



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FORTY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

---

Volume XLVII

SECOND SESSION

Number 12

---

HANSARD

*Speaker: Honourable Ross Wiseman, MHA*

Tuesday

30 April 2013

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

Before we start today's proceedings, I want to welcome to our galleries seventeen students from Holy Heart of Mary who are involved in the International Club. The students are accompanied today by their teachers Boyd Perry and Mandy Penney.

Welcome to our Assembly.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I want to also welcome today our new Page, Marc Brouillette.

Welcome, Marc.

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

#### **Statements by Members**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today we will have members' statements from the Member for the District of Humber West, the Member for the District of Lake Melville, the Member for the District of Bay of Islands, the Member for the District of Mount Pearl North, the Member for the District of Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi, and the Member for the District of Mount Pearl South.

The hon. the Member for the District of Humber West.

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Mr. Speaker, on April 10 I had the opportunity to attend and present a Bronze Medal Duke of Edinburgh Awards to twenty-three deserving young women and men at the Corner Brook Duke of Edinburgh School Group.

To qualify for an award, participants must undertake a balanced program of leisure-time activities and meet the prescribed standards in four different areas of self-development,

including community service, adventurous journeys, physical fitness and skill development.

Over the past year or so, members of the Corner Brook D of E School Group have been involved in many challenging and worthwhile activities under the direction of committed volunteer leaders. In speaking with participants individually, they tell stories of personal growth and commitment as they embarked on the various challenges and opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to congratulate Claire Andrews, Shaelynn Barry, Sam Brake, Rebecca Davis, Liam Dicks, Andrew Dollomount, Angela Earle, Matthew English, Alexander Fost, Hannah Flight, Kavita Gill, Corey Hepditch, Riley Hogan, Emily Hynes, Nicholas Hynes, Morgan Penney, Allison Pittman, Elizabeth Rowe, Whitney Shortall, Eliza Snelgrove, Julia Stagg, Kathryn White, and Claire Woolfrey on being presented the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Medals and wish them well in their silver and gold medal pursuit.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I rise today to recognize Goose Bay's Hotel North women's broomball team who won the Senior Women's Broomball Championships held in St. Anthony this past March.

During the provincial championships the team from Goose Bay had a perfect round robin record, winning all four of their games, shutting out the team from Corner Brook twice, and defeating St. John's twice in very tough games, one of which went into overtime.

In the semi-finals they defeated St. Anthony 2-0 in front of their hometown crowd before meeting Twin Towns in the finals, beating them 1-0 for the championship.

Several members of the team were recognized for their play. Janine Battcock was given the Top Defense award, Joanna Elliott won the Top Goalie award, Kayla Nolan won Top Scorer, and Adrienne Morris was the team's MVP.

The team consisted of Cathy Elson, Dana Webber, Stephanie Webb, Adrienne Morris, Toni Hamel, Tina Combden, Kelly Way, Janine Battcock, Candice Linstead, Kayla Nolan, and goalie Joanna Elliott. They were coached by Clarence Webber, Jordan Anthony and Ann Morris.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this hon. House to join me in recognizing the success of Goose Bay's women's broomball team.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, last Thursday evening I attended the volunteer appreciation night at the Town of Humber Arm South. This was a very special occasion as a former mayor and outstanding volunteer of the town, who made a major contribution to the whole south shore of the Bay of Islands, was honoured.

The family of the late Eric Humber wanted to recognize outstanding volunteers from the town. In Eric's memory, they established the Eric Humber Helping Hands Award. This annual award will recognize an individual from the Town of Humber Arm South for their exemplary volunteer service.

The first two recipients were Mr. Murdoch White for 2011, and Ms Marina Brothers for 2012. Both individuals are well deserving of this award for their continued commitment and dedication to their town.

It was a privilege and honour for me to be asked by the family to present the first awards in memory of my dear friend, Eric. Volunteering

was a big part of Eric's life and his family wanted to ensure that his legacy lives on.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating the recipients and thanking the family, and above all, Eric, for his contribution to the Town of Humber Arm South.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

I rise today to recognize recent recipients of the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards at the bronze and silver levels.

Mr. Speaker, this success is a testament to the hard work and devotion of those individuals who participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards program. As someone who speaks from experience, I know first-hand the commitment and dedication one has to have in order to achieve this award.

I would like to recognize all the recipients, in particular Mason Gulliver for receiving the bronze award; Khristian Fowler for receiving the silver award; Victoria Rose for receiving her silver award; Tyler Bennett for receiving his silver award; Colin Hunt for receiving the bronze award; and last but not least, Sarah Whelan for receiving the bronze award as well.

I wish them all the best in their future endeavours and hope that they continue to participate in those activities that are of great interest to them. They are role models for other youth who have a keen interest that they wish to explore. They demonstrate that hard work and perseverance will enable you to achieve what you put your mind to.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating these achievers of the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards program.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I rise in this House today to salute a unique club at Holy Heart of Mary High School. It is not surprising there is a vibrant International Club at Holy Heart – there are over 150 students from more than fifty countries, speaking over twenty different languages.

The International Club, or IC, as they call it, has a threefold mandate: to welcome new Canadian students to Holy Heart, to create an awareness and acceptance of the many cultures at Holy Heart, and to celebrate the school's diversity, which is a lot more diverse than when I graduated from that high school.

The largest project the group has undertaken was the diversity assembly on February 19, and what an event it was. They planned and organized a wonderful morning of dancing, music, guest speakers, and fifty-one Holy Heart students carried the flags of their countries.

Other popular events include international potlucks for all staff and students at the school, social activities for new, cultural awareness activities and, of course, continuing orientation and mentoring of new Canadian students to the school. Some of the students and their teachers are with us today.

I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating the Holy Heart of Mary International Club on their outstanding work.

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

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

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

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

It is my privilege to stand in this hon. House to offer congratulations to a group of individuals who have made a tremendous contribution to sport in my community.

The Mount Pearl Sports Hall of Fame was founded in 1995 by the Mount Pearl Sport Alliance. Since that time they have inducted sixty-six tremendous individuals.

Today I would like to acknowledge the achievements of five others: Brian Cranford and Andrew Moyst have been inducted into the athlete-builder category; Ralph Neil, in the builder category; and Terry Ryan Jr. and Julie Fiander in the athlete category. I would also like to acknowledge the 1992 to 1995 Mount Pearl senior boys basketball team who have been added to the team honour roll.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this hon. House to join me in congratulating these individuals on this significant accomplishment, and wish them all the best in their future sporting endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### **Statements by Ministers**

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this hon. House to inform members that I had the great privilege of attending the European Seafood Exposition last week. My officials and I joined over thirty representatives from the

Newfoundland and Labrador seafood industry, including the Barry Group, Clearwater Seafoods, Icewater Seafoods, the Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company, Newfound Resources, Notre Dame Seafoods, Ocean Choice International, Whitecap Seafoods International, the Fish, Food and Allied Workers, and the Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University.

The European Seafood Exposition is one of the many important opportunities to market fish globally. European countries, in particular, imported a total \$23.7 billion worth of seafood in 2012. The European Union has over 500 million people with a high level of fish consumption – this offers tremendous opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador. Given the potential benefits of the anticipated Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement being negotiated between Canada and the European Union, it is important for our Province to maintain a strong presence in this marketplace.

Mr. Speaker, approximately 25,000 buyers, suppliers, media, and other seafood industry professionals from over 140 countries attended the show to meet face-to-face to do business. I can tell you it was impressive to witness this first-hand.

Mr. Speaker, our government works very hard with the industry to promote Newfoundland and Labrador seafood at every available opportunity. In *Budget 2013: A Sound Plan, A Secure Future*, we once again demonstrated this commitment by allocating \$2.6 million for seafood marketing. This is in addition to our participation at seafood shows throughout the world, including Europe, Boston, and China.

Other examples of our commitment to seafood marketing include: approximately \$80 million has been offered in the form of inventory financing for seafood companies; \$11.5 million has been offered in support of a seafood marketing council and seafood sales consortia; \$2.8 million for processing and marketing services; and \$1.6 million for market intelligence initiatives. An indicator of our

success is that over 65 per cent of Newfoundland and Labrador's seafood has been, or will soon be, eco-certified by the Marine Stewardship Council. The MSC label represents the gold standard in the certification of sustainable fisheries.

Mr. Speaker, in partnership with our government, the seafood industry has made tremendous progress and there is much more opportunity ahead in the future. Our commitment to this vital industry is strong in every respect.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for an advance copy.

On reviewing his trip to Brussels, I would have to say I would give him a C plus. His heart is in the right place, but the money could have been better spent.

For example, 20,000 people, it is true, still earn a livelihood in the seafood industry in our Province, so it makes it the largest single sector in our Province. It is critically important to us. We catch fish very well and we can process fish when we are given a chance to, when others do not get it shipped out to them, but we do not market it very well. True to form, the marketing budget in 2011-2012 was \$2 million. The Province spent \$1.6 million. In 2012-2013, it was \$5.5 million and the Province spent \$1.7 million. We have not been using our marketing budget.

The biggest market we have for seafood is the United States and the Boston Seafood Show has been around for thirty years, not twenty years like DFA's Web site says. It has actually been around thirty years, so the minister might want to update his Web site in that respect. What I would say is that his heart is in the right place with his European frolic, but not to go to Boston is a huge mistake that he cannot undo.

To go on from Boston, I would recommend that he would go to our other emerging economies, the BRIC nations: Brazil is dynamic and growing, and it is in our hemisphere; Russia has a similar market as we do; India has more entrepreneurs than Canada has people; and China has an enormous market. I would say it is good to go to Brussels, but it would be much better to go to the other places. It is really unfortunate that he did not go to Boston.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. The indication of good marketing is more than just attendance at an international seafood show. It requires on-ground co-operation for a marketing plan.

When we hear the word lobster, many people think of Maine. When we hear about salmon, it is Alaskan salmon or Alaskan snow crab. These places have done phenomenal jobs. Eco labelling and certification should be a key part of this campaign.

CETA presents opportunities, but also significant threat, such as dropping minimum processing requirements, costing us jobs and the ability to maximize local benefits. The minister needs to be more open about these trade deals.

The minister has made many statements and thrown out a lot of numbers here today, but there is very little in tangible results when it comes to dollars actually spent on these initiatives.

Branding and co-operation for marketing with all stakeholders, that is certainly key, so let's see if 2013 will bring with it a generic seafood marketing campaign.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform this House and, through this House, the people of the Province that an agreement has been reached between the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and Fortis Properties Corporation on financial compensation that arises from the passage of the Abitibi-Consolidated Rights and Assets Act.

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

**MR. MARSHALL:** Through this agreement, Mr. Speaker, the government is protecting the assets that belong to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. This is a fair settlement for the people of the Province and is the appropriate course of action for us to take.

Under the terms of the agreement, final compensation of \$18.4 million will be provided to Fortis in addition to payments previously made that total \$22.4 million in all. This concludes all compensation arrangements related to the expropriation of hydroelectric assets formally owned by Abitibi.

A compensation arrangement has also been reached with a consortium of lenders represented by Sun Life Assurance of Canada for the outstanding loan payments and the balance related to the Exploits River Hydro Partnership assets. Nalcor will assume a loan obligation of approximately \$54 million, which will be supported through the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, the government took immediate, decisive action back in 2008 when it became apparent that Abitibi was abandoning its pulp and paper operations in Grand Falls-Windsor. Government was determined to ensure that the Province's valuable natural resources remained

in the hands of its rightful owners, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. MARSHALL:** Mr. Speaker, the legislation was introduced to protect the people of Central Newfoundland and the Province's resources, and upon its passage, the hydro, the timber and the land assets became the legal property of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Upon the introduction of the Abitibi-Consolidated Rights and Assets Act, we indicated that the interests of businesses and people in the Central Region would not be adversely impacted by our decision to expropriate Abitibi assets.

The independent third parties that were involved, we told them that they would be protected and this settlement now reinforces this commitment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I want to thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. Of course, this is something that we have been asking this government about now for quite some time. Just last week I stood in the House and asked the question about the updating of the negotiations with Fortis, as a commitment was made for this company to remain whole. Again, this morning in Estimates, the minister brought this up and said that this would be coming today in a Ministerial Statement, so I thank him for this.

Of course, the \$8.4 million, as the minister said, is on top of the \$5 million that has been paid out over the last five years, but really the story does not end there. This is part of one piece of what has been a total compensation package for a number of the assets. Really, we still have, I

guess, some liability issues around the expropriation of the mill in Grand Falls-Windsor and the environmental cleanup that would be attached to that mill, so the story is not over.

From a Fortis point of view, I would say that back in 2003 when they were making a commitment to upgrade the facilities and the Exploits River hydro development that at that time they were not expecting that this project, this asset of theirs, would be expropriated. So, there is a message I would say that even though we end with the asset, I think from Fortis' point of view this was not their intent back in 2003, nevertheless it puts an end to this aspect of negotiation.

Mr. Speaker, we will look forward to the investments that we make in the environmental cleanup of the Abitibi expropriation.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. I have to note the positive language being used by the minister for the cost of expropriating Abitibi's assets. I think we need to reflect right now on the hasty expropriation that this government conducted several years ago. We were assured all was in hand and were asked for our support, which we gave, because we went on the information given to us by government. It turns out that was not the case and now we are saddled with the decrepit mill which will cost millions to clean up.

Government calls their 2008 decision immediate and decisive. My mother had an expression, Mr. Speaker, haste makes waste; and I suggest that this government reflect on that axiom.

Thank you very much.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Does the Member for St. John's South have leave?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No leave.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

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

The federal Auditor General's report released today stated that the ongoing staffing and training challenges in the air and marine search and rescue are impacting the sustainability of search and rescue operations in the Province.

I ask the Premier: In light of this report, will you now ask the federal government to reinstate the maritime search and rescue sub-centre in St. John's?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we read with some concern the reflections of the Auditor General in his report, especially as it relates to search and rescue and the capacity of the federal government in our Province, where this is an extremely important issue. A significant number of our population still earn their living on the sea, Mr. Speaker, and their health and safety is of critical importance to every person in Newfoundland and Labrador, and we will continue to pursue this issue with the federal government.

We do not need this impetus to keep up our pressure on the federal government to restore the marine sub-centre here in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, and to keep search and rescue at the top of their priority list. It is

extremely important to us as a government, as a people, Mr. Speaker, and we reinforce that every opportunity we have.

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

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

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

Well, my question was about, of course, the sub-centre that was recently closed and the valuable asset that was in the overall search and rescue assets in the Province. So, my question was: Will you speak to the federal government and get that centre reopened again so we can protect the people in the Province?

Mr. Speaker, this scathing report reveals that inefficiencies exist in search and rescue – inefficiencies that were present during failed searches in our Province. So, I ask the Premier: Is the Auditor General's report compelling enough evidence to finally call a public inquiry into search and rescue in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

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

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

I answered the question posed to me by the Leader of the Opposition. Health and safety, search and rescue in our offshore is a high priority with this government, as it is with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. We continue to press our concerns about changes that have been made to search and rescue in this Province at every opportunity with the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, we are not going to call a national inquiry in which we cannot bring the federal government to the table. We are going to continue to do what we are tasked to do by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to bring

these matters to the attention of the federal government.

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

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

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

I would ask the Premier: Based on that response, have you even asked the federal government – and I would look forward to that response. Because our understanding is that you have not even asked the federal government to initiate or engage in a public inquiry, even if they need to be there.

Mr. Speaker, the report also states that the information management system used in search and rescue cases is not adequate and is nearing a breaking point. A replacement system is not expected until 2015-2016.

So I ask the Premier: What measures are you willing to implement to ensure the safety of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians between now and 2015-2016?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, as I continue to say in this House of Assembly, and I say at every interaction we have with the federal government, health and safety and search and rescue are priorities of the people of this Province. We expect our people to have adequate services – more than adequate services – when they go about the means they have at their disposal to earn a living for themselves and for their family. We advocate for the highest calibre of service that is available in this country be available to the men and women in Newfoundland and Labrador who work in our offshore.

Mr. Speaker, we will be taking what we learned today from the Auditor General, the federal Auditor General, and we will be pursuing this argument again with the federal government.

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

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

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

Well, I do not know who is watching what is going on there, but the AG's report clearly says there is not adequate information systems and not adequate maintenance being done.

So who is watching is this? How can you say they should be more than adequate? I ask the Premier: Who is monitoring this on behalf of the Province?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is playing games. He understands very clearly in this country certain responsibilities fall within the purview of the federal government; certain responsibilities lie within the purview of the provincial government. One of our responsibilities is ensuring the services that are made available to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are adequate or more than adequate to meet their needs.

Mr. Speaker, we do not have the means to audit a federal system. That is why we have an Auditor General. When they bring these kinds of examples to our attention, we launch a full-court press with the federal government at every opportunity, with the Prime Minister and with ministers, to make our points.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for Bay of Islands.

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has finally confirmed that the new rightsized hospital in Corner Brook will have 15 per cent fewer acute care beds than at the current hospital.

I ask the Minister of Health: Is this how you plan for the future and take care of the residents on the West Coast, by reducing their access to acute care?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely amazing to me. Time after time after time, the Member for the Bay of Islands stands up in this House of Assembly and basically says he does not want the \$500 million to \$600 million facility that we are proposing for the Western area of this Province. Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely amazed at that.

