful example of a perfect coastal community. It's a very picturesque community, the landscape and the ocean, and of course a lot of busy activity within our fishery.

We have a lot of our inshore and offshore fishers that live in Port de Grave and in Bareneed and those areas, and it's just an area that I'm very proud of. So very, very excited to see the development of the Green Point light station. I'm also lobbying on behalf of residents down there to have Lighthouse Road paved. So, again, roads are a number one issue no matter where you go, no matter what district throughout the province, people want to see better roadways, and rightfully so.

Having said that, I'm also very excited to soon bring good news about Harvey Street in Harbour

Grace. I worked closely, of course, with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment on this, we've had multiple meetings, and let me tell you Harvey Street is a main thoroughfare in the historic Town of Harbour Grace in my district. Again, another perfect example of neglect. Those roadways, I have often compared it to playing a video game, Mario Kart, to try and avoid the obstacles down there. I get complaints and calls of concerns from residents often with vehicle damage due to the condition of the road.

So I'm happy to say that we're hoping we're going to move forward on that project, working hand in hand with the Town of Harbour Grace on that. Underground infrastructure must be replaced before new pavement can go on Harvey Street. Harvey Street, it's a main thoroughfare, provincial road, goes through the town, and we've got great private sector projects also happening in Harbour Grace.

Take, for example, the iconic Roman Catholic cathedral down there in Bears Cove on Water Street. I recommend a drive out to have a look. It's a historic building and I'm happy to say that it's going to be converted into, I think, North America's very first beer spa. Believe it or not, I'm told that you'll be able to take a bath in beer. It has benefits for the body and the skin. So it's going to be very interesting to see that.

I welcome, of course, those business people to our area: Craig Flynn and Brenda O'Reilly. They own O'Reilly's and the famous Yellowbelly here on George Street in our capital. But they're very excited to open up shop and start construction in Harbour Grace.

Also, hopefully there are good, ambitious plans for the historic courthouse that has been closed. It's an historic site there and we're hoping to find a good purpose for that as well, Mr. Speaker.

So lots of great, exciting things happening, but the people in Harbour Grace say to me there are wonderful things happening in the private sector, but we got to have a good road to drive on. And that's right. So, as the MHA, I will certainly continue advocating, working with the minister here, who is very co-operative, I must say, in the position, and so hopefully we'll have a good

announcement to make soon about the infrastructure and to kick off Harvey Street. The Minister of Transportation and Works has also assured me that blacktop will follow this new infrastructure project for Harvey Street in Harbour Grace.

Also, some other good news to announce with our Community Healthy Living Fund. We've got a lot of active kids and active seniors and residents from all ages of the spectrum in Harbour Grace - Port de Grave. Recently, I was able to announce \$5,000 for the resurfacing of a basketball court in Spaniard's Bay. We've got a wonderful group of volunteers out there on the recreation committee, and they've come together, of course.

It takes work to go into these applications, as you know, Mr. Speaker. It's no such thing as writing a cheque and handing out money. Money doesn't grow on trees; we know that. And it takes a lot of time and dedication for these volunteers to put forth these complex applications. So I'm happy to say some money coming there for the kids and for the general population out there for the basketball court resurfacing. Also, the SPLASH Centre in Harbour Grace, just over \$6,000 to go and to support that organization.

I'd be remiss if I didn't talk about the strong volunteers that we have, in particular our volunteer firefighters in the District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave. Strong department in Bay Roberts, Upper Island Cove, Spaniard's Bay, Harbour Grace - I hope I'm not missing any. But they all come together. When there's an incident, when there's something happening, especially on the Veterans Memorial Highway, which is, unfortunately, infamous for fatalities in our province, they all come together and they support one another.

Anything I can do for those volunteers, believe me, I am going to do. I have to say they step up. When people are running away seeking shelter from a fire or from a horrific incident, or an accident of some sort, it's those men and women that run in when the rest of us are seeking safety. I can't say enough about these volunteers. I had the pleasure of attending the firefighters' ball in Bay Roberts just a couple of weeks ago. I got to tell you, they're a great group, a beautiful group

of people. I love spending time with my volunteer firefighters in our district because, like I said, I call them the most courageous volunteers in the world.

On that note again, it's great to celebrate the new medical rescue fire unit truck that I was able to help secure for the Town of Upper Island Cove. The Town of Upper Island Cove services not only Upper Island Cove but, of course, Bishops Cove and Bryant's Cove. They look after that population. They also respond to a lot of medical calls, Mr. Speaker. Because of their unique geography, their response times are very quick. So, hats off to them and I know they're enjoying their new vehicle down there in Upper Island Cove, but there's more to come.

Also, before I conclude, Mr. Speaker, we've got the Summer Games for the first time in our history –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. P. PARSONS: – that's coming into Bay Roberts. We've seen other communities host the Summer Games, but I'm happy to say we have secured a provincial Newfoundland and Labrador Summer Games which will be happening in 2020 in the Town of Bay Roberts. The neighbouring communities will also benefit. Thousands are expected to visit our area in 2020 for the Summer Games. That comes with an operational grant of \$200,000. So, I'm very excited to announce that, Mr. Speaker. Those details are not quite confirmed or official, but it's coming.

I think it's the official Volunteer Week, is the proper title for that, so we're celebrating our volunteers here in Newfoundland and Labrador. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, we have the strongest, dedicated volunteers in Harbour Grace - Port de Grave District, so I'm very proud.

Just to wrap up now, the Veterans Memorial Highway, over the past two years \$5 million has been invested in the Veterans for safety upgrades such as rubble strips, such as the climbing lanes. As we know, it's not a divided highway at this point, but they're going to add in some climbing lanes.

A lot of feedback on that road, a lot of concerns about that road and I'm happy to say we're doing the best we can. I will always advocate for the people of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, Mr. Speaker. It's how we all come here. We're all elected by the people who put us in these seats to represent them, their concerns, their priorities and it is an absolute honour.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I'll take my seat but, again, \$16.2 million has been awarded to JMJ Holdings to replace the long overdue Coley's Point Primary school. Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of that one and very excited, and construction is ready to kick off, I'm told, tomorrow morning and start mobilizing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will take my seat and, again, it's always a pleasure to speak in this hon. House.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm just going to stand and speak for a few minutes to the Address in Reply. Mr. Speaker, I just want, again, to talk about some of the issues in the Humber - Bay of Islands area and also some areas we're going to face, like the hospital.

Mr. Speaker, I know today we brought Daffodil Place. That's going to be a great day for me and a great day for all the people in Western Newfoundland and Labrador also, and probably even Central and back. Once the hospital is built and there's a radiation unit in the new hospital, that's going to be a great day. I just bring that up today, and hearing how much cancer has been beaten over a number years, and the success rate has gone up and we need more research.

Also, when we brought up Daffodil Place, the people from outside St. John's are coming in and making it such a home away from home. It's a great facility. It has provided a need to a lot of people. It's well needed, and a lot of people who used it has nothing but high praise for it. I can tell you, the people in Western Newfoundland

will be happy – it will be a happy day for all the people in the province when the new hospital is built in Corner Brook and there's a radiation unit so it will cut down on the number people who will have to travel to St. John's.

I will be a proud Member, be a proud resident of Corner Brook, a proud resident of Curling where I grew up, and I am sure all the other people who would expect that we could have the treatment in the Corner Brook area – and the people who really need it the most need to be close to their family. They need to be close to their family to make sure that in a time of such sadness and such disease, that you have the support of your family at home.

I go back on that, Mr. Speaker, I go back to when I was in the Opposition and I started with our Opposition Members – that was a hot topic. I think in 2007 was when the first of the hospital was announced. It was announced just about every year. I still remember the big ploy in 2011 when we were at a debate up at the rec plex in Corner Brook and the government at the time went and got tractors and started going up and plowing stuff off in 2011. So, yeah, construction is starting. I stood up and said, well, it's great. It's great that it's starting and you feel great for it and good. I nothing but supported it.

I remember coming into the Estimates after getting elected in 2011; Tom Hedderson was the minister of Transportation and Works at the time. He stood in his place during Estimates, and I asked him: Can I get a copy, and how much of the work was done on the design? I remember – and I have to give Tom Hedderson credit for this – he said: We're not even at the pre-design yet. We haven't got the pre-design completed. That was so startling, after people in Corner Brook in 2011 were told, because they seen the tractors operating up around, they said, yes, the construction will be starting, we're ready to start it. And the pre-design wasn't even done.

That's the kind of fight that people like myself had as the Opposition. I had a lot of support in Corner Brook. I had a lot of support from the Opposition, the whole Liberal Opposition also. It wasn't just me; it was the whole Liberal Opposition that kicked up a fight. Of course, I led the charge, and I'm proud I did lead the charge.