This will be a facility, Mr. Speaker, that we intend to use as a flagship. This will be a facility that will have within it opportunities to be able to look after all of the needs of Western Newfoundland and Labrador. It will be enhanced services. We are looking at 260 beds. We are looking at 100 long-term care beds, Mr. Speaker. I really and truly do not understand why it is that the Member for Bay of Islands does not want this facility.

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

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, I say to the minister, I do not want the same as what the Member for Humber East said, that we made a

mistake with the long-term care facility by having fewer beds. Mr. Speaker, the new Corner Brook hospital will have twenty-two fewer acute care beds than Western Memorial has now.

I ask the minister: How many surgeries have been cancelled at Western Memorial over the last six months due to the shortage of acute care beds?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, that is precisely what we are trying to address through this new facility. That is precisely why we will have 100 long-term care beds as part of this complex. What we will see as a result of that, Mr. Speaker, will be an increase in the number of surgeries that are able to happen in that facility.

Now, once again he is arguing against it. We are here to tell the people of the Western portion of the Province, we are arguing for it and we are going to see to it that that is constructed for them.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** I just want to let the people of Corner Brook and the West Coast know that the Minister of Health does not know how many surgeries have been cancelled in the last six months because of a lack of acute care beds.

I will ask another question, Mr. Speaker. The minister refused to acknowledge the existing shortage of acute care beds and the lack of community-based supports on the West Coast for post-surgery.

I ask the minister: What is the readmission rate for patients at Western Memorial? How does

this rate compare to St. John's and the national rate?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we have identified the needs for the Western region of the Province in terms of health care services. We then engaged a corporation that is vested in providing that kind of advice to the people who require the service. We have taken the best advice that we can find. We have spoken with members of the executive teams at Western Health, Mr. Speaker, and we are putting in place a facility that is going to meet all of the needs of the Western region of the Province.

Somehow or another that is not what the Member for the Bay of Islands wants. Somehow or another, he wants something different. I understand he wants the status quo. We want better, Mr. Speaker, we are going to see to it that we get it.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, just for the minister, if it was status quo there would be twenty-two more acute care beds than before.

Mr. Speaker, I am astonished that the Minister of Health does not know. There is a report, you should get it. If you want a copy, ask me to tell you. It is 14 per cent. The national average is 10 per cent; St. John's is 10 per cent. You should get the report, both reports, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Health has made a crucial decision on the capacity of a new hospital when she cannot even tell us vital statistics like surgery cancellations and readmission rates.

How can you make such a crucial decision on a new hospital without the knowledge of these crucial facts, which obviously you just do not know? These reports do exist in your department, Minister. Please, do the people on the West Coast a favour, look for these reports and study them, please.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the last thing I need is advice from the member opposite. Whatever reports I need to read, I read, and I read them very, very carefully.

We are taking medical advice, we are taking engineering advice, and we are putting in place the best facility that we can possibly put in place for the people of Western Newfoundland, Mr. Speaker. I do not know what else to say to a member who does not want it. I really do not know what else to say to him, but, Mr. Speaker, here is what we are doing.

We are putting in place a facility that will see 260 beds, 100 of which will be for long-term care. We already know, Mr. Speaker, that a goodly number of beds, 25 per cent of them on a regular basis are used for persons who are alternate level of care. Mr. Speaker, we are going to see to it that they are put into...

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

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

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

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, in the ongoing comedy of errors inflicted on public education by this government, the Eastern School District just announced the new school under construction in Carbonear already needs four additional classrooms at a cost of \$4 million.

I ask the minister: How can his planning be so deficient that he could not count all the children in that growing community?

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

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

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

Let me outline for the member opposite, who probably cannot handle it, Mr. Speaker, since 2003 thirty-nine major projects in the school system.

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Nine new schools completed, Mr. Speaker.

**MS SULLIVAN:** How many?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Nine new schools completed; ten more under construction in the development phase. Mr. Speaker, the rest of the thirty-nine projects are major, major renovations in schools. That speaks to our commitment to having facilities that are second to none, Mr. Speaker, anywhere in this country.

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

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

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, the minister missed not one, not two, not three, but four classrooms full of students for a school still under construction.

Given the minister's poor planning performance, will he now put a hold on collapsing four school boards to pay even bigger and costlier mistakes that we will have to pay for long after he is gone?

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, not one school construction, not two, not three, thirty-nine major constructions.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

Dr. Wade Locke was recently hired by this government to advise the Finance Minister on Budget 2013. We have heard just how implicitly government trusts his work and his judgement. Dr. Locke also completed a 300-page report for the Council of Independent Community Pharmacy Owners and in it he clearly says that unless government makes changes to the business model, independent pharmacies will go out of business.

I ask the minister: Have you considered Dr. Lock's advice, and are you willing to make changes to ensure these independent pharmacies do not go out of business?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, like with all reports, I have read that report from Dr. Locke. In fact, I met with Dr. Locke and we had a discussion around this, and my officials met with Dr. Locke and they had some discussions around this.

Mr. Speaker, what we are doing is what we committed to doing right from the get-go. We are investing in pharmacies, particularly rural and remote pharmacies right around this Province. Mr. Speaker, \$37 million over a four-year period, in fact. We are also investing \$29 million, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that seniors in this Province will not, at least under the NLPDP, pay any more than \$6 per prescription.

We are very, very much in tune with what is happening out there in our rural and remote pharmacies. We are very much involved in negotiations to ensure that we are meeting the needs of these pharmacies.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, Dr. Locke's report contains compelling evidence that shows how government can save money, protect pharmacies as health care providers, and demonstrate the real value independent pharmacies can play to ensure sustainable health care. This report was sent to government on February 4, but I am unsure as to whether there was a response to CICPO.

I ask the minister: In the face of compelling evidence from Dr. Locke, who we listened to on the Budget, will you now commit to setting a new funding model for independent pharmacies?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, as I just started to outline we certainly are concerned about rural pharmacies, remote pharmacies, and we are investing in them. We have a new dispensing fee that is to the tune of \$17.5 million that will be reinvested, or has been over the last year or so, and will continue to be reinvested into our pharmacies.

Apart from that, Mr. Speaker – and we had some discussions with Dr. Locke around this as well – we are aware that pharmacies want to be paid for additional cognitive services that they provide. In the first go around of this, we identified three areas of cognitive services for which we are, in fact, reimbursing our pharmacists and our

pharmacies. We will continue to work with them to provide other services.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for Torngat Mountains.

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Mr. Speaker, this year's Budget has declared open season on environment and conservation in our Province, and has left many to declare that the government has now created a poacher's paradise. Cutting sixty-one positions throughout the department is bad enough, but we continue to hear from groups and organizations that were not consulted prior to this Budget.

I ask the minister: Why did you not consult with the Outfitters Association, the Wildlife Federation, and your own standing committees before making these damaging cuts?

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

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

**MR. HEDDERSON:** Mr. Speaker, I was tasked to look at it in my department, and in looking at my department to make sure that I fully understood what our core mandate was, and to balance up the budget that I have been given with the personnel who are required to do the duties that they are required to do.

Mr. Speaker, that job has been done. I am more than satisfied that we are able to respond to whatever group comes forward in a very positive and very effective way.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for Torngat Mountains, for a quick question without any preamble.

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Mr. Speaker: Will the minister strike a review committee with all stakeholders to review these senseless cuts, as was done with the Justice department?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation, for a quick response.

**MR. HEDDERSON:** No.

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

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

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

We learned this morning of more public money spent on this government's expropriation of the former Abitibi properties. We still have a mothballed mill which will need extensive environmental cleanup, for which the taxpayers of this Province will have to pick up the tab. There are also legal fees, operating, and maintenance costs involved.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: Can she give this House a dollar figure for what her government's hasty expropriation will eventually cost the Province?

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, when we made the decision to expropriate Abitibi's assets, we did so because time was of the essence. We explained that very clearly to both Opposition Parties at the time. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we told, because of the action needed to be done in a timely way, that we will be expropriating the assets of Fortis and Enel. It was clearly our intention to restore both those companies to their full status at the time of the expropriation.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the NDP was at that table. She asked those questions; we answered those questions. She ought to have known that

what we have done today was in the plan from the beginning.

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

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

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

What the Premier should have said: I ought to have known how incompetent that government was that they made the mistake they made that gave us the mill that we now have around our necks.

I will now ask the Premier, who I am sure thinks this is a government investment, what are the people of the Province getting from that government investment?

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, first of all what we got in the expropriation was hundreds of millions of dollars of assets that we clearly understood at the time will be able to take care of any liabilities that might occur as a result of the expropriation.

Let me say to the Leader of the NDP and the Leader of the Opposition as well that at the end of the day, once all the liabilities have dealt with, the people of this Province will still have a great number of assets at their disposal and at bargain-basement rates to drive the economy in the Central part of this Province, Mr. Speaker. We kept what the people asked us to keep, something to help them in the future.

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

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

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

Government is backing the \$54 million loan for Nalcor and they are giving Fortis compensation, but what are the direct benefits for the people of Central Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker?

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we have a revenue-generating asset that we have in Central Newfoundland in Star Lake and in the Exploits River, the generation facilities in the Exploits River. That power is being generated, brought into the grid, used for ratepayers here in Newfoundland and Labrador, and to drive industry in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is creating revenue for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and in the long term will pay for itself.

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

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

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

I would suggest the Premier tell that to the people of Central Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, as this government has clearly shown, it is easy to sit in a pool of oil, cutting cheques.

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

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

**MS MICHAEL:** What is less easy, but very important, is developing plans to diversify the

economy of the Province in order to wean ourselves off undue dependence on the boom and bust oil and mineral economy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: Is she willing to embrace and apply community economic development principles to the economy of this Province, or is this government content to keep us all on the wild rollercoaster ride of the commodity markets?

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this government is very proud of the oil revenue that comes into this Province and the benefits agreements that we have been able to negotiate. It makes up more than 30 per cent of our Budget.

Mr. Speaker, we are glad that we have \$185 million business opportunity plan in this Province that people can come and drive small and medium enterprises right throughout this Province. We are proud of the aquaculture industry on the South Coast, we are proud of innovation, and we are proud of the money that we put into our cold climate expertise and market around the world, Mr. Speaker.

We are not interested, like the NDP, of not coming with any new ideas other than burning shrimp shells in Holyrood, Mr. Speaker, and blowing up the projects that now provide for (inaudible) –

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

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

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

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

The latest information available from Statistics Canada tells us that small and medium-sized businesses –

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

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

The Leader of the Third Party.

**MS MICHAEL:** (Inaudible) GDP and account for a larger proportion of the labour income part of GDP than do large businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier why we do not see a more aggressive plan by this government to support more small and medium-sized businesses, especially in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, when we came to this government in 2003 there was basically \$2.6 million a year available for small and medium-sized businesses, and communities, in this Province to drive investment. Mr. Speaker, that fund is now over \$185 million available on an annual basis to small and medium-sized business and not-for-profits in this Province, Mr. Speaker. That is the Progressive Conservative way. That is what this government has done for businesses in this Province, for free enterprise in this Province.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the NDP got up in this House yesterday and talked about universal daycare, universal pharmacare, and universal housing, Mr. Speaker. Just tell us: How are you going to pay for it all?

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

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

The Member for St. John's North.

**MR. KIRBY:** Mr. Speaker, tens of millions of dollars in cuts in the Department of Education this year will result in fewer specialist teachers in music and in arts. To make matters worse, cuts to cultural connections programs will further diminish students' exposure to Newfoundland and Labrador's unique art, music, culture, and history.

Who did this government consult before they decided that the promotion of Newfoundland and Labrador culture and heritage in schools was disposable?

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

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the member to go to some of our schools and see where things like theatre arts, where the music program has come since we came into government. Mr. Speaker, let him go and see. I believe there was a \$20 million investment through the Cultural Connections Fund.

Our commitment, again, to the broader student of Newfoundland and Labrador, the academic side but also that artistic side, the physical education side, Mr. Speaker, we are educating a broad student.

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

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

**MR. KIRBY:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education has said that he will expect even more now from volunteer school councils with the creation of the province-wide English school district that he plans to run from his office in St. John's. At the same time, the minister has cut funding to the Newfoundland and Labrador

Federation of School Councils by nearly 20 per cent.

Can the minister explain how he expects school councils to do more with less?

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

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, I wish he would stop shouting at me.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke at the Federation of School Councils on Friday night and I did not know who the new executive was then, but I assured them that I am more than willing to meet with them because in this Budget, Mr. Speaker, we said no changes to allocations to special education students. No changes to class caps. No changes to the allocations for guidance. Our investment was in front line services, Mr. Speaker, and they will remain there.

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

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

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

Since 2011, this government has promised a home ownership assistance program to working families again and again and again, yet there is absolutely no money in this Budget for it. Are they going to wait and haul it out during the election year?

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Where is the home ownership assistance program he promised to working families?

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

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

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

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

Finally, I get a question on housing from the hon. member, the first one this session. I would like to point out that we had a good discussion on this in Estimates earlier this week. I pointed out to the hon. member at that point in time that the program to which she refers was a commitment we made in our Blue Book in 2011.

It is a commitment that we intend to uphold. It is one that we are working towards. When we are ready to roll out a plan, we will certainly be doing that, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MS ROGERS:** Obviously, Mr. Speaker, they are going to haul it out in the election year, and the people will not be fooled.

Mr. Speaker, the minister cut the Residential Energy Efficiency Program by 50 per cent in this Budget. This is backwards and against all current thinking. Worldwide, governments are doing whatever they can to help people make their housing as energy efficient as possible. Reducing this program actually takes money out of the pockets of homeowners.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister reinstate the funding back to the Residential Energy Efficiency Program?

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

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

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

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

Now that I mentioned Estimates, I would like to acknowledge the very kind words that the hon. member opposite had during Estimates for the great work that the employees at Newfoundland and Labrador Housing have been carrying out.

She congratulated the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing executive and staff, and I would like to acknowledge that and thank her for that. They do excellent work over there, Mr. Speaker.

There are programs at Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, a suite of programs that are there for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. They are good programs that are affecting the people in a positive way. This year, the REEP will provide services to 500 homeowners, Mr. Speaker, so that they can improve the energy efficiency of their own homes. The Home Modification Program –

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

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

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

**MS ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, that program used to help 1,000 families.

**MR. SPEAKER:** No preamble please; a quick question.

**MS ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, will the minister put a freeze on the sale of all provincial-owned vacant land and buildings until he comes up with an actual real plan to use it for affordable housing?

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works, for a quick response.

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

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

I would just like to remind her that the Provincial Home Repair Program, as I was mentioning earlier, is a great program here in this Province. We tripled the funding for that. It is still at two-and-a-half times the traditional rate. We have reduced the wait list by 75 per

cent, Mr. Speaker, and we are going to continue to provide programs to the people who need it most in this Province.

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

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

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

### **Tabling of Documents**

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the last report under this act was tabled on March 22, 2012 and included guarantees issued up to and including March 16, 2012. This current report covers the period from March 17, 2012 to March 31, 2013.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 49(2) of the Financial Administration Act, I wish to table the attached list of temporary loans that were raised under section 48 of the act since my last report to the House on March 22, 2012.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 55(3) of the Financial Administration Act, I wish to report that there were no guaranteed loans paid out by the Province's last annual report, also on March 22, 2012.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 55.1(2) of the act, I wish to report that there has been no guaranteed debt of a Crown corporation

or agency assumed by the Province since the March 22, 2012 report.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Notices of Motion.

Answers to Question for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### **Petitions**

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

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

WHEREAS the offshore of the West Coast of the Island of Newfoundland is recognized as a region containing potentially billions of barrels of oil; and

WHEREAS hydraulic fracturing could be an accepted and effective method of petroleum discovery and exploration, and is compatible with the protection of the natural environment and water sources when executed within the context of a comprehensive regulatory framework; and

WHEREAS the petroleum exploration sector needs the certainty and confidence of a stable regulatory regime; and

WHEREAS with that regulatory regime oil discovery and industry development could provide unprecedented economic opportunity and bring people home to a currently economically challenged region; and

WHEREAS the undersigned support properly regulated exploration and development of oil and gas resource in the Province;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to introduce a

regulatory framework immediately under which hydraulic fracturing could proceed safely, and move this industry forward in Western Newfoundland.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, one of the individuals who signed this petition is nearly eighty years of age, and he is in Hawke's Bay. He is a well-known individual in Hawke's Bay, a former mayor. One of the observations he has made is that Hawke's Bay has been very, very poorly served, maybe due to nobody's fault; the downturn in the forestry sector and the loss of the hardwoods business that was there. After the mine left in the 1990s, it was the shipping centre. They lost quite a bit of economic activity there.

His big concern, as he pointed out, is forty years ago he was one of a group of people and they were lobbying for Gros Morne National Park. Today, it is almost as if the shoe is on the other foot, in that back then he was one of a group of people who went to Ottawa to basically plead with the Government of Canada to continue with the national park.

It is unthinkable today that people in the area would not want the national park, but enough people did not want the national park back then because they did not want their lifestyle to be interfered with. Well, the park has come and has established. For some people, it has brought significant benefit; for others, it has not.

This individual, as well as others, are very concerned now that naysayers with respect to economic development, and in particular, oil exploration and hydraulic fracturing may have enough with small numbers, loud voices, and mistaken arguments that they may stop economic development. That is a big concern, and that is why this petition is being presented, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

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

WHEREAS the process of slickwater hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, injects hazardous chemicals into rock formations to extract oil, and is polluting groundwater and air across North America; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has commissioned an assessment of the potential environmental impacts of shale oil and gas extraction in Canada, including fracking; and

WHEREAS Quebec, Nova Scotia, and a number of US states have halted fracking, and others are introducing regulations specific to fracking; and

WHEREAS it is incumbent upon the provincial government to ensure that our natural environment is protected from harmful industrial processes;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to impose a moratorium on slickwater fracking until it develops comprehensive regulations and ensures that each proposed project undergoes a conclusive environmental assessment to determine whether it is safe for the environment, the integrity of water supplies, and human health.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know how many times I have been up with this petition, but we are up with it again. This petition, again, comes from people in the concerned area of the West Coast of the Province. They are writing in all the time from St. George's, places all over the Port au Port Peninsula, Noels Pond, Stephenville Crossing. I can go on with the communities,

Kippens included. They keep writing about the dangers of fracking. They keep asking government to slow down and take a look at development. The members across the floor, as well as on this side, should be directly concerned with a new process that comes in that has the potential to do as much damage as what it does.

Mr. Speaker, I also have to note that just earlier today the US Interior Secretary of State, I guess, Sally Jewell, says that down in the United States they are going to be bringing in new rules surrounding the fracking industry, and they are saying that these new rules are going to be coming within weeks – not months, weeks.

We know that the United States has been looking at it. We know that the Government of Quebec is looking at it again; they have already had several mistakes. They had thirty-one wells drilled when they called a stop to it; nineteen of these wells were leaking when they done their inspections, so there is a need here for the provincial government to address caution – address caution that these people are asking for when it comes to the development of an oil industry.

There is nobody here who is going to be against fracking, as long as the regulations are redeveloped and done right. We all know that we are all looking for a disclosure of the chemicals that will be used. We all want to see remediation in case there is any damage. We can go to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and we can see right now that they are talking about a problem that they have with what is called orphan wells. What they mean by orphan wells, these are wells that are drilled by companies; there was not enough money set aside for things like environmental cleanup.

There is a lot of things here for government to consider. We hope that they are going to do it. We have the signatures to support it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for Torngat Mountains.

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

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

WHEREAS students of Adult Basic Education program at the College of the North Atlantic do not wish to attend privatized educational facilities; and

WHEREAS the College of the North Atlantic has the most accredited ABE program in Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS students are concerned as to the availability of private institutions and whether or not they can accommodate additional students;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to reverse this damaging decision to the students and reinstate the Adult Basic Education program at the College of the North Atlantic.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I am getting petitions from all over Labrador and my colleagues are getting petitions from all over the Island portion of our Province. This petition that I have submitted today, Mr. Speaker, comes from ABE students who are located Sheshatshiu and North West River. Their concerns are valid and they are timely.

Mr. Speaker, there are students now who have been accepted into Adult Basic Education programs. They have been accepted, but they are not getting sponsored. The reason they are not getting sponsored, Mr. Speaker, is because there is too much doubt created by the cancellation of ABE programs run by the College of the North Atlantic.

As you get into northern regions, Mr. Speaker, there is no plan from this government on infrastructure, on program delivery, on Aboriginal content. The concern right now is that you have students who are accepted but you do not have a sponsorship. The reason you do not have a sponsorship is because of confusion that has been created by the cancellation of ABE at the college.

Mr. Speaker, thank you.

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

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

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

WHEREAS students of the Adult Basic Education program at the College of the North Atlantic do not wish to attend privatized educational facilities; and

WHEREAS the College of the North Atlantic has the most accredited Adult Basic Education program in Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS students are concerned as to the availability of private institutions and whether or not they can accommodate additional students;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to reverse this damaging decision to students and reinstate the Adult Basic Education programming at the College of the North Atlantic.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This is not the first time that I have entered this petition. We have heard a lot about this very short-sighted decision, one that was done without any planning. We do not even know

what the results are going to net us. It is something we will probably get a chance to talk about tomorrow during government's private member's resolution when we talk about public programs and services designed and delivered in ways that are focused and effective. The fact is that there is no focus; we do not even know what the effect of this decision is going to be because there is no plan in place, certainly not to the people directly involved.

One thing I noticed since yesterday in the House, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island had some statements to make, and he was talking about this process. I am sure he was speaking from the heart when he said we have been a part of this process when we were laid off, and we were bumped by people. We have sympathy for the people; we try to lessen the burden on people.

It is funny because I got e-mails on that. What they are saying is if that is the case, why are we not getting redundancy packages when government is cutting jobs because of privatization when redundancy could possibly apply? That is the funny thing; we have these people who are getting their jobs cut. If redundancy is not factored in when you cut a public program to give the jobs to private colleges, then where are you going to put it?

It is one thing to say we are going to lessen the burden on people, and then it is another thing to actually know what you are talking about. Right now the people out there in the Province do not believe a word that is being said because we have no idea where this process is going to go.

I am worried about what is going to happen. I can only hope for the best, as are the people who are affected by this. We know that advanced education, workers are out – the first thing they are being told on their scripted sheets when they come out is do not worry, everything is going to be okay. How can you say that when your union has to file grievances because the redundancy package is not there, when your job is cut and the services kicked over to the private colleges? Duplication I could get into, but I only have a few minutes.

Thank you.

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

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

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

WHEREAS with the passage of Bill 29, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (Amendment) Act, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has weakened citizens' access to information and has reduced government transparency; and

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has moved towards greater secrecy and less openness; and

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is breaking its own commitment for greater transparency, accountability and freedom of information which it said at one time was the hallmark of its government;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to repeal the passage of Bill 29.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen time and again now over the past few weeks since this Budget came down, how important it is for the people of the Province to know exactly what these decisions were based on. We need to know what the results of core mandate reviews were. We need to know how decisions were made on programs that affect the people of the Province, affect their lives.

Also, on what basis were reversals of decisions made? We have no idea at all, Mr. Speaker, and we have been asking for that information. We

have asked it innumerable times and the government is not forthcoming with it.

This petition is called, The Right to Know. Well, we do not know on what basis the plans were made. We do not know on what basis the cuts were made. We obviously do not have a right to know.

Mr. Speaker, again, this government was the one that prided itself and bellowed out to the people of the Province that they were going to be more accountable, more transparent, and there would be freedom of information. Well, they did exactly the opposite. The people of the Province have a right to know on what basis the decisions were made and how the money and the resources that belong to the people of the Province are being spent.

Mr. Speaker, it does not look like that is going to happen. We will continue to ask. They will continue to say no. They may say that is Cabinet secrecy, or they may say that is solicitor privilege. When we look at the huge cuts to the Justice department and then to see so many of those cuts reversed in a matter of a few days, it is almost like someone can get whiplash just trying to keep up with the changes that are happening.

Mr. Speaker, I think the people of the Province want Bill 29 revoked. It is not in the best interest of the people of the Province. It is not in the best interest of this House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

WHEREAS there has been an agreement between the Federation of Newfoundland Indians and the Government of Canada to

recognize the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band; and

WHEREAS persons submitted applications, with the required documents, for registration in the Band up to the application date of November 30, 2012; and

WHEREAS the reported number of applications received by the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band are in excess of 100,000; and

WHEREAS the reported number of applicants now registered as members are approximately 22,000; and

WHEREAS the agreement between the Federation of Newfoundland Indians and the Government of Canada for recognition of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band is scheduled to end on March 31, 2013; and

WHEREAS the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band Chief has requested, but has not received, an extension to the agreement to process the remaining applications; and

WHEREAS to date there is no decision on how to deal with the remaining applications;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to work with the Newfoundland Federation of Indians and the Government of Canada to provide a fair and equal review of all our applications.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, when we came into our history of the way that we have dealt with native peoples – many of us in this House included who have some native ancestry – has been something that we have not been proud of. In fact, it has been shameful and we have buried it. We buried it from the early 1800s in dealing with the Beothuks.

When we came into Confederation there was no real consideration given to the fact that we may have large numbers of people who are of native ancestry in our Province. Proper provision was not made for the people who – what has now become the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band. Over the course of negotiations the federal government is responsible for, under the Indian Act, people of native ancestry.

The federal government has agreed that people who are eligible, who can demonstrate the appropriate genealogy, can demonstrate they are of native ancestry, that they are eligible to be part of a landless band. That will entitle people who are residents of this Province, the citizens of Canada who were previously undeclared as people with native ancestry to claim certain federal government benefits that accrues to people of native ancestry.

Mr. Speaker, there is a significant benefit to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, to the population in general, that as many people who can claim native ancestry under this agreement, under what really amounts to a modern-day treaty, are acknowledged and approved because these individuals have a claim on certain federal resources by virtue of being part of this native band.

Mr. Speaker, the people who have made application, it may be that they will not all be approved. Certainly, all of them are entitled to the fairness of having their application reviewed on the same standing as all of the other individuals who were previously approved.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

WHEREAS the Western School District is considering a multi-year plan to close Bayview Regional Collegiate at St. Lunaire-Griquet in June 2013; and

WHEREAS it has been proven from students who have graduated from Bayview Regional Collegiate, they have excelled in their studies to prepare them to move ahead and achieve their career goals; and

WHEREAS teachers and staff at Bayview Regional Collegiate are qualified and continue to provide a strong academic program with a full curriculum of all students attending; and

WHEREAS Bayview Regional Collegiate has developed a playground, library, drama club, Kids Eat Smart lunch program, school council, and other activities with exceptional community support; and

WHEREAS Bayview Regional Collegiate housed a K-12 school in the past with 200-plus students who have had access to science lab, cafeteria, art room, computer lab, gymnasium, extra-curricular activities; and

WHEREAS the parents, business operators, social groups, concerned citizens, and students of the Municipality of St. Lunaire-Griquet request to rescind this proposal;

Since Bayview Regional Collegiate has met and exceeded all aspects set forth for a viable school, we the undersigned petition the House of Assembly to urge the government to ensure that the Western School District is provided with sufficient funding to keep Bayview Regional Collegiate at St. Lunaire-Griquet open.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I put forward this petition on several occasions. It is signed today by residents from Noddy Bay, Straitsview, Quirpon, L'Anse aux Meadows, Gunners Cove, and Hay Cove. It is very frustrating to hear talk about the new school developments that are happening when we look at the number of schools that are also

closing in my district. We are building a wonderful facility in St. Anthony, and that is great, but it is collapsing three other facilities to provide that one school for the region.

What is the pressing issue is that the residents from St. Lunaire-Griquet to L'Anse aux Meadows and area feel they have not been adequately consulted. I, myself, as the representative for the area have asked the Western School District to be able to present, to be added to an agenda at a public meeting, and they outright refused. They refused the committee. They refused any representative to at least just be engaged and have their concerns heard in that forum. That is very frustrating, and I think that needs to be taken into consideration. Whether it changes the result or the decision, people need to be allowed to voice their concerns, to be able to make a compelling argument and put that forward.

I think that is one of the most upsetting things that has happened. It feels like people do not have the right to know; they do not have the right to contribute as to how these decisions came about.

So I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to put this petition forward.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Orders of the Day.

### Orders of the Day

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation, Motion 6, pursuant to Standing Order 11, that this House not adjourn 5:30 p.m. today, Tuesday, April 30, 2013.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation, Motion 7, pursuant to Standing Order 11, that

this House not adjourn at 10:00 p.m. today, Tuesday, April 30, 2013.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that pursuant to Standing Order 11 that this House do not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. today, Tuesday, April 30; and further, that the House do not adjourn at 10:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 30, 2013.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Motion 1, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, the Budget Speech.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for Bonavista South.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, hon. colleagues.

It is certainly a privilege and an honour to stand in this House today to talk about the Budget, *Budget 2013: A Sound Plan, A Secure Future*.

The government of today is showing leadership and practicing the balanced approach of paying off the debt, dealing with the deficit, and investing in major projects such as infrastructure, building bridges, roads, hospital renovations, nursing home renovations, new schools, colleges, universities, and I can on and on and on. We do have a plan; we do have a vision – a sound plan for a secure future.

To reach this vision, our government must make decisions that are not always popular, but are the

right decisions for the people of this Province and for our future generations to come. Our government does not just focus on the issues of today. Our government makes decisions that will meet the future needs of this Province and its people. Our government has prepared a 10-Year Sustainability Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador – a plan to ensure fiscal management over the long term, a plan to eliminate the deficit, and a plan to return to a surplus Budget, Mr. Speaker.

Our government will continue to invest in vital programs and services that are essential to the people of this Province. Our economy is and will remain strong. We have had to make difficult decisions due to the fact that the price of a barrel of oil was less than initially projected. Added to that, there were two offshore oil rigs shut down for refit over the past year. At the same time, the global economy was very volatile. Federal government transfer payments were reduced as well. To balance these unforeseen circumstances, each department underwent a necessary core mandate review to ensure that they offer effective and efficient programs and services.

It is unfortunate that some public sector employee jobs were eliminated, but these measures were necessary, Mr. Speaker. With human resource costs accounting for up to 55 per cent of the total provincial Budget, this was a logical area to look at in order to find savings. Once it was discovered that layoffs were necessary, we had to make some tough decisions as a government, tough decisions that will make a difference in the future of this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

This government found ways to lessen the impact of job loss by administering alternatives such as a voluntary retirement program, removing positions that were vacant in the system for years, and attrition management, Mr. Speaker. This government listened to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador during the recent pre-Budget consultation process that took place throughout the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We are protecting the priorities that were identified, namely in health care and

community services, and education, Mr. Speaker. In fact, there were no job losses to front-line health care and education workers.

Let's look at our government's \$2.9 billion commitment to the health and well-being of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. This Budget will allow an increase in access to health services and treatments. It will provide greater long-term care and community-support services. It will enhance support for seniors, and it will strengthen our infrastructure, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to highlight a great example of good fiscal management by our government. By introducing a new generic drug program, which by the way will see a further reduction by July 2013 resulting in residents paying 25 per cent of brand drug costs, our government has been able to generate savings, savings that contribute to the \$9.5 million invested in Budget 2013 for new drug therapies.

As the Minister of Health and Community Services pointed out time after time, right now Newfoundland and Labrador is the second in Canada in relation to wait times for priority areas such as cardiac bypass and hip fracture repairs. We are certainly proud of the modern, high-quality health care system available to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, a system derived from the sound planning of this government, the government of today.

What about the \$840 million being invested in childhood learning and K-12 education?

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

**MR. LITTLE:** Eight hundred and forty million dollars, Mr. Speaker, what an investment.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** This definitely shows our government's commitment to the education of our children and our youth. Yet again, we are investing in a sound plan for a secure future; our children and our youth are certainly worth every single dollar being allocated to education in Budget 2013. I should think that none of us

would disagree with that, especially none of us on this side of the House.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** Look at the \$537 million approved for salaries within our education system.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** Five hundred and thirty-seven million dollars, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** Our government is protecting priority services for student learning and is ensuring that our Province maintains the best pupil-teacher ratio of any province in Canada, a ratio that is the envy of this country. I can tell you I have talked to many people throughout the great Country of Canada and they certainly look at our Province and look at the improvements that we made in education in the last number of years and we are model to be looked at.

How did we earn these bragging rates, I wonder? Well, I tell you, it was through the sound, fiscal management of this government. That is how we did it.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** Our government is investing in early childhood learning through a strategy Learning from the Start, which is currently in its third year. Our government is investing almost \$102 million for new and ongoing school infrastructure projects; \$102 million, Mr. Speaker –

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

**MR. LITTLE:** - to meet the immediate and long-term demands in high growth areas while ensuring existing facilities meet the needs of students and teachers throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

In fact, there has been about \$620 million allotted for K-12 infrastructure in Newfoundland and Labrador since 2004. What an accomplishment by this government, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** Six hundred and twenty million dollars allotted since 2004.

We have seen twelve major extension and renovation projects completed, with a further eight underway in the planning stages, not to mention the more than 1,850 repairs and maintenance projects that have been completed. This is ongoing in the education system, a strong plan, a secure plan for the future of this Province throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, in many rural communities, in the major centres right throughout the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our government realizes that education does not stop there. We are providing high quality, affordable education, programming and services to the people of this Province with \$466 million allocated in Budget 2013 to enhance skills and training at the post-secondary level. Our commitment is certainly evident, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue on that road in the future I am sure.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** Tuition freezes at Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic are continuing, keeping tuition rates in this Province about 50 per cent lower than the national average. Again, smart, fiscal management, the lowest in the country, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue on that road as well. This is something that I talked to a number of graduates this year from Memorial University and from the College of the North Atlantic and they are delighted that this government takes this issue serious and we will continue on into the future with such programs I am sure.