I remember speaking to a guy in Corner Brook, Bob Cook. I knew Bob through basketball, a great guy. He's a radiologist at the hospital, and I said: Look, what can we do to start this? What can we do to start getting the proper information? He put me on to this specialist, Dr. David Saltman, who used to be a radiologist in St. John's. He was out in Corner Brook for a number of years. He treated one of my good friends, who passed away. He was travelling out once a month. He always advocated for a radiation unit in Corner Brook and said the bunker can be operating on its own and also the need is there.

I remember they said, well, contact his guy. I contacted Dr. David Saltman in Victoria, BC, to start getting the information on a radiation unit in Corner Brook. What a man of experience and what a man of conviction. He felt at the time, he felt so strong that there should have been a radiation unit. Every time I called Dr. David Saltman in Victoria, BC, the man took my call and said: Here's the next step you have to go.

Mr. Speaker, back then we went to Sault Ste. Marie, because they had a single bunker unit and it was satellite outside from where they had bunker satellites. It was in Sault Ste. Marie, but they satellite the bunker and they did the treatment from 250, 300 miles away.

Also, we went to London, Ontario. We were talking about the isotopes that couldn't be transferred because they're too dangerous. I got in contact with the director of the University of Saskatchewan where they got isotopes from London. We got the email then from the director stating that, yes, they're travelling 1,500 kilometres three times a week by Air Canada. That was another stumbling block.

I'm proud of this guy also; it was a tough time to do it. It was a tough time to finally convince him, but it was Tom Marshall. He was the premier at the time. Tom Marshall sat in that chair, and me and him had a debate in the House of Assembly. We had a debate, and I called him aside and said, look, here's the information. I got to give him credit, as the premier of the province he picked up the phone – I said this before, and I'm proud that he did – and he phoned a person in Sydney, Nova Scotia, and a person in PEI on a Saturday and Sunday morning and asked them

about a single-bunker unit. They said yes, we can get that done. We had done it for 10 years. I think in Sydney they even put in two units because the need became so great.

Tom Marshall then commissioned a \$500,000 study, and finally that study came back and said yes – as we all knew. The PC government also – after we committed, as Liberals of the Opposition, if we got in government that we would have in the new hospital a radiation unit. They came back and yes, the numbers were proven and the dependability of the machine as a bunker – one single-bunker unit has been proven that they – he went out and commissioned a study. So he was a big part of that at the end of it. It took a lot of pushing and shoving, but I got to give the man credit for doing that.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's going to be a proud day for me. I just hope – again, I know the Minister of Transportation and Works is working hard with Trades NL – that when the hospital is being built, it's going to be for the local people because the last time it was tough. I got to tell you, it was tough.

I won't get into the person's name, who I was talking to at the government at the time. He was dealing with government employees, with the government Members. He was also dealing with the companies and we worked out a deal. I know the iron workers were willing to put in \$100,000 to make sure there was no extra cost to anybody. The company would get the profit, the government wouldn't put in any extra money. The union workers themselves brought down the expectation, and there was a \$100,000 gap. The iron workers at the time committed the \$100,000.

I remember this person distinctly. I could get the text very easy, saying: they're going to hire local people, go up and tell them. I did that, and I know who he was speaking to in the government at the time. I know who he was speaking to. We all agreed, yes, we're going to hire local workers. I went up, I got on NTV at the time with Don Bradshaw, and I said yes, they're going to hire local people. I told the guys and ladies, start putting in your applications. They filled out their resumes. They weren't hired. I was led down the garden path. I was actually led down the garden path.

I could tell you one thing, it won't happen this time because everybody is going to be aware that local people should be hired. They are well qualified, they are willing to make sure that it doesn't cost the taxpayers any money whatsoever. And whoever is doing the lobbying for the hospital better not lead me down the garden path this year, like happened last year, because I had to go back to those employees. I went back to those employees and I apologized. I showed them the text messages, Mr. Speaker, and everything I told them was to the best of my knowledge that was given to me that Friday afternoon.

I went back, I faced them, and I said: Look, here's what happened. It won't happen this year, because I made a commitment to them, inside or outside of government, that I was going to raise their issue at every possible opportunity. I'm fulfilling that commitment for the local people in not just Corner Brook, not just the Bay of Islands, but for the whole Western region – and maybe a lot of people from outside also.

With the petitions that I presented today were some people from out here in Eastern Newfoundland. There are a lot of people in Eastern Newfoundland, tradespeople that they may need. There are enough local people here to hire. And I know one Member across – and I won't say the person's name. I'm sure they didn't say it in a bad way. They said Newfoundlanders go to Alberta. That's true. We go all over. You can't fight that argument, because Newfoundlanders work all over the world; they actually do. But if you have the same people, tradespeople here, that's going to be less expensive, qualified tradespeople and labourers to do the work, why not hire local? No extra cost to the province, no extra cost to the company, but it's going to keep people home.

So I'm going to continue on that. Now, hopefully this announcement is going to be made before the election, on the hospital. I'm hoping that the announcement is going to be made and also that it's going to be local people hired. I won't even be upset, Mr. Speaker, if we made it during the election. Everybody knows it's coming. Whenever you make the final decision, I say let's bring on the decision, let's not have it delayed. Because if we got to delay it again until the fall, then the construction won't

start until the spring of next year. Everybody knows it's there, everybody knows the money is in the budget, everybody knows it's down to two components, it's just a matter of how long can you take when the experts have to take the two proposals now and evaluate the proposals. And I know that's the big problem now.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to that day and it's going to be a proud day for a lot of people. I know the Opposition – and I have to give a lot of the Opposition Members credit who are with me, who helped me a lot on that, because we stuck together on that, and that was a commitment that we made at the time. I'm glad that the Liberal government is going to follow through. But I just want that little extra step now for that four years to have people at home working at home.

I just go through the district again; I have a few minutes left. I was talking to the minister on the damage that was done with the flood last year. All the work couldn't get done last year because of the early snowstorm. The tenders are already let for going up Frenchman's Cove Hill and also the big culvert in John's Beach, the tenders have been let. There has been some work done by it.

I'm working with the minister on some funding for Route 450. The minister is working with me on that and I thank the minister for that, to see what we can do. It's been a hard year on the road in Route 450. A lot of it is because of the damage the year before during the flood and then we couldn't get it done. I just let people know that I am dealing with the minister on it. The minister is working with me and we will see what we can come up with, some kind of solution.

I know, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of funding coming out for water and sewer. I can assure the people of the Humber - Bay of Islands also that I'm working with the minister on it for the priorities of the Humber - Bay of Islands.

Another thing I have to recognize here is this is Volunteer Week. I don't think anywhere in rural Newfoundland and Labrador can operate – I saw on your Facebook page, Mr. Speaker, where you were thanking all the volunteers in your district. I think you and everybody in this House of Assembly recognizes all the volunteers that are

in our districts. Without them, I don't think we could have the quality of life or we could have the safety that we would have.

I can start from one end, Mr. Speaker, I can start out with the Harbour and York Harbour fire department and then they have the church group there. They have the Outer Bay of Islands committee. They have the Lark Harbour Trail Committee. They have the York Harbour Trail Committee. It's unbelievable in that area, the amount, for such a small community to come together.

I just want to speak about Lark Harbour and York Harbour. It wasn't just Lark Harbour and York Harbour, but the whole south shore, when you move up to Frenchman's Cove, there is a lot of volunteers in that area. The Town of Humber Arm South has one of the best fire departments, the largest, the work that they do in the area. They have a recreation committee and they even started a youth group. There's a youth group now on Friday nights in the Town of York Harbour started by volunteers. Last week, I think they had about 35, 40 youth on a Friday night in the community hall playing games, having fun. They brought in a little exchange of clothes for some people. It's just fantastic the amount of work that the volunteers do.

When you can move up to Mount Moriah again and you look at all Mount Moriah, the fire department that's there. The recreation group in Mount Moriah is one of the most organized groups that I ever seen. It's a small group. They have so many different events for seniors, a Christmas supper for seniors. They have a lot of youth. They don't ask government for one penny; they raise it on their own. And each time I went to them and said there is money available if you need equipment, they said no, save it for other people, we're doing fine at our bingos, our card games and other things. What an attitude, to say no, we don't need to apply, we're doing just fine, thank you very much.

The Mount Moriah, the whole fire department also, they just got a new fire hall there, and it's named after a former fire chief and a fireman for 30 years, Mr. George Bellows. George passed away a few years ago and George was instrumental in the fire department in Mount Moriah, and I think when they opened up the

fire hall and you're with the family, there was no greater feeling in the whole Town of Mount Moriah than when they opened up the George Bellows Memorial Fire Hall.