Our government realizes the importance of education and skills development. We

understand this is key to maintaining a successful and prosperous economy for Newfoundland and Labrador, and we do need to meet the job market of tomorrow. We do need to look at where the jobs are and we do need to invest in the labour market as well, and we have been doing that. We have been paying attention, and we will continue to work on that road in the future I am sure.

With major projects such as Hebron and Muskrat Falls creating new job opportunities and sustainable growth for Newfoundland and Labrador, our future is brighter than ever before. Imagine \$23 billion in returns estimated from the Hebron project with 3,500 jobs at peak.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** It is \$23 billion in returns, Mr. Speaker, from the Hebron project alone.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** What investments; what money is coming back to the people of this Province and investments that we can make in relation to education, health care, and for our youth and for future generations.

Muskrat Falls and the transmission links will generate 3,100 direct jobs at peak employment, 1,500 direct jobs per year on average. I can tell you, there are people in my district who will be working on those big projects, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** People who will not have to leave the Province to go to Alberta but will actually work in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in the future. What accomplishments this government has made in the past and will continue to make in the future on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Through the Department of Advanced Education and Skills, Budget 2013 will continue to support apprenticeship and trades. The Journeyperson Mentorship Program will continue, as well as

the Apprenticeship Wage Subsidy Program. It will also continue to provide grants for women and Aboriginals in apprenticeship. Through responsible fiscal management our government is working to ensure a strong labour force is available to meet all future demands, Mr. Speaker.

Communities will continue to see infrastructure development and ongoing support through the Department of Municipal Affairs. Budget 2013 provides \$230 million in funding to meet these needs, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** Two hundred and thirty million dollars to meet the needs.

We will continue to provide funding for Municipal Operating Grants as well as a new Capital Works Program for the seven largest municipalities in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

This government will continue to offer a voluntary relocation program in municipalities where at least 90 per cent of residents vote to relocate. We will continue to offer sport and recreational opportunities which will contribute to healthier and more prosperous communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our government also realizes the importance of safety in our communities. We will continue with the development and operation of a Province-wide basic 911 system. Furthermore, this government will provide \$1 million to form a taskforce on child exploitation and drugs, Mr. Speaker.

Our government is committed to reducing poverty which is evident in our Poverty Reduction Strategy, a comprehensive and long-term approach to the prevention, reduction and alleviation of poverty. Right now, Newfoundland and Labrador's poverty is actually below the national average and our strategy is considered a model for others to follow; a model in this country of Canada.

Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, \$118 million; Budget 2013-2014 includes \$46 million from our provincial government. This will allow the corporation to continue supports for the most vulnerable in our society.

Core programs such as the Supportive Living program and the Home Modification Program will continue, Mr. Speaker. In fact, no programs are to be eliminated. Newfoundland and Labrador's Housing Corporation portfolio will also continue to include such programs as the Provincial Home Repair Program and the Residential Energy Efficiency Program.

It is worthy to mention, that in 2007 a six-year commitment to increase spending for the Provincial Home Repair Program was made by our government, this government, Mr. Speaker. During the last six years the waitlist for this program has been very successful; successfully reduced from 4,300 people to 989 people, Mr. Speaker. That is quite an accomplishment in such a short time.

The number of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who have been able to avail of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation's many programs is quite impressive and it is wonderful that these services are available to those in need. I definitely talk to a number of people throughout the different communities in the District of Bonavista South and I have had some very good comments made to me commending the government to continue on with those very important programs from the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation and the many programs that they provide. I am really proud to stand in this House today to be able to discuss the programs that are provided and bring the message to my colleagues in the House of Assembly how important those programs are to the people out in the districts of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Significant funding has been allocated to the Department of Transportation and Works from Budget 2013, as our government realizes the importance of maintaining and strengthening our transportation network. From provincial road

construction projects, to several major Trans-Canada Highway and Trans-Labrador Highway projects, to various bridge projects, be it for construction or repairs, we are talking about nearly \$250 million earmarked for these projects – \$250 million, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** Let's not forget the \$76 million allocated for ferry vessel replacement refit work and improvements to marine terminals and wharves.

Economic growth is yet another area in which this government has committed to strengthening, as is evident in more than \$200 million allocated in Budget 2013 towards investments – \$200 million – to economic growth. What an amount. What this government is doing is evident in more than \$200 million allocated.

This Province will see over \$36 million to support growth and innovation in the business community through the Business Investment Fund, Mr. Speaker. We will see over \$11 million to support community and regional economic development efforts through the Regional Development Fund.

Let us not forget the \$100 million being invested in continuing tax credits and incentives for businesses. There is: the Small Business Tax Credit, the Manufacturing and Processing Profits Tax Credit, the Scientific Research and Experimental Development Tax Credit, the Economic Diversification and Growth Enterprise Program, and the Direct Equity Tax Credit.

I actually spoke to a person recently who owns a business in my own district. He has various businesses in other provinces throughout Canada. He said that of all the provinces where he has done business, Newfoundland and Labrador makes it the easiest, most attractive, and most cost-efficient to start and operate smaller businesses in this Province.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** What a statement coming from a businessperson who has businesses throughout this great country of Canada. Economic growth is most evident in my district through the tourism, culture, and recreation industries, and I do not have enough time to continue on, on this particular topic, but I am sure I will speak on this further.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make one final number that I want to highlight, that reflects sound planning, good fiscal management by our government. It is that this government has paid down \$4 billion in the debt in the last ten years – \$4 billion. Now, what other provinces or country, for that matter, can highlight this accomplishment?

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I recognize the Member for St. John's North.

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

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

It is a pleasure to stand here and continue in the Budget debate. I will just quickly pick up where I left off. The last time, members will remember, when I was speaking in debate on the Budget I was talking about the planned school district consolidation. The plan to consolidate four school districts into one English school district headquartered here in St. John's – or it could be in the minister's office for that matter, from some of the things that have been said by members of his own Cabinet in the media.

That plan, which has caused such outcry across Newfoundland and Labrador – we have had entire boards of trustees speak out about this. We have had school district trustees resign from their elected positions over this. We have heard retired chief executive officers of school districts come out of retirement to speak out about this, and we have seen a lot of people speak out about this in the media. We are hearing more from

parents, and more from students, and more concerns as we go on.

One of the primary concerns and complaints that people have offered up is that they were not consulted. They were not consulted. I have a theory about why they were not. I do not believe the minister is engaged. I just do not think he is engaged. We know the Premier is not engaged. She has already said, in the press, the Premier has already said she does not want to be engaged, and I am not sure if the minister wants to be engaged either.

I think this is really important. The last time I was speaking, I referenced this report that was published just this year by Dr. Bruce Sheppard, who is a former school board CEO himself, Dr. Gerald Galway, who is a former assistant deputy minister in this Province, Dr. Jean Brown, and another individual from the University of Manitoba. This was published in collaboration with the Canadian School Boards Association, and it is a report called School Boards Matter.

I just want to read this quote again because it says, "Our survey of the literature and the empirical data from this study support a position that school board consolidation and restructuring coupled with increased government control and oversight have compromised the ability of school boards to focus on authentic student learning and to meaningfully connect with their constituents."

I think this is an example of how this government is not engaged in the current thinking around school district governance. This decision, this wrong-headed decision, is a prime example of how government is not engaged in what people are saying.

Now, last fall, we know that the minister had no objections at all to closing down a number of Eastern School District schools. He had no objections to closing down Swift Current Academy. He had no objections to closing down Catalina Elementary. He had no objections to closing down Immaculate Conception in Colliers. He had no objections to closing down Epiphany Elementary in Heart's

Delight. He had no objections, and he continues to have no objections, to closing down Whitbourne Elementary. Unfortunately, those individuals who wanted to see that done got their way and saw Epiphany Elementary and Whitbourne Elementary closed.

I think this new supersized school district headquartered here in St. John's overseen by the Minister of Education is going to create a situation where we see more schools close. What was failed to be achieved last fall in some of our rural communities is going to rear its ugly head again. There are great fears in rural and outport communities across Newfoundland and Labrador, in those communities that this government sees as no longer viable, that government's agenda to close down some of those schools through this school district consolidation is going to become reality.

I also want to take a little bit more time to say a few more words about \$27 million in education cuts that we are seeing in this Budget, where they are coming from, the impact that they are going to have, and what stakeholders in the education community across Newfoundland and Labrador are saying.

The minister has said he strongly contends that there is going to be no impact. I heard a member of his Cabinet on Back Talk last Friday afternoon, no impact; in fact, that minister suggested that there was going to be positive outcomes on these cuts, which I disagree with, many stakeholders disagree with, and I would agree that the facts would suggest otherwise.

I was provided with a letter that the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association wrote recently to the Minister of Education about the cuts in the Budget. It talks about how many members of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association are now beginning to see the folly of this Budget, beginning to see the potential negative impact of these cuts. The NLTA has heard from teachers, administrators and many stakeholders, and they say that the message is loud and clear, that these cuts will have a negative impact on students and

their learning in classrooms and schools of this Province.

So, do not take it from me; teachers are saying that themselves. They are saying that the cuts are regressive. Number one, that these cuts to education are regressive; number two, they will have a direct negative effect on schools.

The letter goes on to talk about how the minister suggested that these will be minimal or negligible, not impacting classrooms or students. They certainly disagree because the Budget has removed teachers from the classroom – there is no question – it has cut administrative time, and it has amalgamated boards. That is the net impact of this Budget.

There is going to be a loss of specialist teachers in intermediate schools; there is no doubt about that. There is going to be a loss of numerous literacy support teachers, and there is going to be a loss of learning resource teachers. We know that.

A large number of the teaching units that were provided under the needs-based portion of the teacher allocation model – which was previously lauded by the government; they thought it was a grand thing – that is not going to be any longer available, a large portion of that. That is going to have a negative impact on services to students. That is what the NLTA is saying.

Cutting administrative time in schools is going to have a negative impact on schools at the same time as the board restructuring is occurring, and that is going to really mean the downloading of tasks to the school level and cause undue pressure.

Those are some of the things that the NLTA has to say. They say that their members are telling them without hesitation that the reductions to teacher allocations will have direct negative impacts on students and they will add to an already heavy workload that teachers and school administrators are forced to bear.

It goes on to that the NLTA School Administrators' Council has expressed serious

concerns that the announced reductions in administrative allocations will have significant negative implications on their ability to carry out their responsibilities and meet the requirements for their jobs.

There was an ad in *The Telegram* newspaper on the weekend – it was about a half a page – that the NLTA had placed. It said what the cuts to education really mean. They talk about the fact that in September 2013, this coming school year, only one specialist teacher for every 150 students will be in schools, instead of one for every 125 students that there is now in subjects like music, fine arts, physical education, and skilled trades and technology. I challenge anyone on the other side of the House to get up and give a decent explanation as to why we would want to be making cuts to music, fine arts, physical education or skilled trades and technology.

It goes on to talk about a number of other things, but I think one of the important things that I want to highlight is that this ad – not from me, from the NLTA – talks about cuts to program specialists. It says that in September 2013 there will be a significant reduction in the number of program specialists, which means there will be less support for teachers in the implementation of curriculum in their classrooms. Do not take it from me; that is the NLTA.

As I mentioned briefly the last time, the School Administrators' Council of the NLTA, which is made up of school principals, assistant principals – so those who we used to call vice-principals – and program specialists themselves. There are 590-odd of these individuals, members of this special interest group of the NLTA across Newfoundland and Labrador.

They say in a brief that they prepared – I am not sure if it was actually ever provided to the minister, but I am sure he has seen it, provided directly by them, because it has been distributed widely through the media and otherwise – all of us see the reductions to school allocations as having direct and negative impacts on student achievement and adding to an already heavy workload. They are seriously concerned that

recent reductions in personnel will have negative implications in their ability to do their job. The roles and responsibilities for school administrators have changed drastically over the years.

I think this is one of the important things that we have to recognize, that over time with reviews that have taken place really since the late-1960s, more and more responsibility. Those members of the government caucus across the way who have been in school administrative positions in the past, they will know the level of responsibility that has been handed down to school principals and other administrators over time, and it is very significant.

They talk about some of those in here. They talk about mandatory increases in the implementation of government and school board policies related to such things as school councils. Other things we hear – the Minister of Education lists when he gets up to give what passes for an answer in Question Period, things like healthy and active living, Safe and Caring Schools, inclusive education, LGBTQ initiatives, KinderStart, twenty-first century learning, instructional technology, integration, occupational health and safety, accounting and controls, electronic school report cards, school security, and building maintenance. Those are just to name a few of the responsibilities that have been levelled onto the shoulders of school administrators over time.

They make a very interesting point here, they say, “Resources that are scarce at the best of times get stretched until the band breaks.”

“The recent decision to once again reduce administrative time at the school level has broken the band. It is regressive and will have direct negative effects on schools as safe, healthy, inclusive environments focused on student learning and achievement.”

It will mean not having the resources available, and I think this is particularly concerning. It will mean not having the resources available to support students, not having the ability to support healthy and active living programs,

which is something government should champion, such things as nutrition monitoring, breakfast and lunch programs. I know at the school breakfast program that I volunteer at in my district, there is always someone present from the school administration doing some form of supervision. They will not be able to carry that out in the same way because of these cuts.

It means not having personnel available to deal with student conflicts and fights – with violence, I say, Mr. Speaker, that is what we are talking about here. They will not have the resources they need to deal with violence that may occur within the boundaries of the school. It means not having the personnel available to secure a school and a child who may be under threat.

That is basically saying they will no longer be able to, 100 per cent, assure security. I think that is very problematic in this day and age with everything we are after hearing, everything we have heard about school violence and bullying, the dangers of that. To significantly curtail funding now for administrative tasks within the school is haphazard and, dare I say, a dangerous decision.

They also go on to talk about the fact that already, prior to the minister's cuts, many people, many teachers, many educators were already making the decision to stay away from administrative roles in schools because of the level of the responsibility, the weight of the responsibility that they have. This is creating a worse situation. It is taking a bad situation and making it worse for a lot of individuals, and it is not doing a lot for recruitment.

They talk about the reduction in time to learning resources, teachers, as a direct loss in services to students. I will have a lot more to say about cuts to literacy, school libraries, and learning resource teachers as time goes on.

They talk about the reduction in and loss of specialists' support at the junior high level. They say that is difficult to comprehend. I asked the minister in Question Period today who he consulted when the decision was made to cut

back on those specialist teachers in the area such as arts and music.

There was a time not long ago when the former Premier was out there, and all the government caucus, talking about how proud we should be about our Newfoundland and Labrador heritage and how important it was to teach our children in schools about the importance of our heritage, to preserve our music, to preserve our history, to preserve our arts, to preserve our culture. In some way these decisions diminish that, and that is an important thing to point out. We have to acknowledge that here, and we have to acknowledge that now because it will have a detrimental effect.

I did mention this last time but I am not sure if everyone got it, so I want to especially reiterate what I said the last time regarding this brief because don't take it from me, you can take it from principals, assistant principals, and program specialists themselves. They say: Perhaps the most significant reduction in teacher allocations to schools is the loss of special education teacher support.

While government has publicly announced its reductions to teacher workforce in other areas, they have not admitted to a reduction in the numbers of teachers allocated to serve the needs of our most vulnerable students. Government has said that the allocation of special education teachers is done on the basis of need. It is difficult to comprehend, reductions in these allocations when the need of the population has not changed, yet the amount of time to serve the need has changed and is reduced.

So, don't take it from me. I know the minister likes to suggest somehow that I am the propagator of misinformation when it comes to – and I say it is coming and I am certainly going to be paying a lot of attention to this as we go into the next school year. That we are going to see cuts in services for children with special education needs in schools. We are going to see them, that is an absolute fact. Don't take it from me, take it from the NLTA, take it from principals who are making decisions right now about the numbers of teachers, what the makeup

of teachers are going to be in their schools in September.

That is what they are saying. I am a messenger in this. This is what they are saying. The minister can like it or lump it, but these are the facts, Mr. Speaker. Those are facts.

Thank you.

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

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

The hon. the Minister of Education.

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, he is exactly right in one of his statements. I am going to correct him because he has done the same thing today as he did a little while ago and he continues to do. I am still expecting that at some point he is going to rise and say that he was wrong, and apologize to those parents who he upset.

I have said here on occasion one of the most bothersome e-mails I had after he made the statement that we were cutting service to children with autism was an e-mail from a parent of a three-year-old child who has been diagnosed with autism. That parent was very upset and concerned that we were cutting services to children with autism and wanted to know if it was true. Mr. Speaker, that is the ultimate of disrespect and disregard for parents who face challenges with students with special needs.

He said it here again today, that we are going to cut services to special needs. Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely wrong. He is Twittering and Tweeting over there now as I speak, and I imagine he will be Twittering and Tweeting for the next twenty minutes or so. I am going to correct him on some things, and he can Twit, he can Tweet, and he can Twitter all he wants, I can tell you that.

I make no apologies, Mr. Speaker, for our investment in education. Let me put one simple fact. He talked about cultural connections. Since 2005, we put \$17.4 million into the education system as part of cultural connections. Now, let me point out to him why we might have some reductions in the programming. Part of that was the investment into such things as art supplies, musical instruments, and print around connecting students to their culture.

So, Mr. Speaker, if you go around today and if you look at programs such as music in our school system, it is prevalent probably more than it has ever been before because –

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, he is telling me he wants to get up and apologize. So I will sit down if he wants to get up and apologize. If he wants to apologize, I would sit and I would allow him the next seventeen minutes of my speech to make his apology. I have absolutely no problem with that. If he wants to do that, I am willing to sit down and allow him to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I will give you a couple of more examples. Because of our needs-based formula that we introduced – and I would like for the member to listen to this. Because of our needs-based formula that we implemented in 2008, there are 265 more teachers in the system today than there would have been if we had continued with that model – 265 more teachers.

In 2007, despite a decline of 2,200 students, we added thirty-eight teachers to the system. In 2008, a reduction of 1,400 students; we put an additional sixty-five teachers in the system. That is 103 extra teachers, despite the fact that we had about a 3,600 student decline.

Mr. Speaker, he is talking about our investment in education – let me give you this example. Our class caps: Grade 1 up to Grade 6 students, twenty-five per class; Grade 7 to 9, twenty-seven. Mr. Speaker, let me speak to those who would have been in the education system, let's say, ten years ago. If, in Grade 4, there were

thirty students, what would have happened? You would have had one teacher with thirty students.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we put in the caps. Once you go over twenty-five, you cannot have a teacher with thirty students in the class. What would happen, Mr. Speaker, those thirty students would be split into two classes of fifteen. That never happened before – never happened before. That is our commitment to education in this Province.

This time, I will tell you – and the Premier was the one who was front leader on this, and any of us who are in Cabinet will remember it. We started talking about what we were going to do to have some savings in our education system. The minute we started talking about well, we can save \$50 million or \$60 million if we change these caps, just by one or two students.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you this – and either member of our Cabinet will tell you – the first person to speak up on that was the Premier. She said: We are not touching class caps. She was very clear on it. We said then that class caps would not be touched. I can guarantee you one thing, you can speak to anyone in the school system and they will tell you how appreciative they are that we have kept those caps in place, Mr. Speaker.

The member alluded to the NLTA – and I have said this before. I spoke after Ms Lily Cole spoke at the Federation of School Councils AGM the other night. I said it there and I will say it again. When we sat down with her on the day before Budget and she was looking at a 10 per cent cut, as other people were looking at in other departments – they were crunching the numbers, knowing where we were going to have to go, Mr. Speaker – she said she thought that where we were going to go to was to touch class caps, because she knew that is where we could have major savings. This government did not touch class caps.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I spoke at the Federation of School Councils, and the Member for St. John's North got up and left before I spoke. Now, I

thought it was just the politics. I will say the Member for Bay of Islands, I looked at him, and he was intent on my speech. He was intently listening to my speech, and I looked down and the Member for St. John's North was gone. I thought, that shagger – that shagger, he left. Mr. Speaker, I have to give him credit because I did find out afterwards that he had a gastrointestinal problem, it seems, and he did leave, and I even went as far as to verify it –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** He was fracking.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Somebody said he was fracking.

Mr. Speaker, I did, and I certainly wish him the best in the recovery. He told me on Monday – he came over and he said: Look, I did not walk out on your speech because I did not want to listen to you. It is because I really did get sick. I respect that; I really do, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot deny the commitment of this government to education. I know I have gotten up here and said this stuff before, and I am going to say it again – I am going to say it again. All I have to do – and I mentioned it in Question Period today – is to go down through the list of infrastructure projects that we have done in this Province, Mr. Speaker. If I can find them here, I am going to read them out to him again.

Mr. Speaker, nine new schools built and open in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Torbay, Placentia, Port Saunders, L'Anse-au-Loup, Port Hope Simpson, and Baie Verte. Those seven are in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, and two in Paradise. Ten more schools under construction and planning.

St. Anthony: Almost an \$18 million school, in the Member for The Straits – White Bay North's district. The day that is finished, I am going to be there for the opening. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, I am going to be there for the opening of that.

Carbonear, Gander, St. John's, St. Theresa's – I went over the other day to take a look at what is

being built in St. Theresa's. It is going to be, Mr. Speaker, a magnificent facility, state-of-the-art. West end high school – the folks who were taking me around over there told me that St. Theresa's, which is a huge school, is going to be dwarfed by the one in the west end.

We are not talking, Mr. Speaker, minor facilities here, these are major; Portugal Cove-St. Phillips, Torbay, Pouch Cove, Flatrock, Baileine, Conception Bay South and in Paradise, and then twelve other major extensions. Canon Richards Memorial Academy in Flowers Cove – two in the Member for The Straits – White Bay North's district. He gets up and criticizes it day in and day out. That man should sit down, Mr. Speaker, sit and listen to it more often.

Pearson Academy in Wesleyville; St. Bernard's Elementary, Witless Bay; St. Peter's Junior High in Mount Pearl; Beachy Cove Elementary; Upper Gullies Elementary; Roncalli Elementary, St. John's, and two phases completed to date. St. Edward's Elementary in CBS; New World Island Academy in Summerford; Riverside Elementary; St. Paul's Intermediate; and eight additional extension and renovations, Mr. Speaker.

These are not minor investments. I will not take a lecture, Mr. Speaker, from the Member for St. John's Centre. I will never sit and take a lecture from that member about our lack of commitment to education. I can stand up here, Mr. Speaker, for –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** St. John's North.

**MR. JACKMAN:** St. John's North, sorry. I could have lectured the one from St. John's Centre as well. Mr. Speaker, never question the commitment and continued commitment of this government to education.

I have to speak to his commentary on the school boards, Mr. Speaker. One point I hope that the member and the people of the Province will get is this. Mr. Speaker, if I talk of education I am going to put it in two contexts. One I will say is the corporate side of education and the second is the educational component.

What is the most important part of that educational component? It is student achievement. It is students in facilities. It is students knowing that when they are in these facilities they have good teachers, they are in a safe environment, that they are respected, that at the end of the day they are achieving and doing well, Mr. Speaker.

Let me say to the Member for St. John's North, we are going to move to one CEO in the English boards. One CEO and that being that corporate side of it. They are going to be responsible. There is going to be a person assigned to the corporate and the operational. Now, here is the most important piece in education, and that is student achievement and those types of things that I spoke about.

At the offices that are in Gander, at the office in Corner Brook, at the office in Happy Valley – Goose Bay, and at the office that will operate in St. John's are very much focus on education, exactly where the efforts in those regions should be. Mr. Speaker, the other seven regional offices, even though they will move out of the office – and I have one in my district in Burin. Even though they will move out of the office, they will be placed in schools where space is available, Mr. Speaker. The supports and the provisions of services will still be there.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my point is this. In those areas the people who are on the ground are going to be working towards what they should be working towards, and that is the betterment of students. That is the betterment of student achievement. That is the provision of safe and caring schools. That is the provision of the services that make life better for students.

Mr. Speaker, I have to point out to him, and I have to point out to anybody opposite who tries to dispute. We have 14,000 students less in this Province than we had in 2004, a 17 per cent reduction. We have thirty-seven fewer schools, a 12 per cent reduction. Yet, the operational costs of boards have gone up by 30 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, if they are saying that we keep those boards in place, what they are saying is

that we invest there. Are they suggesting that we take it from some of the things that I have talked about? That being the focus on education, class caps, and so on and so forth, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our transition team – some people have asked why we called it committee or transition team. You can label it transition board. Mr. Speaker, we have a very, respected educator in this Province leading that, Mr. Lorne Wheeler. He was the President of the NLTA, was Deputy Minister of Education, was a teacher, and was a principal. Anyone who knows Mr. Lorne Wheeler has the highest of respect for him. He is a very organized, calm, collective man. Mr. Speaker, with him we are going to put eight other individuals.

We are going to put the CEOs of existing boards – I see the member over there Tweeting again. Maybe I could slow down a little if he wants to get it into the Tweet, because I would love for him to send this out. I could talk a little slower to see if we can get it out to him.

Mr. Speaker, along with these four CEOs we are going to put four trustees. I will just use this example. We wanted to make sure we had regional representation, so in Nova Central we have a trustee from Gander, a very good trustee from Gander. Then we have another trustee who resides in Harbour Breton. In Labrador, we have a representative from Happy Valley – Goose Bay and then we have another representative from Lab West. That regional piece is there.

Mr. Speaker, we also wanted to make sure we had women represented on the board. We have two women who are representatives on the board. We have a good transition committee in place, Mr. Speaker.

I am aware that Mr. Lorne Wheeler, I am not sure if he has spoken to all of the trustees but I know that yesterday he made an effort, and I believe he has spoken to the majority of them. He is also looking at bringing them together in rather short order because there is much work to be done.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we are going to hire one CEO. The advertisement is out on that. I believe it closes on May 10. Shortly after that, an individual will be hired who will be the CEO of this one English board. There is much work that has to be done between now and September.

Mr. Speaker, we are hearing from some people. I can tell you the outcry is certainly not what the Opposition and the NDP are putting out there. I can assure you there are people who have questions. There is no doubt about it. Any time we enter into a change there is going to be questions and uncertainty, and they exist here as well.

My plea, Mr. Speaker, to those trustees who have an issue, and those past CEOs and others, if you have questions I would suggest that they direct them to the members of this transition team, this transition committee. All of us, I truly do believe this, are about the betterment of education in the Province. Those with opposing views, their interests are the same. The best way for us to move forward with this is that people provide their collective opinions and views. I am certain the committee would more than welcome it.

Mr. Speaker, our commitment to education has been strong since 2003. We indicated through the fees and the textbooks that we removed, and the other things that I have mentioned. Our commitment to education is strong and it will continue to be strong as we put in the best educational system that we can for the students of this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I recognize the hon. the Member for Bay of Islands.

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

I am proud to be able to stand and speak on the Budget. I just heard the minister talk about Lily

Cole. I spoke to Lily Cole on that. Do you know what Lily Cole told me, Mr. Speaker? She said we were into a meeting with the minister and the minister said: Put down your pens, what is said here in this room now is going to be confidential and never to be spoken. When she made this statement, the minister forgets what she said after that.

I said, what did the minister say? Do you know what she said? Do you know what Lily Cole told me? I said, what did the minister say? She said: I gave the minister my word, what was said in that confidential few minutes that I would not speak about it and I stand by my word.

So when you are going to talk about what Lily Cole said, let's make sure we finish the statement of what she said after that. It was a confidential meeting where the minister himself said: put down the pens, do not write anything down, this will never be repeated. God knows what secrets were told then.

Mr. Speaker, let's get the full facts here when we are going to talk about education, when you are going to use a part of a statement made in a confidential meeting. I just wanted to make sure the people in the public know that. It is easy to stand here in this House and say something about Lily Cole. She cannot defend herself when she said: I will abide by my word and not say anything about it. The minister can continue with what Lily Cole said to him after, and I am sure it will not be what the minister is portraying here in the public, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to go back to something that was in the paper last Friday in *The Western Star*, it was Corner Brook Pulp and Paper. This is something that bothers me. I have to thank the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Finance, and I know the Member for Humber West will confirm this also. Corner Brook Pulp and Paper has been an issue for all of us in this House.

I remember when the toing and froing was coming from the NDP to the government. I stood up in this House, Mr. Speaker, I am going back eight, nine months now, and I said guys

let's stop the fighting here. Let's all work together on Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, because it is not us. It is the people out in Corner Brook who are going to lose their jobs. I have to give the government credit, Mr. Speaker. I have been in contact with the Member for Humber West, the Member for Humber East, and the Minister of Finance on this here and we have been working together very well.

To my shock, last week when I read *The Western Star* on Friday morning I actually got a call. I said look at *The Western Star*. The Minister of Health is trying to be the big hero out on the West Coast, and said: Some political parties do not support this \$90 million and would like to see the mill collapse.

Mr. Speaker, I take offence to that. That is very offensive when you use the word, some, and you use the words, political parties. She was asked, do you mean Liberals? I said some political parties. There are only two, us and the NDP, Mr. Speaker. I can assure you that is absolutely false. It is absolutely incorrect.

Mr. Speaker, I refuse to let an incorrect statement made about me, who still has family and friends working at that mill out in Corner Brook, to try to get a few brownie points because you are speaking to some group out there to try to give me and the Leader of the Official Opposition – I actually refuse to let that go and not be contested to show how factually incorrect that statement is, how false it is.

It just shows me, Mr. Speaker, and I hope the people in Corner Brook are listening to this, especially the pensioners I met with and the union members, and all the people who call me who are workers at the mill. It shows me how much that minister is in the loop with what is going on with the negotiations.

I can assure you the Member for Humber West, the Member for Humber East, and the Minister of Finance, we have a good working relationship. We differ on some things in this political realm, and I understand that, but when it comes to this mill we stuck together. I had chances to get political opportunities and get

political points, I refused to do it. Those individuals had opportunities to do it, they did not do it and I respect them for it. I abide by my word to them, that we will work together.

Mr. Speaker, I will not speak any more about that mill because I know negotiations are very tenuous. I know what is happening with the union, so I will not get into anything else. I just wanted to confirm that. If that Minister of Health, the Member for Grand Falls, if she was the lead negotiator for the Abitibi mill in Grand Falls, make no wonder, I say, Mr. Speaker, make no wonder.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to clarify that and get that straight for record and for the people in Corner Brook. I challenge the minister. Anything I said here on this, I challenge the minister to prove me wrong. It cannot be done. If you want to make statements, make sure they are factual. Check with your colleagues to make sure that we are working together to save jobs for Newfoundland and Labrador, not little political brownie points, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak about something now, I am sure a lot of people don't expect me to; it is about the new hospital in Corner Brook.

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, again, I hear the members opposite chirping already, but when the Minister of Education spoke, I sat down attentively like I did last Friday. I never said a word. I listened attentively because there may be some points that I could pick up, some things I may learn.

If you do not agree with this government, they have to try to interrupt. Let's try to interrupt him. Let's try to make – it is not going to happen. It is just not going to happen, so do not waste your breath. Save it for your death bed. You may need your last breath. You are not going to waste it on me, trying to get me to stop

talking about the hospital. It is just not going to happen, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Health said it again today: I do not want the hospital in Corner Brook. Mr. Speaker, that is such an idiotic statement. It is factually incorrect. I will tell you what I want. I want a hospital that is going to service Western Newfoundland, not a downgrade. I refuse to accept the downgrade. I said it when the long-term care facility was being built that it is a downgrade.

The Minister of Natural Resources is quoted in *The Western Star* saying: We can't make the same mistake as we did with the long-term care facility – his own words, because the beds were reduced. I say to the minister, and the Minister of Natural Resources said it himself: If we make that same mistake it is going to cost us millions upon millions to correct it.

I am saying to the Minister of Health and I am saying to the Minister of Natural Resources, you are making the same mistakes. You are making the same mistakes. Math does not lie. What the Premier put out in a press release, what I received when I called the hospital myself, what we received in Estimates and what the minister said last week.

I know the Member for Humber West, and I am not sure if he is getting all the details. I respect the individual. I know he is from Corner Brook. I know that one of these days he has a lot of friends who are going to need this hospital. Maybe we will. Maybe we are going to need it, too.

Check the numbers. I plead to the Member for Humber West, the Member for Humber East, and the Minister of Natural Resources, check the numbers because the minister herself – when there is a brand new state-of-the-art hospital built for all Western Newfoundland there is going to be twenty-two less acute care beds. That is the numbers. Now, unless the Premier is wrong, unless the Minister of Health is wrong, unless the hospital that give out the numbers are wrong, we are going to have twenty-two less beds.

Mr. Speaker, I tell you what bothered me today, and we asked this in Estimates. This was five or six days ago. Guess what? A decision was made on this \$400 million hospital. Guess what? The Minister of Health did not know the number of surgeries that have been cancelled at Western Memorial Regional Hospital in the last six months due to a lack of acute care beds. It is amazing. I was astonished.

Mr. Speaker, I was going to ask that question last Thursday but the minister said she was not feeling well and she would be out of the House, so I would not do it. She was out in Corner Brook giving a speech to the Rotary. I would not ask that question because I said: no, we asked the question Wednesday. I will give her time now to get her facts together. I would not ask it when she is not here.

I asked today and the Minister of Health does not know; did not know, do not know. To me it is flabbergasting. I say to the Member for Humber West who is over there listening attentively, and the Member for Humber East: Do you know that these decisions are being made about this hospital and she do not have the facts? If you do not believe me, ask people out in Western Newfoundland whose surgeries have been cancelled. They have been cancelled. This is not propaganda by me.

Mr. Speaker, it is astonishing that the Minister of Health made this and does not know this. It is really amazing. She is going to decrease the number of acute care beds. There are surgeries already cancelled out there because there are not enough acute care beds to handle the surgeries. Can you imagine that?

Mr. Speaker, the other thing I was astonished by about the Minister of Health, there is a report in her department for readmission rates. People in Western are pushed out with a lack of services in their communities. Some may go down the coast; some may go out in some of the outlying rural areas. The Minister of Health – and I put this on the record because it is public record – I asked her today and she did not know what the readmission rates were for residents who had surgery who were admitted to Western

Memorial Hospital. It is astonishing; it is absolutely astonishing.