There are a lot of volunteers in Curling and Corner Brook, all throughout that I could name and that help out so much. Look at George Sheppard and Jack Pennell, his sidekick, what they do for the Children's Wish Foundation. George was recognized just last year by the Children's Wish Foundation for his outstanding contribution, and they help out with the golf tournament. Even those two men, even today, with the Children's Wish, they're so dedicated. Jack Pennell has his basement full of recyclables that he goes around and collects and turns in for the Children's Wish Foundation. It's just unbelievable, the work that they do.

I move further up, and when you look at Corner Brook, I know a lot of people in the Humber Mouth area in the district are heavily involved in Special Olympics. When you see these individuals who have no connection, only they just want to give back and see the smiles on the people with Special Olympics, you can see why volunteerism is so big and people are so happy to get involved with it.

And on the north shore, there's absolutely no difference either. When you got all the fire departments and the H.I.S. fire department, you got the Meadows fire department and you got the McIvers, Cox's Cove, they do so many medical calls now it's unbelievable. I know back when I first got elected, back in the early '90s, 90 per cent of the calls were fire. Now, it's reversed. Ninety per cent of the calls now are medical. They're so well trained; they're so well versed in their training itself. People call them volunteers; they're not. They're just not paid. They're professional, they're accountable to their town councils, and also to all the recreation groups in the Humber - Bay of Islands does such a great job.

Also, we can't forget a lot of the town councils. A lot of the town councils are volunteers. They may get a small stipend, but a lot of the town councils are volunteers also, and they put in a lot of time. When you're in a municipal council, you do take a lot of heat from people because you're so close with the residents themselves

and the issues are more local. You have to recognize the volunteers of the town councils all throughout the Humber - Bay of Islands because they do an outstanding job.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of issues we're working on in the Humber - Bay of Islands. Water and sewer, again, in Lark Harbour, York Harbour. Hopefully, we will secure some funding for that again this year. Also, roads on the North Shore, I have to give the Minister of Transportation and Works – last year the North Shore Highway was done and done well.

I know the Outer Ring Road from Wheelers Road down to O'Connell Drive is in the five-year plan. It's going to be done this year. I think seven or eight kilometres are done; most of the work. So that's a lot of work for people going out of the city and using the Outer Ring Road. Also, that's going to be site of the new hospital. So that's well needed in that area.

Mr. Speaker, there are always issues in towns: firefighting equipment and fire trucks, but when you look at any government, you can't give all the needs that everybody has, you have to look at the properties. I just don't think there's enough money. I said it before in government, there's not enough money.

If you had all the requests, even just capital works, I assume this year is around \$600 million or \$700 million in capital works funding across the Province of Newfoundland. There's no government ever, that I know in Newfoundland and Labrador, can give out that amount of money in one year. So we have to pick the priorities, and we have to look at the officials themselves for making those priorities. That's the job of the MHA is to help the concerns of the residents, to bring forward to the government, and work where you can to make improvements.

I know the budget is coming down. I'm looking forward to a good budget, and I'm looking forward to speaking on the budget. Hopefully, there will be some good news there for Humber - Bay of Islands because I know I had a lot of meetings with several ministers on different key issues in the Humber - Bay of Islands.

I thank the residents of Humber - Bay of Islands for all their efforts in putting forward their

concerns and making sure that as elected people who represent the districts, that we put forward information.

Mr. Speaker, I see my time is ending there. I just want to thank you for the opportunity, and I thank the great people of Humber - Bay of Islands.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MS. PARSLEY: Good afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House this afternoon on matters important to the great District of Harbour Main. It is a positive message and so its appeal may be lost to the Opposition.

Today, being the beginning of Volunteer Week, I would like to say a special thank you to all the volunteers, not only in my district, in all of Newfoundland and Labrador, because without volunteers we would not be where we are today.

I attended a fire department – 45 years in Harbour Main – the other night, and there were firefighters there who had a 45-year service pin. There were young people coming on 18, 19 to serve, and let me tell you, by the time the awards and banquet was over there was movement in the room, and it was because of the volunteers and the commitment of the people.

Also, there was one in Bay de Grave on Saturday night, which I had to send my CA to because I couldn't do three, and the same thing down there with the Bay de Grave fire department. Holyrood celebrated its installation of officers also on Saturday night, which I had to get someone from there to go on my behalf.

So let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, it's been busy days, busy weekends. I live in a rural district with rural concerns and family – rural with a wish list. *The Way Forward* ensures that districts like Harbour Main may be given the opportunity to repair itself, inject much-needed funds and growth.

The government has shown commitment to the district since being elected in 2015 with sizeable

investments, including municipal operating grants. Stay tuned on that, I understand there are going to be announcements this week: clean water, waste water funds, building expansions to schools, the Job Creation Partnerships for various locals and, finally, aggressive spending on road infrastructure.

I can be proud to say that in my district of Holyrood, Salmonier Line was recently paved, and what an awesome job. I understand this is their Come Home Year celebration this year in Holyrood. And the people of Holyrood, the volunteers, are looking forward to bringing people in from all over the world, and this road will make a difference. It's also making a difference to people who go to their cabins on the weekend, who travel on to the highway. So hat's off to the government for that.

In just the past few months this government continues that trend with recent investments in my district. Some of those hit close to home for the value they place on citizens that need an extra boost.

Our government just presented the Brigus sports and recreation with approximately \$4,600 to benefit recreational seniors' healthy living. For general recreation, we gave \$1,500 to Marysvale recreational committee. The Immaculate Conception School received \$1,000 for their healthy living agenda. For the Town of Avondale, accessibility grant, community gardens, this government presented them with a grant of approximately \$8,800.

The Town of Harbour Main continues to build on its recreation platform and was injected with approximately \$5,600 for its summer recreation program. The Town of Holyrood is always front and centre with events for family healthy active living, they were presented with \$8,600 for their continued efforts. The Marina Golden Club, \$1,900 for upgrades to a seniors' room.

Mr. Speaker, on a grand provincial scale monies like this are perhaps rather insignificant, but in individual small town cases it means the world. It keeps us motivated, prolongs critical programs and shows our government are engaged and empathic to everyone and everyone.

When you look at our seniors today out there who are making strides – one time seniors were in their houses, they didn't have a whole lot to do, but in today's world our seniors are running most of our volunteer places. They're the first ones you'll see in the morning when there's a breakfast, up serving. They're the ones who are cleaning the halls when people go home.

So our government has really done a lot for most seniors, and the youth of our province who are coming up. Let's face it, the youth are our next generation and if we don't support and help them with programs and do what we're doing today, we will not have our province growing the way it is today.

Now, to be able to speak about something else, the District of Harbour Main just received awards at Softball Newfoundland annual awards night this past week. The Conception Bay Centre area of Harbour Main district continues to produce world-class athletes in softball. As a matter of fact, the entire province continues an upward trend in their ability to compete on the national scale.

John Farrell of Holyrood was inducted into the Hall of Fame. David Connors of Conception Harbour received the minor coach of the year award. Emily Hawco of Chapel's Cove went home with minor female athlete of the year – Emily just participated in Red Deer with the hockey team – and Eric Healey of Chapel's Cove got the male minor athlete of the year.

These are students and kids who've been on soccer fields and ballfields from the time they could walk. So, hats off to their parents and the communities that support these people. Many members of the team, the Galway Hitmen, received their start in the Conception Bay Central Minor Softball League.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to send congratulations out to the winners in their continued success. They represent their district and province so well. Softball, baseball continues to grow in Newfoundland and Labrador, and this government should not only encourage a love of sports but (inaudible) sports play, as long as it includes vigorous playing, physical activity and the potential of lifelong friendships.

I heard my colleague from Port de Grave just a few minutes ago talking about she could not wait to enter the new school in Coley's Point. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is another note on my bucket list today. I cannot wait for the new Waterford to be built because every day that I enter the Waterford on Waterford Bridge Road, it's a building, there are a lot of wonderful staff there, but there's no newness, there's nothing. The patients, the staff, everybody is just waiting.

So, when this new facility breaks ground and opens, I will stand here in this House of Assembly and I'm going to be one of the proud ones to be able to go and visit, whether I have my son there or not. It's been a long, hard road on this journey and without the help and what we're getting today in the medical services, I would not be able to do it.

Before I take my place, I would like to advocate for many things in my district, but I know with the capital works coming – people got a little bit confused last week when we talked about the grants, they thought it was capital works, but that was a different story. It's coming in our new budget, it's coming when the capital works is brought down. I just hope, after advocating for every part of my district, that things are going to be a little better, and with the help of this government, we are hoping to put this place on a better road.