Yet we are going to sit down here, agree that you have to take what you are given, and the minister does not have the proper facts. Mr. Speaker, I just let the minister know because obviously you do not know. In your department, there is a report on readmission rates. Western Newfoundland is 14 per cent. The rest of the Province is 10 per cent, maybe getting up to 11 per cent. It is well above the provincial and national average.

So when the minister wants to make a decision on the hospital and wants to say publicly the Member for Bay of Islands does not want the hospital, I want something that is going to be sustainable and something that is going to be in Western Newfoundland so we do not have to cancel operations. I want something that people do not be rushed out the door, but the readmission rates are going to be back in through the door quicker. That is part of the reason there are beds in Western Newfoundland and you are saying: Oh, well, we cannot get it.

The readmission rates are higher. Those are facts. They are in her department, Mr. Speaker. Those are the kinds of things that people want to think I am fighting for. You better believe I am fighting for the hospital, but you better believe that I am going to fight for the right hospital, the right number of beds, and the right number of facilities we need in Corner Brook.

The long-term care should have been bigger. They are putting in another hundred beds. I congratulate that because we need it. The long-term care facility was cut back. This is not me. This hospital, please God, a lot of us will never be able to use it, but there are a lot of people out there now as we speak in Western Newfoundland who cannot get surgery because of the lack of acute care beds.

**MR. DAVIS:** We are going to fix that.

**MR. JOYCE:** The Minister of Transportation and Works said: "We are going to fix that." How are you going to fix that, put in twenty-two

or less acute care beds? If you do not know what you are talking about, please – and, Mr. Speaker, do you know how they are going to fix it? This was told to us in the Estimates. If the Minister of Transportation and Works does not believe me, I will get it in Hansard. Do you know how they are going to fix it?

**MR. DAVIS:** (Inaudible).

**MR. JOYCE:** I will get to that, I say to the Minister of Transportation and Works. I will get to that.

Do you know how they are going to fix it? The time in hospital, they are going to decrease it by 25 per cent. That was in the Estimates. If someone has surgery right now – I am just telling the people of Western Newfoundland, I am telling you now, I am looking you straight in the face right here and now and saying – it was said in the Estimates; it is in Hansard during Estimates – how they are going to make up for the lack of acute care beds is that they are going to take people 25 per cent faster, get them out of the hospital. That is in Hansard.

The people in Western Newfoundland now who feel that they do not spend enough time after surgery to get recovered – guess what? You are going to have to spend 25 per cent less time in the hospital. It is in Hansard. When Hansard is typed up from the Estimates for Health, I will show anybody who wants to see it, what we were told, and I nearly fell off my chair when I was told that. That is how they are going to decrease the number of beds in Western Newfoundland, Mr. Speaker. We have Estimates again Thursday night; I will follow up on it again.

The Minister of Transportation and Works is saying: Who is in the beds? He was over there saying: Who is in the beds? Tell us who is in the beds. I can tell you now. The Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Health have been here saying that 25 per cent of the beds are for long-term care patients. People of Western Newfoundland heard that. Now, Mr. Speaker, you do not have to believe me. We were told in Estimates – I asked that question to

the minister. Do you know what we were told in Estimates? There are thirty-four long-term care patients in acute care beds for all of Western Newfoundland.

The Member for Burgeo – La Poile was at the Estimates. It is on the record. This is no me. It is on the record. When I hear these statements that 25 per cent of the 200, which is 50 of long-term care patients, it is absolutely not true. In Estimates, when I asked the question, the officials told me it is thirty-four for the Western Region. I said: Are you sure now because the Minister of Natural Resources – and do you know what? The Minister of Health tried to defend it. Oh, it fluctuates. Sometimes it goes up.

I said: Minister, for the last four months it has been the same. The Premier made the statement. Here is the number. So is the Premier giving out false information? Are your officials giving out false information? You cannot have three, four – everybody cannot be right on this.

So when I asked officials, that is what was said. So when the Minister of Transportation and Works wants to know who is in the bed, do not rely on the propaganda that is being put out, ask the officials, read Hansard. Hansard is the official record of what was said. I can assure you what is being put out on the West Coast is absolutely false – absolutely false, Mr. Speaker. So, I hope the people on the West Coast are listening to this, and whoever is listening to this, I can assure you, you are getting less acute care beds, confirmed by the minister – less acute care beds. Your post-surgery and if you are admitted to the hospital, it is going to be decreased by 25 per cent. That is guaranteed.

The people right now who have cancelled surgeries, it is going to continue; that is the fact. When we get this so-called new, super hospital out in Corner Brook, your surgery is going to be delayed because it will have less acute-care beds. That is bar none.

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

**MR. JOYCE:** I hear the Minister of Environment – I have to give him credit. Last year, he was the only one who told me the proper information that I ever asked for in this House. He was the only one. Mr. Speaker, do you know what the Minister of Environment and Conservation told us last year? Exactly what is happening this year. I have no problem with it; give us the facts.

Mr. Speaker, I just want the people of Western Newfoundland to do me a little favour, just do me a little favour – you want to talk about propaganda – read the Premier's press release. In her press release, she said we were going to have the Request for Proposals in by July. That is the Premier's own press release. That is your boss. She said that out in Corner Brook. Everybody said: Oh, perfect, we will see what is going to happen the summer. Guess what we were told in Estimates? They are hoping to have the Request for Proposals sent out now by the end of July, later the summer. That is what we were told in Estimates.

The Minister of Transportation and Works, I have to give him credit. When I asked for a copy of the Hatch Mott MacDonald, he said: Yes, you will get a copy. I am still waiting, but I am sure we will – and a copy of the Stantec report. I thank the minister for that because I am sure we will get that very soon. That is going to show what Hatch Mott MacDonald put in for Corner Brook, and what Stantec said we do not need. I thank the minister, and I am sure I will have that before I go back Friday. When I have a few meetings in Corner Brook on Friday, I can show people that. Of course, once again, as I always said, that is in Hansard. The Minister of Transportation and Works – thank you very much for that commitment. I know you are a man of your word and you will live up and follow up with that, and I am sure I will have that. Thank you very much.

The stuff on housing – I have to say to the Minister of Transportation and Works. Yesterday at the housing Estimates, we asked for information on housing and I got it today. I thank the minister for that, and that is the kind of stuff – we work together.

Mr. Speaker, I will conclude on that –

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

**MR. JOYCE:** I hear the Minister of ATIPP, we call him. I tell you the strange part about you. You are trying to get your little few words in, Mr. Speaker, instead of standing up. Let me tell you, do you know how I got the money for Hatch Mott MacDonald? The freedom of information, because the department would not release it – that is how I had to get it; that is open. People in Western Newfoundland could not even get a copy, Mr. Speaker, of what was being reported. I had to go under ATIPP to get it. That is really open. Yes, everybody can see.

Mr. Speaker, I see my time is up. I look forward from the minister and I hope I will get it before Friday – I hope I hear by Friday to get two copies of the Stantec report and Hatch Mott MacDonald that was committed to in Estimates.

**MR. SPEAKER (Littlejohn):** I remind the member his time has expired.

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

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

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

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

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

It is certainly a pleasure for me to rise in the House here today and speak to the Budget debate on the amendment and, hopefully, we will be able to get up again during the actual Budget itself.

I am going to sort of change the course of the discussion here a little bit. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the Budget and how shocked I am – there is a lot of shock, I guess, goes around in this House – totally shocked I am at the complete lack of understanding that the Third Party has around economics and taxation.

I was driving home to my wonderful District of Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune just a few weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, and I was listening to Open Line, a wonderful show, and the Leader of the Third Party came on and I could feel my blood pressure rise as I was driving. I could not believe my ears. Mr. Speaker, again last Thursday, the Member for St. John's East got up and spoke again about the very same line items in the Budget relating to the taxation. I just could not believe it because these are some very basic principles of economics that everyone should be able to understand.

Let me elaborate, Mr. Speaker, on what they spoke about. They talked about concerns they had with two line items in the Budget that said people are paying more in personal income tax and we are accruing less in corporate income tax. Now, we have had the Minister of Finance try to explain it to them. We had the Minister of Natural Resources stand up and speak to try to explain it to them. Many of my other colleagues have tried to explain it to them. I, Mr. Speaker, will attempt to do so again today. Wish me luck.

Anyone who understands good governance understands that it is a good thing to earn our revenue from taxation of businesses. That is pretty basic. We do not want to tax, of course, individuals any more than what we have to. Personal income tax rates in this Province, even though the line item was higher, had not gone up. In fact, Mr. Speaker, under our leadership tax rates have decreased, putting over \$500 million back into the hands of our citizens, money that they can choose to spend to best suit their own needs and their own specific interests.

That is what is happening here, Mr. Speaker. It is the result of growth, growth in people's annual incomes. It is not because we are charging higher taxes. It is because we are making more money, and that is a great thing. In fact, we are second in the country only to Alberta for the highest average weekly earnings. Who ever would have thought we could achieve such a milestone in Newfoundland and Labrador? We achieved it in ten short years.

We have more people working, Mr. Speaker, than ever before in our history. It is a good thing; it is a great thing.

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

**MS PERRY:** It enabled the government to increase revenues from taxing. We are increasing our revenues from taxes, yes, Mr. Speaker, but without increasing the taxation rates. That is the way, I say, it should be, unlike the members opposite who want to raise the tax rates, hurt the working public, deter business attraction, stifle economic growth, and stifle job creation.

Mr. Speaker, let us talk about corporate taxes. Again, the Minister of Natural Resources did a great job of explaining it yesterday and I will endeavour to cover some of that ground again in as layman terms as I can possibly put it.

Yes, corporate taxes have decreased, but why? We are in an economy in Newfoundland and Labrador primarily reliant on commodity exports, like minerals, fish, lumber, paper, and oil. It is a fact of life over which governments, any government, have no control, which is all the more reason why it is crucial to have a competitive tax regime to attract the investors who create the jobs and who create the sustainable wealth, particularly in rural areas of Newfoundland and Labrador.

To be honest, Mr. Speaker, in my personal opinion it really, really scares me that the NDP have no understanding of good governance, no understanding of economics and no vision for how to achieve sustainable prosperity.

In my opinion, an NDP government would be terrifying for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. They would – and I will say it again – increase taxes, deter private sector investment, where the majority of jobs should and need to be created if we are going to have wealth that is real and sustainable. Government alone cannot be the sole provider of jobs. Where in God's name would all the money come from if we have a weak private sector? We have to raise

revenues. Government cannot be the only job creator.

Just this weekend – and in terms of taxes again, another tax issue I have to say really bothers me. Back in 1996 when I had just started my job in economic development, I was invited to participate in the National Round Table on the federal Budget consultations. At that time – and that was well over fifteen years ago – I was really horrified that, of course, Canada's debt being in the hundreds of billions of dollars, we were paying \$90,000 a minute at the federal level in interest. Ever since that time, I have been extremely concerned about governments running deficits and the amount of money that is lost in interest payments.

Just this weekend in reading my Twitter feed, I picked up a link to an article that talked about what the average Canadian pays, what we lose from our paycheques. Each and every average Canadian loses on average 42 per cent of their paycheque towards taxes through the combined federal, provincial and municipal level of taxation, and they want us to pay even more – absolutely astounding.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, they do not understand the economic side of the picture. With a poor economy, as wonderful and grandiose as it would be to have all of these great social programs, without an economic base there would be no money for social programs, Mr. Speaker. So, unless you solve the economic side of the puzzle, you are not going to be able to do much with the social piece.

To further illustrate my point, Mr. Speaker, let's just take a look at some other jurisdictions that have an NDP government. Manitoba, presently, has an NDP government – highest tax rate it has seen in the last twenty-five years. In another province, Mr. Speaker, led by an NDP government, they have seen their taxes increase 25 per cent in four short years. This is not what I, for one, and my colleagues on this side of the House want to see for Newfoundland and Labrador. We want to stimulate the economy, we want to attract the private sector, we want to

create the jobs that are sustainable, and we are well on our way, Mr. Speaker.

When you listen to the Budget here in the House sometimes, it is really frustrating, especially when things get theatrical, because you really want to focus on what is important to the people. This is an opportunity here in the House to educate people on the facts. I would like to get the facts out.

Sometimes members opposite will get up and they will spend their whole twenty minutes harping on a Budget cut to a single organization. There is no mention whatsoever of the hundreds of other organizations that do receive funding, Mr. Speaker, often to provide a similar service for a similar demographic. We are not about pet projects. We are about trying to do what is best for the greater good as a whole. The fact is these are public dollars we are spending and it must be spent wisely.

Governments, especially in this day and age, must reduce duplication, must increase efficiency, and must eliminate excess layers. The days of going to the manager of the manager of the manager are quickly becoming history.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of Opposition, one of the things I have marvelled at in here – and I certainly have had the benefit of being a part of government since I came to office. I sometimes sit down and ponder and say, my gosh, the luxuries of being in Opposition. You can promise the world, but you do not have to deliver on a single thing.

In government, Mr. Speaker, we do not have the luxury of dramatizing single issues in isolation of the whole picture. We are responsible for the people's money, and we must consider everything in the context of the larger picture and understand all possible implications.

Let's take another look again, Mr. Speaker, at some of the things they want to do across the way, the Third Party. They call for all-day Kindergarten; they call for child care programs. I do not know if they know what such programs

would cost, but we are told it is in the range of at least \$500 million. Where is that money going to come from? We certainly are not in a fiscal position to be able to do that within a balanced Budget, so they would have to borrow.

Already, Mr. Speaker, we as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are spending \$800 million per year in interest on the debt. That is nearly \$2.2 million every day in interest payments alone. Imagine the social programs that we could fund, the roads we could pave and the hospitals we could build if we had that kind of money, Mr. Speaker, instead of it being lost to interest payments. In my district alone, in just thirty days we would have enough to pave the entire Coast of Bays highway on the Connaigre Peninsula. That is the place we want to get to, Mr. Speaker. Again, with the fiscal tax policies and the governance that we have in place, we will get there and in short order.

To take a look at how our investments work and how our fiscal policies work, you need look no further than my wonderful District of Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune. Here is an exemplary example of how our policies and our investment strategies are working. If the Coast of Bays is not an exemplary model of success, Mr. Speaker, I do not know what is. I have to say though, that it baffles me as well that the Liberals want to shut it down. That is very depressing.

In any case, I will certainly be an advocate that the industry continues to stay, continues to grow and reach our goal of 2,000 jobs. We are now at the 1,000 level and we expect to double that in the next few years. I certainly want to assure my people that I will advocate for that until we achieve that goal.

I am going to talk a little bit – anyone who is really, genuinely interested in the Budget, in how your taxes are being spent, in what is happening to your money, read the book that accompanies our Budget document: Securing the Future, A 10-Year Sustainability Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador. It outlines the material, Mr. Speaker. It outlines where we are

today very well, and it certainly outlines where we are going.

By reducing the net debt – remember when we came into government the debt was \$12 billion. We were paying twenty-three cents on every dollar in interest. Today, Mr. Speaker, that figure is down to 10.9 cents, and that is quite a significant amount of progress. That money is going back into the pockets of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and back into the infrastructure of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We could have, I guess over the last few years, been spending money because one of the things we are being criticized about now is: Oh, you were spending so frivolously and now you have to roll it back. We spent because the money needed to be spent. There were infrastructure deficits. Why not create jobs when you had the money to do it?

If we had not done it, Mr. Speaker, and we had taken all the revenue that we were earning from the oil in the glory days, we would have been criticized for that. We would have been criticized because we are putting it all on the debt and there is so much that needs to be done and so much we could be doing. So we took a balanced approach, Mr. Speaker, and we are achieving both goals steadily and surely.

Now, in terms of taxation, let's look at where we have reduced some of those taxes, Mr. Speaker. Personal income tax is down by \$403 million, and \$21 million has gone back into the pockets of seniors through the Low Income Seniors' Benefits. That benefits seniors all across the board, each and every senior we have in our Province.

The people, Mr. Speaker, called for a reduction of retail sales tax on insurance, and we delivered, \$75 million. Now, what would the NDP do with that? Would they bring that tax back? Would they take that money out of the people's pockets once again? HST and the Residential Energy Rebate, \$38 million back into the hands of the people of this Province to spend as they so desire.

Corporate income tax and payroll tax down is by \$15 million, but what is that doing, Mr. Speaker? That is enabling the employers, especially in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, to maintain and increase the workforce and keep the jobs going. They are using the money to create jobs instead of giving it to government. Of course, it is yielding great results in terms of sustainable job creation.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know I have probably taken a harsher stance than I usually do when I get up here and speak in the House, and I have not elaborated a whole lot on my district, which is fabulous and I would really love the opportunity to brag about what is happening in the Coast of Bays district. The Budget this year, in particular some other things that it does that are great for us pertain to Municipal Operating Grants and how we are seeing an increase in MOGs. Each and every one of my communities will see an increase. Of course, that will be very valuable money to use in improving their infrastructure and programs as they see fit.

I really do not intend to discredit the importance of anything that is said here. I recognize the importance of the Opposition views and the concerns of the people they represent. We would love nothing more than to continue with the surplus funding that we had.

At this point in time, Mr. Speaker, to continue spending at those rates would mean spending beyond our means because we are not earning that level of money any more, which would only increase the debt, reverse the progress we have made toward self-reliance, and pass the burden on to our children. That is not our course, Mr. Speaker. That is not our leadership.

The waters may be rough for a while, but our destination is clear and straight ahead. This crew and its captain are well on the way to leading ourselves towards wealth, prosperity, and self-reliance, not just for us but for future generations to come.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I take pleasure in rising to talk about the Budget, but I would like to touch off on a few things that the hon. Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune talked about. If we were to practice the type of reaganomics that this particular government has been practicing in the last couple of years, I think that we would be in trouble for a long time. The degree of investment we have seen in some regard has been positive on the part of government, but in other ways it has been completely wrong and misguided. I guess I will stand and correct a few facts again this time.

I have to talk about, I guess, the first thing to start off is about the degree of investment in small business. One can look at an NDP government merely across the Straits and they can see an NDP government that this government has been dealing with, an NDP government in Nova Scotia that saw a strategic investment. They saw a strategic investment in small businesses by dropping small business tax from 4.5 per cent to 3.5 per cent.

At the same time as that, they also created 2,900 jobs. It was one of the provinces here in the Atlantic Canada region that showed the strongest economic growth in the last little while. So, hats off to the Dexter government, to the NDP government in Nova Scotia, for doing that.

What did this government do? When we presented a motion having to do with the dropping of small business tax, 1 per cent as a strategic investment to small businesses – what did they do? They voted completely against it, Mr. Speaker.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Shameful.

**MR. MURPHY:** A shameful move. That was a \$3 million investment for small businesses. How many times have we heard from the

government across the floor that the economy that is being created by small business is white-hot, and it is certainly worthy of a degree of investment on part of government, even if it was just 1 per cent.

Compared to \$560 million in the hole, Mr. Speaker, \$3 million is not very much on top of that to see what kind of a return small business is giving to us. It happens to be responsible for about 40 per cent of revenues coming into the Province – about 40 per cent of the employment, sorry, that is right now in the Province. That is what we are looking at as to how important small business is. Whether you are a taxi driver or whether you are a fisherman, every single one of them is contributing to a white-hot economy, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to point that out to the hon. member and, as well, in case the other side does not know. Perhaps they will consider dropping small business tax as a strategic investment into the Newfoundland and Labrador economy. One is no more important than the other.

Mr. Speaker, as well, she talked about dropping personal income taxes. One of the things that were in our platform the last election was raising the basic personal exemption. It is an easy way of saving people money as well. We would have gone from \$7,989 right now on the tax return to a \$9,000 basic personal exemption for people. What is the matter with that? That is another way of keeping money in people's pockets, yet we get criticized for it.

I would like to know what government considers a stronger investment than keeping about \$1,100 in people's pockets. It is a very good investment, Mr. Speaker. How fast would that be turned over into the economy? It would stimulate the economy, and it would attract jobs as the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune would say.

It would stimulate the economy and attract jobs; it kind of rings true when you are talking about that shipbuilding project that happened on the Burin Peninsula isn't it? We are talking about the JSS contracts that government failed to make

any kind of a move on when it came to that. We lost \$30 billion in projected shipbuilding work on the Burin Peninsula. When was that, about a year-and-a-half ago, two years ago?

It is only about two years ago we saw \$30 billion up in smoke, and where did the work go? The work went to an NDP province, Mr. Speaker, the Province of Nova Scotia. It was the Premier Darrell Dexter of the day who stood up in his own House of Assembly, in his own Nova Scotia Legislature and said, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to this project it is like winning the Olympics for thirty years. That is exactly what it was like.

He sees the strategic investment in the shipbuilding; he sees being able to retain a strong, co-ordinated workforce that would pull together on the same rope for this one massive project – \$30 billion, Mr. Speaker. Where is that going to bring them in the future when it comes to future shipbuilding, I wonder? Do you know what it means? If I was twenty-five years old and I worked thirty years in those particular shipyards, I would probably be able to retire and have a family in Nova Scotia.

What are they doing right now on the Burin Peninsula, Mr. Speaker? We are dealing with a transient workforce. Half the people down there, I think, are flying off to Fort Mac, and the government is making higher taxes as a result of Fort Mac money. That is exactly what it is. That is why revenues are up. Yes, there are some good jobs up in Labrador.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** (Inaudible).

**MR. MURPHY:** Yes, there are some good jobs in Labrador, I would say to the hon. Member for Terra Nova. Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, sure there is an improved job situation when it comes to Labrador. It comes at a risk too when it comes to the volatility in commodities.

We have to look at something that is going to be more steady. That is why we should be looking at small businesses because small businesses are anchoring the Newfoundland and Labrador economy. That is why we should be looking at

personal income taxes for the people who are going to be here. If we want them to participate in a small economy and at the same time return money to the people out there who are running businesses, that is where we need to go, but we have not. We are missing that particular fact.

I would like to talk as well about – she brought up the cost of all-day kindergarten. That is the problem with this government on the other side of the House. That is the problem with the blue document. It talks about spending; it does not talk about strategic investments like all-day kindergarten or full daycare. With those things, while you are investing, there is an immediate payoff.

If you are talking about the possibility of being able to free up more people to go into a workforce or to pick up the welding torch or have more women out there in the workforce, Mr. Speaker, that is right where you go. That is how you would also put money back into the economy as well. We all know how much it costs to pay for daycare. I have been there – been there several times. I think that a lot of us here know how much it costs for daycare and how much small businesses like daycares, for example, would like to see money poured back in to the economy. You have to look at the end payoff as a result if you are talking about freeing up people.

I do not know what the stats are when it comes to births, for example, last year, but let's pick a number out of the hat; maybe it is about 1,200 births last year. In five years from now if we had all that money gone into the economy because the investment in child care and then further on then into kindergarten, that is five years of people working out there. Maybe they will be working on a future shipbuilding strategy. Maybe they will be iron workers in Labrador. Maybe they will be driving the big trucks hauling the ore out to keep the Labrador economy going and to help the Province grow.

Maybe they will be doing that. Maybe they will be picking up the welding torches and putting offshore oil rigs together or whatever. Whatever they do is just as important a contribution. It is

just as important a contribution. Every one of these people deserve to have a roof over their heads, Mr. Speaker, and at the same time are saying yes, we are waiting for that homeownership program that we do not think is going to happen in our lifetime from this government. It is not going to happen. Everybody wants to be able to live in a Bailey Park.

That is what I am saying. When it comes to that, everybody wants something that they can afford and they all deserve to have a chance to have a roof over their heads. We need to see more money into Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. We need to see that particular department grow and, at the same time, to develop into something that is going to mean something to everybody, rather than the select few that we are looking at right now.

Let's expand the boundaries; let's make the investment for people. It is not in the Budget. I say to the hon. Member for Mount Pearl South, it is not in your blue document. You need to be pressing your fellow Cabinet ministers for that if you want to see growth in Mount Pearl when it comes to that.

We are dealing with an awful lot here when it comes to debt and economics and, at the same time, they are managing decline, Mr. Speaker. What the NDP are about are some ideas that come to be expressed in one word, growth. We are not managing decline, we are managing the Province's future is what this government should be saying, but they are all protracted within a shell about themselves now. They cannot come out with an idea.

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** Anyway, Mr. Speaker, that is what I wanted to say to the hon. members across the hallway. Perhaps if they had a little bit more proactive thinking when it comes to budgetary constraints and maybe take that chance and invest in all-day kindergarten and invest in daycare. Take that chance.

Try out an experiment for yourselves, for example, in Lab West right where you need the workforce. Try it on the population up there. Do some sampling. Hold some surveys up there and ask the people: If this was brought forward, would you use it? Would you avail of it? Would you be working in the local economy? We would not be worried about taking in people from the outside, Mr. Speaker, because we would be so busy having our own people working we would have all dates filled.

**MR. MCGRATH:** Lab West is growing.

**MR. MURPHY:** It is growing, I would say to the Member for Lab West, but perhaps it could be grown a whole lot more than what it is. Newfoundland and Labrador for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, I say, first.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about a few things in my district that I would like to see or things that I am hearing at the doors when I am out there or at events. I am hearing an awful lot about EAS workers. I know I talked about them the other day. I have talked about the investment of time and effort that these people have made, the Brother T.I. Murphy Centre or the Association of New Canadians.

The degree of work these people do in filling a role, not only as people who are trying to get them to enrol in educational programs, but also the jobs they were doing as regards to taking people off the streets. These people were almost – well, Mr. Speaker, you could call them social workers at times for taking people out of trouble, getting them back into the educational system, and turning into something. Maybe they did not think they were worth anything, but other people saw fit that they were.

We lost funding for EAS workers. We lost funding for various groups like the Brother T.I. Murphy Centre and for the Association of New Canadians in my district. There were twenty-one jobs all in total, and I have not even included groups like the Y that were out there doing the same thing.

All of these people were all pulling on the same rope. What did we do? We have forsaken them. This government has forsaken them. They have cut the line and said you are on your own. That is exactly what they have done. That is just in St. John's East.

Let's talk about municipal funding, because I get a real kick out of this one. One day government comes out and they announce \$25 million for seven towns and cities that are strategic in the Province, and yes, it might be a good investment but what did they do on the other hand? They took out the grants that the Newfoundland Liquor Corporation were paying for their stores in various cities. It cost the City of St. John's about \$100,000. So they give with one hand and they take with the other.

What did it cost the City of Corner Brook? Two liquor stores there, I think it was. The hon. Minister of Natural Resources would probably know. I think it meant something in the area of \$20,000 out of the City of Corner Brook. They had to rejig their budget and come up with another \$20,000, just when they thought they had it all figured out.

How much in Mount Pearl, I wonder, Mr. Speaker? Did I hear the hon. Member for Mount Pearl South complain to this government about the loss of funding for the Newfoundland Liquor Corporation to his city? I did not hear a word, Mr. Speaker. How many liquor stores are in Mount Pearl? I think there are two out there in Mount Pearl, so they lost \$20,000. It is roughly about \$20,000 they lost.

Mr. Speaker, something else about municipal funding I keep hearing about is the simple fact that it is the provincial government chasing down small cities and towns, the larger cities and towns. When it comes to municipal funding you keep hearing about the talk that they are doing as regards to a new operating formula, municipal formula. That is great that they are going to enter into talks.

What turns off a lot of people is that sometimes they get caught in the middle, and my constituents are being caught in the middle, Mr.

Speaker, I say to you. Here is how. You get a provincial government that is not paying municipal taxes, for example, on its facilities. Right now in St. John's East there are several government facilities that are not paying taxes.

We have the old Baine Johnston centre. The Baine Johnston Building on Portugal Cove Road does not pay any municipal taxes. We have the Baine Johnston Building on Elizabeth Avenue that now houses Child, Youth and Family Services, that does not pay any taxes for the services it receives. It does not even receive a grant. What does that do?

Well, for the lost taxation from where the businesses were before, now the City of St. John's has a shortfall. Because they have a shortfall on taxes, they have to go somewhere and get it. Where do they go? They end up possibly putting up mill rates. Because they end up putting up mill rates, what does that do? That raises municipal taxes on the taxpayer out there. It leaves them on the hook, sometimes with a say, sometimes without.

Sometimes the City of St. John's manages to fill the gap and sometimes they do not. In this particular case, I think this year they are dealing with something in the order of \$3 million, I believe, that they are short when it came to the new municipal funding formula, the \$25 million share.

Every time we bring up the gas tax issue, of giving a small contribution of the provincial gas tax, we get criticized for it. Why? I have no idea why. It just seems to be responsible that if you are driving on a road perhaps you would be able to take some of that municipal gas tax formula and possibly sink it back into municipal roads again. It is a brilliant idea.

I would suggest that the government would look at it this time around. Sixteen-and-a-half cents a litre, if you were to take two cents a litre off that and contribute it back to municipalities. I say to the minister, avail of it. It is there. It is constantly growing.

The provincial government right now is projecting it to go from \$171 million that was collected last year to \$176 million. There is an extra \$5 million that the government is projecting that it is going to be collecting in the next year. I think that is a great place to start for municipalities. It is fair, it is transparent. If every municipality knew about it, would they complain? I do not think so. Certainly they should enter that into the discussion when it comes to Municipal Operating Grants.

When it comes to other things, let's talk about REEP. Let's talk about the government's conservation efforts over the last little while. How do you help somebody out on a lower income? Government's own projections on January 6, 2012, in their own news release talked about putting \$900 into every household. What would that have done?

The overall REEP that is what it was doing. It was putting about \$900 into every low-income household in this Province, the people who availed of the project. What did they do? They cut the program in half it was such a success. Yes, there is an impetus for growth.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is an impetus for small businesses out there to be making money, the guys and girls who are out there swinging the hammers and nails putting in the new vinyl windows and putting in the insulation. That is self-defeating, not to mention it is probably a little bit less than gratuitous when it comes to a message to small business, to carpenters and everything like that out there, anybody who is working in the trades.

What kind of a message is that? It is not a message, Mr. Speaker, other than to say you are on your own. That is exactly what it told a lot of people too, who are out there trying to avail of this program, who are struggling with high heating costs in spite of a positive government move.

May I add, it was an NDP motion that was pressed for in some of your election programming in some of the books. It was one of the things that was pressed as well by the

Consumer Group for Fair Gas Prices, which I was a member of and only too proud to have found that one coming in on the Budget. It was great. Still, there are people out there who are paying high energy prices as a result and we should be recognizing that they needed a hand. They did not get it with this Budget with the REEP cut in half.

I guess last but not least in the time that I have left over is the contribution that RED Boards were making. It was such a small amount on government's behalf, but showed such big promise and showed such big results at the same time. The people who I have been talking to were all over this Province – how much of an investment was being made by this government into RED Boards, but abruptly I think it was July 16 last year the funding was cancelled. No real reason behind it, other than it had to be cost savings. We did not see a degree of investment back into RED Boards again. We did not see that impetus on the part of municipalities, and these were important boards for smaller municipalities who could not afford economic development offices on their own, a very important wing.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we had an impetus for decline, the management of decline rather than an impetus for growth. That is just the way it is. That is the way I see this Budget. This Budget will not get my support. As a matter of fact, I think that they should be taking this Budget in itself and going back to the drawing board with it. This Budget is an absurd failure. It has meant destruction to a lot of lives. We have already started to see the decline in housing starts – I think it was last month – down by about 450 units compared to what it was this time last year.

We also saw an increase in the unemployment rate up to I think is 12.6 per cent. Do you know something? I think a lot of people were saying to themselves before all of this happened, I think something is starting to go right in this Province. Then, abruptly, came the layoffs and the talk about the \$1.6 billion deficit, and all of a sudden the Province was in trouble, and so is the economy now as it is.

We will see in the next month stats, Mr. Speaker, how this government has been doing. We will see if a couple of tenths of a percentage point up or down is going to mean anything to a lot of people. I think it is going to be the other way around. I think that this government has to go back and has to rethink its strategy behind this Budget and get back to the drawing board again with everybody in this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to get up in this House and speak and speak to the issues for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I tell you something; I hope and pray that each and every taxpayer in Newfoundland and Labrador was just tuned in to the hon. member's speech.

Do you know the reason why? Because they will finally see exactly how the NDP is governing themselves in regard to talking out of two sides of their mouth. As a matter of fact, I heard the hon. member just spend \$7 billion on a bunch of worthwhile initiatives, but not one cent in education, not one cent in health care, not one cent in transportation, not one cent in fisheries, not one cent anywhere else. That is exactly what he did just that time.

He talks about all of these things in the perfect world – I heard the Leader of the Third Party, in regard to her speech the other day, talk about people. He talked about the white-hot economy and some of the things that are out there in regard to people needing a place to live and stay and that kind of stuff. That is the reason why we created this economy over the last eight, nine years, to give the people of Newfoundland and Labrador an opportunity to have jobs and have good paying jobs, to afford good housing, to afford things that they want. We are not all about – in regard to social programs, social

programs are not the answer to the Province, absolutely not. A white-hot economy is what the answer is to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, giving them that opportunity.

I think back to the United States and a lot of people moved to the United States. The reason why they moved to the United States is because it is the land of opportunity. They see the absolute opportunity that is at their fingertips, if they want to grasp it. I encourage each and every Newfoundlander and Labradorian to grasp the opportunity, because it is here.

The hon. member gets up in his place in the House – and he was not here in 2003. I will give him that. He was not here in 2003 when we found, really, a bankrupt Province. That is what we found – absolutely. Then, he talks about small business and how we should invest in small business. Well, if you got tuned into our past Budgets, you will see that we made significant investments in small business, not only here in the City of St. John's but mainly in rural Newfoundland and Labrador to the tune of \$2 billion to \$185 million in Innovation, Business and Rural Development, I say to the hon. member.

He comes and he gets up in his place in the House with a simplistic, and I mean a simplistic, view of financing in the Province. As a matter of fact, a simplistic view that gets some families in grave trouble in regard to where they find themselves in debt and find themselves not able to make their payments. He comes with a simplistic view on all of it. That is what he does.

He talks about moving million and millions of dollars in regard to the provincial share on the purchase of gas over to municipalities. That is fine, dandy. That is great; that is absolutely great. We will move it over there tomorrow morning, but what do we do with education and what do we do with health care the next day? You have to have revenue streams. You have to replace them.