Now, I'm going to sit and take my place. Thank you for the opportunity to have spoken in this House this afternoon.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

MR. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's an honour to rise in this House today and speak about my wonderful District of Topsail - Paradise. Topsail - Paradise, of course, is a young community, we have lots of activities. In fact, every weekend there are a barrage of events happening throughout the district.

This past weekend, one of the main ones was our hosting the Beaumont Hamel Centennial Cup, the high school hockey tournament. It commemorates the sacrifices of our young men and women from Beaumont-Hamel, July 1, 1916. It was won by the O'Donel Patriots, the tournament this year, so bravo to all of them out there.

I also want to talk about the volunteers. Our community is run by a tremendous number of volunteers, just like any community depends on its volunteers. This being Volunteer Week, and the theme being: The Volunteer Factor – Lifting Communities. That is certainly to the point.

In Paradise, we have many groups. We have Lions groups and the Rotary. We have a lot of volunteer groups in terms of the Girl Guides and the Scouts. We have seniors groups and church groups. We have all those parents who come forward and assist with our sports groups, and I can go on and on. I'm sure any community or any district within the province can do the same. Our volunteers are certainly a huge part of keeping a community going and as the theme says, lifting our communities up.

The Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave had mentioned the volunteer fire departments. That's an interesting one because in many of our communities they are volunteers. I had the opportunity this past summer to participate in the Fire Ops 101 process that the fire department put off here in St. John's. I believe the Premier was there briefly and, of course, the Member for – let me just make sure I have him right – Virginia Waters - Pleasantville also participated.

Of course, in that particular event, we went through five types of drills. We were all equipped with the full fire gear. We rescued someone from a car, a dummy, but we rescued him from a car. We repelled down a five-story building. We went in confined spaces. There were a number of activities we did, and until you do that, you don't really get an understanding of what our first responders go through and what our firemen go through, and our fire women.

We went through in a controlled exercise, but I can tell you right now, I could have turned back anytime, but you have to understand that your first responders are going through events or

through facilities or buildings or burning buildings in which they have no knowledge of where they're going. So, for someone to do that as a career and for people to come forward and do it in a voluntary process, it's outstanding that they do so. So hats off to our volunteer community.

Of course, as we approach the election everyone in this House will be availing of volunteers and they know the importance that the volunteers bring to their campaigns. So, certainly, I'm looking forward to that, looking forward to a lot of volunteers helping out and moving forward.

In Paradise, in the Topsail - Paradise District, there are a number of issues that have been brought forward to me. Child care, affordable child care is out there. The 1.6 kilometre busing issue is there. There are some infrastructure needs that are definite in the community. We look at some senior care issues. There are certainly a number of items there that we need to address and I'm proud to be speaking up for Topsail - Paradise, and I'll continue to go forward and push those issues.

Last week, we had the Speech from the Throne. Lovely document, as Speeches from the Throne are. I went through this document and a lot of highlighting I looked at. I'll take one out, I'll just look at one here that has been talked about. It talked about growing our economy, growing employment.

It's been quoted by the Premier, it's been quoted by others here across the way, and I'll quote it right from the book here as well, from the Speech: "February 2019 marked the eighth consecutive month of employment gains, showing growth that we have not seen since 2013."

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!

MR. DINN: That's interesting, and I hear the Member for Bonavista cheering over there. I appreciate the cheering.

I'd also note, because the Member for Bonavista spoke when the Member for Mount Pearl North was speaking, and I think he said: You should know what you're talking about before you

speak. I'll say that again: You should know what you're talking about before you speak.

That is wonderful to hear. In fact, the Member for Bonavista has said in the past, he said: We are a party of fixes. He said that in the past. He said that. Of course, I looked up – I said, well, what's the definition of fixing? I looked it up and it said: It's the underhanded way of fixing – determining an outcome. That's one definition of fix: to determine the outcome by illegal or underhanded way, but, then, of course, the other definition of fix is to repair or approve upon.

Now, I'll take the latter, I'm assuming the Member opposite was referring to the latter. So I'll go back to my quote here: "February 2019 marked the eighth consecutive month of employment gains, showing growth that have not seen since 2013." I'll paraphrase that: Showing growth that we have not seen since the last PC government was in.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DINN: I have no problem with that. The Members across are cheering on too, so I appreciate that. I appreciate that. We have not seen growth since the last PC government. That's wonderful, but let's go back. Let's go back to the Member for Bonavista now – well, it's not just him, a couple of other Members have made it: Facts matter. Facts matter. So, again, we have not seen employment growth. We have not seen employment growth. Facts matter.

When you're measuring employment growth, you normally refer to the labour market survey. That's what most governments do. That's what the Department of Finance does – labour market survey.

AN HON. MEMBER: What about the ferries?

MR. DINN: Well, they monitoring them too. I'm sure they survey the ferries.

You look at the labour market survey. It surveys about 1,900 Newfoundlanders every month and every six months so many drop off and they come up with another number. That's where they come up with the employment figures.

So, I go back to employment: eight months of consecutive growth.

If I flip into the labour market survey: July, full-time employment, down – down in July.

AN HON. MEMBER: July?

MR. DINN: In July.

February, full-time employment, down – down.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. DINN: Oh, I'll get to those months.

March, full-time employment, down.

Now, the Premier even said it today on the radio: month over month we have had eight months of consecutive growth – month over month. Now, most people looking at the data will look at the year over year. So let's look at the year over year.

November, full-time employment, year over year, down. In fact, what brought the employment number up was part-time employment. December, year over year, full-time employment, down again – down again.

So, facts matter, guys, facts matters. Facts do matter.

Now, when I stood up here last time and we had a chat with the Member opposite on immigration, again, I was told facts matter, get the facts straight. I noticed this past weekend, a top economist, Don Mills, talked about immigration. Guess whose figure he used? The same one I used; the same one I used. So someone's wrong.

The Member here for Mount Pearl North, he raised a good point, he raised an excellent point on the GDP. Here's the quote from across the way: We will be leading this country in economic activity, GDP, in Canada next year.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's right, check the facts on it.

MR. DINN: That is right. I'm not saying it's wrong.

AN HON. MEMBER: Facts matter.

MR. DINN: Facts matter, excellent.

GDP represents economic health of a province. It presents a sum of the province's production, which consists of purchases, goods and services produced in the province. That's what it does. Facts matter.

I got a nice document here. It's produced by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. It's our Budget 2018. I look at GDP, and here's where you have to understand GDP, which I just read you the definition. We get huge, huge monetary gain from our oil and extraction. That makes sense. We get lots of money coming in due to our oil companies, due to the production offshore.

The value of that on our GDP is about 13 per cent, that's the value. Do you know what it creates in jobs? Just over 1 per cent. Now, if you throw in induced and direct employment, that figure probably jumps to near 10 per cent. So GDP, value-wise, doesn't correlate with jobs; 30 per cent increase in value is not 30 per cent in jobs.

You look at our retail trade. Our retail, in value, brings in just under 6 per cent, but guess what it creates in retail. Over 16 per cent.

So, facts matter, and you really have to delve into the detail to understand what's being said. I think the public out there understand and they're not as naïve to take the first quote or the first figure you throw at them.

Eight months of consecutive growth, looking at the stats, and I'm only referring to the stats that are put out by Stats Canada, through their Labour Force Survey, which is done on a monthly basis due to a monthly survey. It's not there; don't know where it's coming from. So, facts matter.

As we move forward, because we talked about the momentum, I think the Premier mentioned the momentum we got.

AN HON. MEMBER: Absolutely.

MR. DINN: Absolutely, you're correct.

If I jumped off the roof down there I'd have lots of momentum going down, lots of momentum. There's nothing to it. Gravity pulls you down; lots of momentum. As quick as you can get down there, you're going to hit the ground.

AN HON. MEMBER: You're going in the wrong direction.

MR. DINN: You're going in the wrong direction.

Now, a number of years ago dealing with some of the women's groups here, many years ago, they put out a document called: *At a Snail's Pace*. It spoke to the issues around women's issues, equity and that, and how it's moving forward. Snail's pace, but a snail is moving forward.

So, really when we look at it, *The Way Forward*, are we actually moving forward because when I look at this the labour for August, full-time employment, down. I take any of those last months, it's not there; the data is not there. Down is moving, down is gaining momentum, but down is not in the right direction, so whatever you say.

All I'd like to do, and I've committed to my constituents in Topsail - Paradise, I committed to them to be open, accountable, transparent and honest. I do agree with the Members opposite, facts matter – facts matter. It's the facts you put forward, you've got to have them backed up; you've got to make sure they know the difference because anyone – as they've said opposite – I think the Member talked about cherry-picking. I'm not cherry-picking stats, I got, right there, Don Mills I'm sure is not cherry-picking stats. It's all in his article.

If we're really going to do something productive in this province, at least let's start putting the right facts out there. Let's talk about the facts.

With immigration, I know the minister responsible, he said it there last week: We are setting obtainable targets. I have three daughters, if I told them to go write their tests: Do what's obtainable. No, do your best. That's all we ask, do your best. And if it's not your best, do something better, change it. We are not doing what we can do.

Our birth rate is down, our deaths are up. Our out-migration is up, our in-migration is down. This is simple math. We're bringing in 1,700 immigrants, that's the target. Let's go to the hills and shout that out, but it isn't going to help us. Don Mills has already said we need about 3,800, annually. In fact, almost 5,000 annually. This is what you need.

We are the only province in Canada with a declining population – the only one. We are the lowest on immigration – really.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. DINN: It's great to get up and heckle and bawl and all of that, that's wonderful, but facts matter, guys – people here in this House, facts matter. Look at the facts and put in your policies in accordance with those facts.

It's great to put it out there with an election year coming, but be truthful, be outright, be upfront with the residents of this province.

I appreciate it.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to see that the Trinity Pageant is alive and well; I think we just got our latest contender.

Mr. Speaker, facts do matter and that's what I'm going to do, I'm going to stick to the facts because there are a lot of great facts out there. Today, it gives me great pleasure to rise and talk about the great District of Labrador West where facts are making a big, big difference.

Now, we can talk about a lot of things today – and the Minister of Natural Resources is going to love me after this I know because I'm going

to talk a little bit about mining. Now, I know the Member for Topsail - Paradise probably is a little far removed from that, but I guarantee you, his district and every other district in this province, including yours, Mr. Speaker, because you know all about mining yourself, that every district in this province is benefiting from what mining is contributing to the –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: – coffers of this province, including Topsail - Paradise. Now, if he can't see that, that's his problem, not mine. But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, we are doing very well in the mining sector. We've come through a rough time in the mining sector and we are, sometimes, at the mercy of world markets.

I can tell you, he talks about down, down, down. I remember another Member in this House from a previous administration who talked about down, down, down, but I'm not going to talk about down, down, down, I'm going to talk about what's coming up and what's going up, Mr. Speaker, and that's the confidence in this province is going up. That's what's going up, and the jobs are going up.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you what's happening in the mining sector, and you know as well, in Labrador West we depend on mining; it's our bread and butter. That's why we've signed an MOU with the Province of Quebec to develop the Labrador Trough because that's one of the richest mining sectors in this world. We know in Baie Verte, as well down on the Burin Peninsula, we just announced the opening of a new mine in Glenwood, an old mine that's reopened, creating 100 jobs.

The previous administration was in power when Wabush Mines shut down, down, down. Well, I tell you, Mr. Speaker, give us another month and we'll be up, up, up, creating 260 more jobs for this province. That's what we're going to do.

The previous Member, the Member for Topsail - Paradise, can talk all he like about GDP. I don't care. And he's right, facts matter, because we are producing facts and there are jobs being created. I look forward to another month when we will be announcing the restart of Wabush

Mines under Tacora. That's what I'm looking forward to, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: That's what the people of Labrador West are looking forward to. We're talking 260 new jobs – 260 new jobs. If that's not improvement, if that's down, down, down, then I don't know the definition of up, up, up because that's what we're talking about; we're going up.

To hear the Member from the other side get up and trash us because we're not creating jobs, we're not building the economy and we're not improving the lives of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, what I will say to him is that every constituent in the District of Topsail - Paradise is benefiting from what's happening in the mining industry. It may not be happening in Topsail - Paradise, but I can guarantee you that every one of his constituents is benefiting from it because of their contribution to the economy of this province.

To put it in perspective, Mr. Speaker, our mining industry, we had \$3 billion worth of mineral shipments in 2018. We're going to go to \$4 billion in 2019.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. LETTO: I hear the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune over there yapping away.

AN HON. MEMBER: Yap?

MR. LETTO: That's what she's doing.

I can tell her that her district is benefiting from it too. It directly employed some 4,800 people throughout Newfoundland and Labrador in the mining industry. In the 2019 forecast, mineral shipments are expected to grow to \$4 billion, with direct employment anticipated to be 5,100 and another 1,200 employed in the construction activities. If that is not growing the economy, what is it, if that's not growing the economy?

Mr. Speaker, we have a world of opportunities at our doorstep in the mining industry, and Labrador will play a big role in that, the Baie Verte Peninsula will play a big role in that, the

Burin Peninsula will play a big role in that and the people of this province, everybody in this province, will benefit from it. Labrador is a treasure of natural resources.

MS. DEMPSTER: A jewel in the crown.

MR. LETTO: It's a jewel in the crown is right, and we're talking about mining. It's not only in Labrador West. It's in Voisey's Bay. It's down on the south coast where the Member from Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair is from, we're looking at a great potential there in the rare earth minerals that will benefit this province. So if the people from the other side want to say that we're going down, down, down, let them preach it, Mr. Speaker, because they have no facts to back it up.

So just to recap –

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

MR. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just on a point of order in terms of the facts. Again, this goes –

AN HON. MEMBER: Sixty-four.

MR. DINN: Sixty-four.

MR. LETTO: Sixty-four?

MR. DINN: I don't know. What is it?

MR. DINN: The Speaker's going to determine it now in a second.

MR. SPEAKER: It has no relevance to 64.

I ask the Member to take his seat.

MS. PERRY: Forty-nine.

MR. DINN: Mr. Speaker, let me – no, 49 is offence, right?

MR. SPEAKER: You better make your point quickly, Sir.

MR. DINN: No, just on their own document, in terms of the minister opposite talking about

employment. The numbers by their own document certainly don't add up to what he's saying.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much for your input.

Please continue, Sir.

There's no point of order.

MR. LETTO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is nothing short of mockery. Total mockery, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. LETTO: They gets up one minute and trash us for not doing anything, then they get up and try to make a scene –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

We're almost done.

MR. LETTO: – and mocking things that we are trying to do. It's nothing but – you should be ashamed of yourself.

We have the facts. We have some great developments in mining. New fluorspar mine in St. Lawrence with over 255 full-time positions, Vale's underground mine project with 1,700 jobs, the IOC Moss Pit that we had the pleasure of opening with the minister and the Premier just a few months ago. It's the future, it's the future of Labrador West, a huge part of the future of Labrador West that will continue to employ 1,900 people, Mr. Speaker, 1,900 people in one facility.

AN HON. MEMBER: How many people?

MR. LETTO: Nineteen hundred. Is that down? Well, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, those numbers are going up. Those numbers are going up, Mr. Speaker, and they're going to go even higher.

So, to get over there and talk about us going down, well, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, Labrador West has been a great contributor to this province for a number of years and we will continue to be a great contributor to the

economy of this province. Mining is our forte and it will always be. The best, Mr. Speaker, the best is yet to come. The best is yet to come.

For any Member to get up over there and tell us that we're going down, down, down – it's just total, total mockery, Mr. Speaker, total mockery. It's a travesty to us, to the people of this province to say that we are not making progress.

Mr. Speaker, I could stay up here for a lot longer, but I just want to make the point, Mr. Speaker, I represent the great District of Labrador West and the great people of Labrador West, and they're very proud people. They're miners. They're very proud miners and they're very proud of the contribution that we've made to this province since the first mine opened there in 1960.

To have somebody here today talk about how bad we're doing when we're on the verge, Mr. Speaker, in Labrador West, of becoming very prosperous once again. We had a very rough five years, Mr. Speaker, and you were there. We had a very rough five years when we had pensions taken away from people, Mr. Speaker, under their watch. We had pensions taken away from people. How do you think they feel?

By the way, those people live in your district too. They're not all in Labrador West but they worked there and they made a good living there and what happened to them with their pensions was shameful – was shameful.

Mr. Speaker, today, they're on the verge of regaining 93 per cent of the pension that they had in 2014.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: Ninety-three per cent, and if that's down, Mr. Speaker – I can tell you there are some great people in Labrador West, some great pensioners, and if the Member for Topsail - Paradise wants to go and talk to them, talk to them about what they lost over the last five years, talk about their hardships and where they are today. Mr. Speaker, they're not going to tell him that we're going down because they've regained a lot of what they've lost and they're on the verge of receiving that.

Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat, but I just want to say that the people of Labrador West are very proud people and they have made a huge contribution to this province. To see what happened to them in 2014 with the closure of Wabush Mines is shameful, Mr. Speaker, but I can guarantee you, they remain proud, they remain resilient and today they are reaping the benefits of what they endured because, Mr. Speaker, he's right, facts do matter.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: Everything I've said here this evening are the facts of what's happening in Labrador West, of what happened there under their watch and what's happening today. These are the facts, Mr. Speaker. Facts do matter, but I guarantee you, we need not get up and try to make a mockery of the facts.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

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

Again, it's an absolute pleasure to be here today and to represent the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis with the beautiful people in the District of Cape St. Francis.

I say to my good friend, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, calm down a little bit now because you're not as good as Springsteen. Springsteen does that song: I'm goin' down, down, down too. Your down, down, down didn't sound very good to tell you the truth. I'd rather listen to Springsteen now to tell you the truth.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. K. PARSONS: I like listening to Springsteen, he's probably one of my favourite artists.

MR. SPEAKER: Correction, it was actually Johnny Cash.

MR. K. PARSONS: No, no, no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, Bruce Springsteen also does a version of it too. Bruce Springsteen also does a version. Actually, I have it home on tape and it's one of my favourite Springsteen songs. Actually, Mr. Speaker, I heard Springsteen do it in concert a couple of times. So, Springsteen is one of my favourites.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I'm not questioning you. No, I'm not questioning, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure Johnny Cash does a good version also.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, this is Volunteer Week and I want to get up, first of all, I want to be on a positive note and thank all the great volunteers in our province. I know that we are in such a good place in this province because of so many volunteers. I know per capita, all over Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador has more volunteers per capita than anywhere else in this country.

I just want to talk about some of the volunteers. I'm going to have the opportunity this week – I'm very fortunate that I live in the St. John's area and can attend some functions, I know most of my colleagues here on this side of the House and on the other side of the House would love to be able to do it, but they can't do it.

This week, I'll be going to Bauline, Pouch Cove, Torbay and Flatrock and celebrating Volunteer Week with those people. It's great to be able to show – so anybody out there who have volunteers in their communities, make sure you get out and thank them for all they do.

We wouldn't be the place we are – it wouldn't be the best province to live in, only for the volunteers we have. So I want to put a big shout out to all the volunteers in the province, not only in my own district.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to speak a little bit about the Throne Speech. I'm a little bit disappointed, and I don't think it's a big issue or anything, but I'm the critic for Fisheries in this province and I'm very disappointed that

our Throne Speech didn't discuss enough about our fishery, because our fishery, to me, is probably one of the – well, it is the reason why we're here as people.

Today, I believe that the fishing industry brings so much to this province and it brings to rural Newfoundland. I talk to my colleagues across the way, and we talk about it all the time, we were talking recently about the crab pricing and stuff like that. I know there was a huge fear down my way that quotas, in particular, were going to be cut by a whole lot more than they were. The average was 9 per cent, which was a relief. Now, imagine getting a cut in the quota amount you could catch is still a relief.

Mr. Speaker, I was very disappointed in the Throne Speech – very disappointed. There's one paragraph there that mentions the fishery fund, and that's the only paragraph in the whole Throne Speech that mentions an industry we're all supposed to be proud of. Working to make sure it continues today is so important, not only for rural Newfoundland, I suggest it's probably one of the biggest industries right here in St. John's also.

If you look at the activity over on the Basin now, I was over on the weekend, and to see all the boats getting ready to go for the crab. I have family members who have a couple of boats and they're going to be going out this week at the crab. That's something that this government has done absolutely nothing about in the last four years, and I really mean that.

We had a private Member's motion here a little while ago that I introduced, it was on joint management. We all agreed in this House, it was unanimous, that we were going to fight for joint management and go to Ottawa and say, listen, we want a say in our resource. If you listen to the fisheries union, listen to the harvesters, they want a say. They want a say in how quotas are. They want to have a say in management. So that's what we're asking for.

Joint management, all that does is give Newfoundlanders and Labradorians a voice in the fishery. We've heard it for years and years, and we've heard it from both sides of the House. We heard it when our government was in; we heard it when the Liberals came in first.

The first mandate letter the Premier put out was talking about joint management. Yet, we're 3½ year later and there's no mention of it in the Throne Speech; no mention of it whatsoever. And this is an industry that we need to stand up to Ottawa, we need to make sure we're doing what we can. People are always saying, diversify our economy; diversify our economy. Well, let's put a little bit of effort into our fishery, put an effort into rural Newfoundland, and that's how we do it.

There are other things, too. I just want to talk a little bit – the *Fisheries Act* came down last year and the Minister of Fisheries, I asked him some questions here in the House of Assembly about adjacency, and the word adjacency doesn't appear in the *Fisheries Act* anymore. It's not there in the *Fisheries Act*, and that's important. That's important to people that are on the Baie Verte Peninsula. It's important to people that are on the South Coast. It's important to people that are fishing off Labrador.

We should have first right of our fishery that's adjacent to us. That's what we want to be able to do. That's not in the act anymore, and nobody from that side stood up and said: oh, it's wrong, we want to have – that gives us a bit of control, and that's all we're looking for.

When we talk about joint management, we talk about adjacency, it would be a huge factor. How huge of a factor with our surf clams? What happened with our surf clams down in Grand Bank last year? If adjacency was implemented to say, okay, the first right is to the adjacency – Grand Bank is adjacent to the stock, so those people and those plant workers down there.

Now, granted, it got fixed after a while, but it was fixed for the wrong reasons. The Minister of Fisheries had to be moved out of his portfolio because they found he was unethical with some of the dealings. He had a family member, he had – it was a lot of skulduggery, we would say, that happened with that. But it got straightened up, it got straightened up.

A conflict of interest was there also, and I asked the minister and we're looking now. I know that Clearwater has a proposal in now. Hopefully, that will be accepted and the people in Grand Bank will have some assurance that their jobs

will be there – and they're good, full-time jobs in rural Newfoundland. So our fishery is very, very important. I didn't want to talk too long on the fishery, but I've gone a little bit longer than I wanted to.

I really want to talk about seals and the fishery, too. I've spoken to some Members across the way and we've talked a little bit about seals and everything, and the effect seals are having on the fisheries. I spoke to a gentleman in Baie Verte - Green Bay recently, he's very knowledgeable of seals and very knowledgeable of the industry. Myself and the Member across the way, we spoke about this several times, and two of us, I think, are on the same page. I spoke also to the Member for Fogo Island - Cape Freels on the same issue. We've been talking about seals a lot, and DFO, for some reason or another, don't believe that seals have any effect on our (inaudible). It's sad.

Mr. Speaker, I can show pictures, I can show videos, I can show seals up in rivers where salmon – and I know they say they don't eat codfish –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. K. PARSONS: Yeah, that's true. John Efford said at one time they don't eat Kentucky Fried Chicken, and I guess he was right.

We're at a point right now in our fishing industry where we got reduced crab stocks, we got reduced shrimp. The cod fishery is not coming back to what it used to be. Our capelin are gone to what we used to see for years and years.

I was involved in the capelin fishery for years. I used to follow it from St. Mary's Bay down through Conception Bay, Trinity Bay, White Bay all the way through. We'd be catching capelin and trucking capelin, because that's what I did. I was driving a truck and trucking capelin. We don't see that anymore. Capelin came late last year.

There's a huge issue in our fishery, and my personal belief is that seals play a major factor in this. As a government, we need government to stand up and say, listen – DFO were supposed to come last year with a count on the number of

harp seals that were out there. It is delayed for a full year. The prediction now is, someone said it's around 7.4 million seals. Well, back in the '90s it was only 3 million seals. So what effect are they having on herring, mackerel? What effect are they having on our cod stocks? What effect is it having – we need to do something. I don't know what the answer is. I really don't know what the answer is, but we need people working on it.

We just can't have DFO scientists come in and say, I don't believe that has any effect whatsoever. Talk to harvesters, talk to sealers. Talk to people that are out during the day and are on the water. That's what joint management means. That's what adjacency means. That's what we need in our province. We need our fishery and we need our Fisheries Minister, who got up here today and spoke on the Throne Speech, and I didn't hear him mention one thing about our fishery.

Our Minister of Fisheries got up here today and spoke for 20 minutes in the House of Assembly on the Throne Speech and never mentioned the fishery of our province; an industry that's important to so many people, so many families. We're looking to figure out what we can do to keep people in our province. How can we keep our population up? Why are people leaving?

I think if we invest, and invest in our fishery and invest – like, I don't know. Maybe we can set up some kind of – work with Memorial University and set up products that our seal industry – we can go out and harvest our seals and use it for Omega -3. We can use it for different – I know there are all kinds of different supplements that are out there. They tell me seal is fantastic, great for your health and everything else. So maybe there's stuff we can do like that.

It's sad when you get up here in the House of Assembly and the Minister of Fisheries gets up and speaks for 20 minutes and don't mention the fishery in our province. I believe if that's what government – and then, again, here it is, here's the Throne Speech, I think it's got – I'll check now – 38 pages. No 35, Minister.

Thirty-five pages in this Throne Speech, and for one paragraph, which is about six lines, it mentions the fishery. Then what it does there,

what it mentions is the Fisheries Fund. Now, the Fisheries Fund, we'll all disagree how it was signed with us and what it did, and we moved to Atlantic. But the fishery fund was once a \$400-million agreement that we were supposed to have in place and we don't have it, and then it went to the Atlantic Canada fishery fund, which we had to share with the rest of the provinces in Atlantic Canada.

We need a stronger government when it comes to our fishery. We need stronger representation. I think the people of Newfoundland and Labrador deserve it. I think it's an industry that I hope we don't forget about, because it brings a lot to our province. I know it brings a lot to rural Newfoundland, and I know most of the Members over on the other side that live in fishing communities all over this province realize how important the fishery is to their communities.

I can remember when I was young – and that wasn't that long ago. I can remember when I was young and knew what the excitement was in the community when the fishery started. Whether it was cutting out tongues or it was down on the wharf, there was money generated, the local stores were doing good, and everyone was doing good. And I'm sure most of the Members in this House of Assembly that are from rural Newfoundland remember the same thing I remember.

We need to put more emphasis back on our fishery. We need to stand up for our fishery in this province. I believe we're not doing it. One way, like I said, we had a private Member's motion here that both sides, everyone – now, not too often you'll do a private Member's motion where it's not amended or changed in any way at all, but we had a private Member's motion here in this House of Assembly and we agreed that we would stand up for Newfoundland and Labrador and demand that we have joint management of our fishery. Since then, there is absolutely no mention of it. As a matter of fact, the latest mandate letter that went from the Premier to the Minister of Fisheries didn't have it included in it.

I believe that's wrong. I believe we've got to stand up for our rural Newfoundland. I was happy to hear from the Minister of Municipal

Affairs that mining's doing well. We're over on this side are not over here to say everything is wrong. No, there's positive stuff in this province. Even with the Throne Speech, one thing that really struck home to me was the mental health and how wait times has come down in mental health. Listen, that's a great job. It was an All-Party Committee that helped with it, but I give the other side credit.

Everything is not perfect in this province, and everything will never be perfect, but our fishery, I think it's the base of what we are as people. I think that we need a government that will stand up for the fishery in this province, a government that will go to Ottawa and say, we have a right to have a say in this industry. We have a right to see how our industry, whether it's quotas – we just heard the FFAW. They had a huge protest here a couple of weeks ago, and the main thing they were talking about was there are no consultations, people are not listening to harvesters and we need science. We definitely need science, and I'm not knocking science, but that's a huge ocean out there and we need to be listening to harvesters in this province.

I always tell the story that we put a new wharf in the Town of Flatrock, and DFO come down, the engineers, everyone looked at it, and a couple of fishermen said: Kevin, that's not pointed the right way. They better change it or else that's not going to stay there. No, the engineering, everybody did it. Guess what happened? The top of the wharf got washed right out because they didn't listen to people that have been on the water.

So it's time for DFO to listen to our harvesters. It's time for this government to stand up for the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador. It's time for us all to be working together to make sure that this industry survives. We're looking at, right now, this year, crab prices are \$5.38. Only a few years ago they were only around a dollar a pound. There's a chance for people to make great incomes, there's a chance for communities to survive, and we need to be able to say to Ottawa and DFO that our people, our harvesters, have a right to say in how our fishery is managed, and that's what joint management means.

Again, like I said, for the Minister of Fisheries to get up here today and it is absolutely sad, to do a 20-minute speech on the Throne Speech and not once mention our fishery – not once mention our fishery, I know.

Before I sit down, I only got a couple of minutes left, I never even got to half what I wanted to say anyway, but I just want to talk about this Atlantic Accord agreement that was talked about last week.

People in my district have been talking about it, and a lot of people, they just don't put things into perspective. So, I explain to people it's not a handout; this is not a handout from Ottawa. This is something we deserve as a province. But I look at equalization, and \$2.5 billion is a lot of money.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. K. PARSONS: No, it's not equalization; it's \$2.5 billion that we're going to receive for the next 38 years. We got provinces – I never heard the Premier mention about equalization, if he was talking to them about equalization or talking about everything.

Just talk about Atlantic Canada now, for example. Equalization this year for the Province of Nova Scotia means that the Province of Nova Scotia is going to get \$2 billion. PEI is going to get \$419 million; Nova Scotia is going to get \$2 billion; the Province of Quebec gets \$13.1 billion.

Now, our agreement is 38 years. So if we keep equalization and everything the same and we don't get (inaudible) the Province of Nova Scotia will receive \$76 billion over the same period of time we're going to get \$2.5 billion. The Province of PEI will get \$15.9 billion; the Province of New Brunswick will get \$76 billion; the Province of Quebec will get \$497 billion. That's the money that they got coming to the province. We got nothing.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. K. PARSONS: Oh no, I'm sorry, I apologize, we got \$2.5 billion. The sad thing about this agreement – I can remember I went home last week; I bet it home because I wanted

to hear the announcement. I left this House of Assembly because the Premier got up and he was going to answer all the questions that day. I'm going to answer everything they ask me, but then he said no, stay tuned to 6 o'clock. Stay tuned at 6 o'clock because we're going to put money back in the pockets of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

That's what he said. He said we're going to put money back in the pockets of Newfoundland and Labrador. Do you know what? This agreement is almost 40 years before this agreement is finally done. He tied us in for 40 years. I have a sad thing to tell you, Mr. Speaker, in 40 years' time I'll be 97 and there are a lot of people in this province will be long gone by the time that this 38-year or 40-year agreement is done.

Mr. Speaker, we have to look at the agreement. Any money coming to this province I applaud, I want it, but I want that to be a fair – I'm a Newfoundlander and Labradorian, I'm a Canadian and proud of it, but I think that we should be all treated fairly. And I think that government should have stood up for Newfoundland and Labrador, should have stood up and said listen here, here's what's going to happen over 38 years in New Brunswick, \$76 billion; PEI, \$15.9 billion; Nova Scotia, \$76 billion; Quebec, \$497 billion; and you're only getting \$2.5 billion, it's wrong.

If anybody over there thinks that's a good agreement, shameful. It is shameful that it is.

Mr. Speaker, I just hope that this government realizes that the people of Newfoundland will have a say in a month's time and hopefully they'll say the right thing.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I know the Member for Topsail - Paradise said facts matter, and you would think that someone who has sat in the House of Assembly as long as

the Member for Cape St. Francis would know his facts about equalization.

He's been here since 2008, Mr. Speaker. I would tell him to refer to the Minister of Natural Resources Facebook page to find out a little bit more on equalization. We haven't got it since then. The minister does a wonderful job explaining the difference between the Atlantic Accord and equalization. It's not the same thing. The Atlantic Accord is related to Hibernia and the revenue based on that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KING: Also, if they want to get a good listen on the Atlantic Accord, they should listen to *Issues and Answers* from yesterday morning when the Premier spoke eloquently on *Issues and Answers*.

We got the man from BC –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The debate is for the gentleman who has been identified to speak. So let's go there.

MR. KING: The man from BC, former Premier Brian Peckford who hasn't paid one dime of tax here in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador for 25 years, giving us advice on how we should run our province. I think the Premier said it good, he should stay in BC and chew on his cucumbers, Mr. Speaker.

Now, the facts –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KING: I'm going to talk about the fishery, but the fact of the matter is – a friendly reminder from the Deputy Speaker, he actually was listening to things. Apparently you didn't listen to what the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources said because he did talk about the crab prices. He did talk about quotas. So if you actually had listened to the minister, you

wouldn't have got up and got on like you got. It's disgraceful.

He talked about the fisheries, but I'm not going to get into the phantom fisheries fund where they threw a party and they only turned up themselves, pat themselves on the back and didn't get a dime from the federal government. They threw a party and the key player, the key partner for them, the federal government didn't turn up.

Now, they went to Ottawa shortly thereafter –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KING: – and they couldn't even get inside the doors. They got thrown outdoors in the rain. Stephen Harper wouldn't even see them.

Mr. Speaker, facts matter, and the fact of the matter is that when it came to the fisheries rally to protest against a 30 per cent cut in 3K, the Opposition wasn't there. I was there, the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay was there, the Member for Fogo Island - Cape Freels was there, the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate was there. Not one Member, Mr. Speaker, was there from the Opposition. That shows you how much they care about the crab fishery. It's disgraceful.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KING: But, I digress.

I'm going to talk about the Throne Speech which was delivered on Thursday, and I thought it did a wonderful job of talking about what our Liberal government has done in the Third Session of our General Assembly and laid out a plan for the year ahead.

Now, they want to chirp and laugh over there. The Member for CBS is laughing. He thinks it's funny, the state of the province that him and his buddies got us into over the 12 years that they were in power. They think it's actually funny when we took over in 2015 and we couldn't afford to pay our public servants without taking

out emergency loans and cashing emergency bonds. That's what they think is funny.

They think that leaving us with a \$2 billion deficit is funny, Mr. Speaker. It is absolutely disgraceful when they are over there chirping right now, laughing at the fact that they put us into a mess that we've had to clean up for the last four years. We have turned the corner in this province.

You heard the Member for Lab West talk about the mining industry, and I'm going to get into a little bit more about our seasonable workers because we had the Leader of the NDP talk very poorly of them in her response to the Speech from the Throne. We've already heard replies to the speech from the Members for Harbour Main and Placentia West right afterwards, and they eloquently talked about what the speech means to their districts and their people.

We heard our Premier discuss his thoughts on the speech, and rebuke erroneous claims made by both Opposition Leaders. Now, it's obvious that they did not listen to the same speech that I listened to. They once again chose the doom and gloom narrative that they continue to use after the past four years, and they choose the doom and gloom narrative because they are void of ideas and have nothing to bring to the table.

That is certainly true for the Leader of the PC Party who, when he started speaking, I thought it was Donald Trump. He talked about fake news and how the media wasn't reporting the facts when it comes to things that he said. He used other language right out of the Trump playbook. He offered nothing to the public in his speech, which means that he and the PC Party have nothing to offer the people of this province, and that he and his PC Party are void of ideas.

That's the same thing we got out of the Member for Topsail - Paradise today, offered nothing. He brought my name up time and time again, so I must be hitting a nerve with them. I must be saying something that's resonating with them time and time again when I get up and speak.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. KING: So what they're good at, Mr. Speaker – and they're chirping again, they can't

take the truth. When I say facts matter, they do matter, Mr. Speaker.

So what they've done is they're creating politics of division, the politics of fear. They're offering no solutions to the issues we face today. You could see it with Trump in the US, their buddy Andy Scheer federally, Doug Ford in Ontario and Jason Kenney and the UCP in Alberta.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KING: Now you're seeing all this cheap politics being played in Newfoundland and Labrador by the Leader of the Conservative Party here. So the politics of division – and they're laughing at it. They think people should be divided.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KING: They think we should attack immigrants. That's what they're getting on with. That's what their buddies are doing. That's what they're laughing at right now, the politics of division and fear and they're playing right into it. They're playing it right now because they have no ideas, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I've talked enough about the politics of division and fear. I want to spend the rest of my reply to discuss the workers in the District of Bonavista. I want to discuss the fallacy that the NDP have a monopoly on supporting workers in this province, Mr. Speaker. That couldn't be further from the truth.

The co-Leader of the NDP, the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi, certainly proved that on Thursday with her response to the Throne Speech. At 4:17:30 on the House of Assembly webcast, the Member is quoted as saying: Government needs a comprehensive plan to create employment with permanent jobs, not jobs that are seasonal or jobs that are related to construction which are not permanent. That's shameful, Mr. Speaker. That is shameful to people of rural Newfoundland. That shows you how out of touch the NDP are in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the first thing she got wrong is that we don't have a plan. The fact of the matter is we do have a plan. It's called *The Way Forward* document and from *The Way Forward* document our Liberal government has developed a Cabinet Committee on Jobs. This is partnered with industry to grow specific sectors. This includes aquaculture, agriculture, technology, mining and forestry. We've developed *Advance 2030* which was streamlined and see our oil and gas sector grow. These are all developing permanent jobs and diversifying our economy.

The biggest thing that I take exception to in her speech is that seasonal and construction jobs are some how not real jobs. That is absolutely a disgraceful thing to say, Mr. Speaker, from the former leader of the NDP, the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

Well, once again, Mr. Speaker, facts matter and the fact of the matter is seasonal jobs are very much the life blood of Newfoundland and Labrador and always have been.

I want to look at the key industries in my district, Mr. Speaker, and most of them are seasonal in nature. We talked about the fishery. I'm going to talk about the fishery. We have our harvesters, our plant workers, our dock workers, our sealers, they are all seasonal employees, Mr. Speaker, who contribute greatly to our economy in Newfoundland and Labrador. That's the nature of our climate that they can't go out and fish all year round.

Mr. Speaker, I could not have been prouder to stand down in the ballroom of the Delta with my friends here to show my support for the harvesters, for the plant workers, for the dock workers, the people in Newfoundland and Labrador who depend on the fishery, Mr. Speaker. The fishery has always been the life blood of Newfoundland and Labrador and certainly we have a great group of people in my district who are out there continuing our heritage.

Another thing is the tourism sector. The NDP gets on and talks about how seasonal jobs aren't real jobs, but tell that to the hundreds of people in the District of Bonavista that work in the tourism industry that depend on those jobs because they want to stay here in Newfoundland

and Labrador. They don't want to move anywhere else. They're here showing the people who visit our province that we have a lot to offer. They're providing the great service that has given our province a wonderful name.

It's not just our tourism ads that are bringing people to Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, it's the word of mouth that brings them here. It's the service that people deliver. It's the good work that people in our tourism industry are doing, the leaders and the business owners. Mr. Speaker, that is another seasonal job.

We're continually growing the shoulder seasons as well, we get people coming in April or May and leaving in September or October. There are a number of non-profits doing some great things in the District of Bonavista through the Bonavista Biennale, that's creating a longer tourism window, and Roots, Rants and Roars in Elliston. Mr. Speaker, this is great.

Now, I'm going to take at least two more minutes, I do want to talk about agriculture. When I said the Member for Mount Pearl North should know what he's talking about before he speaks about me, he really should before he opens his mouth, Mr. Speaker, because agriculture is a big industry in the District of Bonavista. We have a number of farms there and a number of young farmers in the District of Bonavista who are doing good things.

I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker, the Thursday before last, I spent two hours with a young farmer named Damien Oliver. He lives in Musgravetown. His grandfather, George Greening, had that farm long before him. He called me up, he said: Neil, come take a look at what we're doing. Take a look at what we want to do.

This young fellow, Mr. Speaker, was 19 years old last year in his first season of farming and he produced some root vegetables, marketed them locally, made it successful, and we've supported that through our programs. He's excited about the future.

When we talk about farming, I've sat down to a kitchen table with David and Krista Chatman of Three Mile Ridge ranch and talked about how they can move forward. They're young farmers

as well, how they can get their farm grandfathered so they can offer more things such as meat products.

I've been to Hillside Holsteins in Harcourt with Luke Strong who comes from a family of farmers. He's in his early 20s, Mr. Speaker, and has a very successful dairy farm. He's looking at expanding. It is absolutely wonderful to see.

So when the Member for Mount Pearl North talks about me not being on farms, it's an absolutely disgraceful statement. He should know what he's talking about before he makes those statements because, once again, Mr. Speaker, facts matter.

Now, we have the forestry sector and construction. Construction, Mr. Speaker, another thing that the Member for St. John's East-Quidi Vidi talked about, they're not real jobs, they're not permanent jobs. Tell that to the people living in my district, Mr. Speaker, who are building new homes, doing renovations, who are working on our heritage. They're doing our infrastructure work which we've had millions of dollars from the federal and provincial governments supporting roads and water and sewer projects amongst others. Tell that to the people who are going to be employed working on renovations to the emergency room at the Bonavista hospital and who are going to be working at the mental health and wellness centre, which are going to be started up this year.

Those are jobs that we didn't have before. They may be seasonal, Mr. Speaker, but they're certainly no less important because they are contributing to our economy. To have that said in the House of Assembly, Mr. Speaker, it was absolutely ridiculous.

I will stand up for the workers in the District of Bonavista because we are doing great things. The workers in the District of Bonavista are contributing to our economy, Mr. Speaker, and I'm certainly darn proud of those workers.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Any further speakers?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I would adjourn debate on Address in Reply, and given the hour of the day, I would move, seconded by the Member for Torngat Mountains, that the House do now adjourn.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

This House does stand adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 o'clock.

Thank you.

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