There is only one taxpayer in Newfoundland and Labrador, and that is the people who work here

and that is the people who live here. You cannot just take one tax, move it to one area, and then expect the other programs to keep on running without any money. You do not understand the Budget. You do not have two clues. If you are going to get up in this House, and I do not mind saying it, and say the things you are saying that might resonate in some of the people who are out there, for whatever reason it might – you do not have any idea of how you budget of a huge corporation such as the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

You get up there and you talk about daycare. You talk about kindergarten. You talk about all those kinds of good things. Yes, absolutely, I would be the first one to agree that we would want all of those, too, but you have to be able to afford them.

As a matter of fact, I was in Labrador just a couple of weeks ago and the hon. member was there, and so was the Leader of the Third Party. There was another person in the room.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I remind the hon. minister to address the Chair.

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will. If you want to hear me, I will speak to you directly.

There was another person in the room, a prominent politician in Canada, but that politician used to be a Premier of a province. He was a Premier of a province when they had probably the strongest economy in Canada of that day. He came in as the Premier of the Province of Ontario as an NDP. He implemented foolhardily the policies and principles of the NDP in its entirety. What happened? They tanked the economy of Ontario and they are still digging their way out of it because of poor fiscal management. That is exactly what happened in Ontario.

I will say to the hon. Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi, you can shake your head. It is a fact, I say to the hon. member.

I hear this day and day, but this is starting to work. This is starting to resonate on the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. You cannot promise everything nor can you promise your children everything. You cannot give it to them. You have to be responsible in regard to your plans and your strategies to bring your province forward. Bob Rae did not do that.

The other thing that hit me about Bob Rae when I was watching him was that he was back in politics, which I have known and you guys have known for a long time. He had every opportunity to come back with the federal ND Party of Canada – every opportunity to do so – but he did not. He came back, I say, as a Liberal. He could have picked us. That would have been better, but in the meantime he came back. My point is he did not come back as an NDP. Why didn't he come back? Because he found out the hard way that you cannot implement the principles and the policies of the NDP in its entirety or you will tank Canada, you will tank the Province; you will tank whatever you are doing.

You can compare apples to apples. It is like comparing Liberals in Quebec compared to Conservatives. You know yourself that a Liberal in Quebec is a Conservative in Canada, in the rest of the Province. You are not comparing apples to apples, I say to the Leader of the Third Party.

You take Dexter up there in Nova Scotia; I tell you, you should take a lesson from him. You do not even speak to him, I would not say. You would not have sense enough to speak to him, I say to the hon. member, because you would learn something from him.

I am telling you the reason why he did not come back as an NDP. It is exactly what I said. He did not come back because he found out the hard way. I am not saying here that the Official Opposition does not come forward with good ideas, absolutely they do, or anybody does. They do, absolutely, but you have to be able to afford them.

I hear especially the NDP talking about fiscal management. What do you equate to fiscal management? It is the ability to predict a deficit or predict a surplus. That is called fiscal management. That is what they equate it to. That is what they equate fiscal management to, being able to predict.

God love the people in New York in regard to the price of oil. I do not know how they can come that close, to be honest with you, with the strife in the world, the global economy, and changes that happen there. That is what they equate.

Go tell the hon. members. I will tell the hon. members what fiscal management is. It is how you spend the money you have and not overspend it, and how you pay down your deficit, which you guys have no idea of paying down a deficit. You stood up there a few minutes ago, you spent \$7 billion. No money in education, no money in health care, no money in fisheries, no money for the services that are provided by Service Newfoundland and Labrador, nothing in education at all. You are going to give it all away and not replace it.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Gas tax.

**MR. O'BRIEN:** As a matter of fact, in regard to that, I say to the hon. member that was my next point. I say to the hon. member it is all about tax because they do not – and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, the people in the City of St. John's have to wise up because that is exactly what it is all about in regard to providing the services. The services they will implement you have to pay for it.

Where is that going to come from? I will show you where it is going to come from. It is going to come from the pockets of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in \$20 bills, I say to the hon. members. That is shameful, because we worked hard in the last ten years, to the point that we came from the highest personal income tax in Canada, now down to about the third in Canada, for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, putting more money in their pockets.

The hon. member talked about what we have done for individuals in Newfoundland and Labrador. Well, we put \$530 million-odd back in the pockets of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in tax concessions over the last eight, ten years, I say to the hon. member. Wise up and do some reading. Get your facts before you start to speak.

We removed the tax on auto insurance and home insurance, I say to the hon. speaker. That is exactly what we did. We put money straight back in every Newfoundland's pocket, I say to the hon. member.

Usually when you have a party they get up and they have a philosophy or whatever it may be, but it really disturbs me when the Leader of the Third Party, with no principle whatsoever, will tell you what you want to hear, not what you need to hear.

We have a Premier who is built on principle, a person who drafted, who penned the energy file and the energy strategy in Newfoundland and Labrador. Now it is all coming to fruition. She led that file right from the beginning, right to the point of getting a loan guarantee from the federal government, putting money straight into the pockets of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** That is called leadership, I say, Mr. Speaker, and we are so lucky to have it in Newfoundland and Labrador. Do you know something? We have put out six surpluses now over the last number of years. Yes, we have a deficit this year for three reasons, and three reasons only: the loss of the Atlantic Accord, \$536 million. The price of oil is down due to the global economy and world strife. Also, production was down because of maintenance in regard to the platforms. We knew that, absolutely, but we have a plan. We came with that plan of sustainability over the next ten years which will see us in surplus within the next couple of years.

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Absolutely!

The hon. members, as well - and I heard one of my colleagues speak that they are ignoring what is in the Budget. They only want to talk about what is not in the Budget. They do not want to talk about the \$7 billion that is being spent in Newfoundland and Labrador today and everyday forward.

That is exactly what Newfoundlanders want to talk about. They want to have a future, absolutely, and we have given it to them. Our Premier has given it to them, and it is a white hot economy, absolutely it is. Where did that come from? Did that just happen by chance? That came from sound planning, stimulating the big industries, stimulating the mining industries, stimulating the oil industry, stimulating those. That is the reason why people are buying cars, people are building houses, and people are investing in Newfoundland and Labrador. They are having the things that they deserve.

I was talking not that long ago with a travel agent. You know their business has never been better in Newfoundland and Labrador as it is today, because people are going down south. They are taking some time with their families, things that they deserve, absolutely deserve.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to deny that there are people out who need more. That is the reason why we have the Poverty Reduction Strategy, \$130 million a year investing in those people and giving them an opportunity to avail of the white hot economy; giving them an opportunity to better themselves in this Province. Absolutely, it is \$130 million a year. A strategy hailed by anybody across this land, across North America, as the best Poverty Reduction Strategy ever tabled in any province or any State in the United States. That is the reason why we do it.

My message here to the NDP especially, is that you cannot be everything to everybody. That just does not work, absolutely do not work. We are investing in people. We are investing in their health care. We invested \$2.9 billion. That is up from \$1.9 billion, I think.

**MS SULLIVAN:** Yes, \$1.3 billion.

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Yes, \$1.3 billion up to \$2.9 billion; \$700 million was being spent in education only a few years ago. Now it is up to \$1.3 billion. Just because we try to save on the operational side to make sure we did not violate what we have achieved in our classrooms and the teacher allocation and also the pupil-teacher ratio in this Province, they want to get up there and criticize it.

With a declining enrolment in pupils across this Province, a declining number of schools in this Province, what did we do? We took the operational side. We maximized that and put it right straight into the classrooms, right straight into the pupils of Newfoundland and Labrador, the moms and dads in this Province, and the future of this Province. That is exactly what we did.

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** That is good fiscal management. That is what it is all about is fiscal management, making the hard decisions. I swear in this House – and God forbid I am gone – if the Third Party ever were to be the governing party in this Province, I am out of here. Absolutely, I make that promise in this House of Assembly today.

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Yes, you will be gone, absolutely. No doubt about that because your days are numbered.

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** No, the one behind you, ‘Kirbus’, I tell you that right now. I will be gone, I will guarantee you that.

I tell you the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are in for an awful shock. It is fine enough to be out there – and I ask the people of the Province to have a close eye in regard to the management of this Province, of where you are going. Your white-hot economy did not happen

by chance. Then the other side of the coin is that they are up there criticizing in regard to some of the restraints that we had to implement in regard to this Budget. Each and every day they are up there, spend, spend, spend, spend, spend, and then they turn around and tax, tax, tax, tax, tax, tax.

Do you know one of the other things that they put out there in regard to paying for their policies? Do you know what our economy in regard to our revenues streams is made up of? Did you know that only 17 per cent of our total revenue in this Province is made up of personal taxes? A very small amount, nearly 40 per cent is made up from oil revenues, which we negotiated super royalties and got more money.

What is the NDP going to do? I will tell you what they are going to do; they are going to tear them up. That is what they are going to do. They are going to tear them up and they are going to drive them out of this Province. That is exactly what they are going to do, drive them out of the Province.

I have heard it loud and clear from the oil companies. Then you might be sitting in St. John’s wondering what a cold economy is all about.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Then they will know.

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Then you will know, absolutely. Then you will know. When you cannot sell your house, you cannot do this and you cannot do that, and you have a lot of people out there who do not have jobs.

I often said, in Newfoundland and Labrador, to be honest with you, if you wanted a job you would find a job now. You would absolutely find it. I do not mind saying that, absolutely not. There are jobs out there for each and every Newfoundlander and Labradorian if they wanted it. Go for it, absolutely, and we will try our best to help you get it.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** We are helping.

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Absolutely, we do. Through all the programs, the suites of programs, we have within this government and created over the last eight or ten years.

Do you know in Municipal Affairs, just thinking to myself, under the leadership of our Premier, \$230 million into municipal capital works projects across this Province over the last couple of years?

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** That is just about 50 per cent of what we spent in five years. You listen to the hon. member talk about our support for municipalities, or lack of it. The man should have a look. He was here at Estimates. I answered every single question, absolutely every question.

As a matter of fact, there is lots of support out there from mayors of various sizes of municipalities in this Province in regard to this Budget. You should do a bit of research before you get up there and promise the world to municipalities and promise the world to all of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and then you cannot deliver on it, absolutely cannot, and you never will. You never will be able to deliver on it because you have to govern, everything changes, the economy changes, and you move it.

That is called fiscal management. That is what we are doing. That is what our Premier is doing, and that is called leadership.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

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

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

It is a pleasure to rise and speak to Budget 2013. Mr. Speaker, with all the changes that have

come forward from this government on release of the Budget, sometimes I am still wondering if I am waiting for the Budget or not. My colleagues have done a wonderful job of addressing this Budget, from the opening remarks from our leader and from my colleagues throughout the debate. It certainly makes my job a little easier.

I would like to bring a different perspective, Mr. Speaker. This time I would like to speak a little bit about Justice. Certainly it was a very controversial Budget in that respect, to the point where the minister had said he would revisit it.

Justice delayed is justice denied, I think, is a quote we all live with. We all take it to be very true. Mr. Speaker, in many regions of our Province, we are actually living with that condition, where justice is actually delayed. So in fact, justice is actually denied.

Mr. Speaker, I have been in the courtroom on many occasions and I have heard judges say on many, many occasions that there are delays in sentencing, delays in trials, delays in appearances, all in the interest of the court's time. Mr. Speaker, I am sure sometimes that certain judges would like to tell the truth and that the reality of it is that all these delays are in the interest of the court's lack of resources, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these concerns came down before Budget 2013 – this is before Budget 2013. We have seen many delays in sentencing, we have seen delays in court appearances, and we have seen delays in trials all in the interest of the court's time, Mr. Speaker. I find that very ironic that the interest of the court's time should say due to lack of resources. It should say due to lack of resources because that is the cold, hard reality, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to share a couple of actual cases that have gone on in the courtroom, Mr. Speaker. We had a guy who appeared in court on assault charges and he was released on his own recognizance. Twenty-three breaches of undertaking later – twenty-three breaches of undertaking – he was brought back before the

judge. The judge told this accused person that it is obvious that breaches of undertaking or conditions on good behaviour were not working. So he sent the guy home and told him to come back the next day.

Do you know what happened, Mr. Speaker? He committed another assault and was brought back in front of the judge the same day. This is the delay and this is what they call in the interest of the court's time. Mr. Speaker, this is due to lack of resources, and this was before Budget 2013.

Mr. Speaker, we have had cases where there are thirty-plus breaches of undertaking, over thirty breaches of undertaking. Do you know what happens, Mr. Speaker, in the wake of new crimes committed by an individual? The breaches of undertaking and the initial charges are dropped in the interest of the court's time. They do not have the time.

Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the Member for Topsail a few days ago. This person, I know, has been very involved in law enforcement and in the judicial system. He had some good advice and he shared it with us. I take this from Hansard, "If a crime has been committed, your job is to look after the person who has been victimized...". That is your job, to collect evidence and to protect people. That is your job, to prevent crime. Mr. Speaker, he shared that he was told not to forget that.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken out many times on the victims of crime. When you have thirty breaches of undertakings and initial charges being dropped, this is protection of victims? I beg to differ; I really do. This is prior to Budget 2013; this is before the Budget came out.

I have listened to my hon. colleague the Member for St. Barbe talk about some of the cuts earlier in the debate. Mr. Speaker, he talks about the cuts to the prosecution office, legal aid office, sheriff's, and court circuits. Court circuits saved this government in their Budget a whopping \$50,000 in the interest of the court's time – \$50,000, Mr. Speaker, major savings at the expense of the victims. It is not acceptable. I

never accepted it before the Budget; I certainly do not accept it after this Budget.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to go on a little further. I would like to talk about the victims of serious crimes in small rural areas. There are victims of assault who live in close proximity to the person who did the assault. They live beside the person who did the assault. The cases are delayed over and over and over in the interest of the court's time. When I hear the minister talk about a job to look after victims of crime, it makes me wonder because we see it every day.

Mr. Speaker, let's talk about the court circuits. In some areas they saved \$600. Hats off to you; you saved \$600. You are cutting back the circuits in Nain, and this was before the Budget. In the communities of Makkovik, Postville, and Rigolet, do you know what they are going to do now, Mr. Speaker? They are not going to go in there until enough crime has been committed. I take it that crime is low, but there is always a victim.

How long does that victim have to wait for protection? How many crimes have to be committed, Mr. Speaker, how many breaches of undertaking does a victim have to endure? Because it is not the person who is doing the crime who suffers; it is the victim of the crime.

When I hear the minister comment that it is their job to look after people who are victimized, I am at a loss for words. Because he was given good advice and what we are seeing in this Budget, Mr. Speaker, is that this government is not practicing that good advice; as a matter of fact, they are making it harder for victims of crime.

If you are going to delay court circuits, if you are going to cancel court circuits, that means a person has to live beside a criminal who committed an offence on that person, Mr. Speaker, until the next court circuit arrives. Do you know what the confusing thing is, Mr. Speaker? Those victims do not know when that date is. They do not know.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that there are cases where criminals are flown out to court or they do

court through other mediums, telephones or video court processes. At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, they are not all being done.

I spoke about breaches of undertaking, Mr. Speaker, and I read up on it in the Criminal Code of Canada. I went through the section. It states that a breach of undertaking is a serious offence punishable by incarceration. Do you know what is happening in our court system, Mr. Speaker? Those charges of breach of undertaking, like I said, some of them are over thirty, and the initial charges are thrown out of court in the interest of the court's time. They are thrown out. Under the Criminal Code, they are defined as a serious offence punishable by jail, but they are thrown out.

It makes me wonder if the court circuits around this Province are going to save you \$50,000 at the expense of the people who are, as the hon. member across the way said it, victimized by crime – your job is to protect people. Mr. Speaker, I will ask this government one simple question: Where is the protection? Where is the protection for individuals that are victimized by crime? Mr. Speaker, what I am stating here in the cases and the examples are the facts. I find it very hard to question facts, because they speak for themselves.

I would like to speak about the Budget and the impacts of Justice on the Budget. Mr. Speaker, cutbacks in the RCMP, cutbacks in court representatives, cutbacks in the sheriff's office, cutbacks in legal aid, and cutbacks in prosecution. Add that on to the problems that already exist and then you get a reality check.

Sometimes, as the critic for Aboriginal Affairs, I find myself wondering what the government knows about it. I have made our position on crime – I brought the facts out and the issues with crime, court, and the impacts on victims, quite clear in the past.

I fully realize that the judge has to take into account Aboriginal status and Aboriginal culture in sentencing, Mr. Speaker. There is a time and a place for that, yes, I understand; but the court is not obligated to take the abuse and the impact

on Aboriginal victims, Mr. Speaker. That is not in there. These are the people – according to the Member for Topsail, it is our job to protect them. Are we failing miserably? The short answer, Mr. Speaker: Yes, we are.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen sentences that were handed out for cruelty to animals that were stiffer than those handed out to some of the criminals who have impacted victims that we are supposed to be there to protect. That puzzles me.

Mr. Speaker, we have had very serious crimes where twenty years was the maximum sentence. Twenty to life, two life sentences, Mr. Speaker, and seen individuals get out in three years and carry on a livelihood with the family who was impacted by the very same crime. I find that appalling.

I could be standing up here, Mr. Speaker, and speaking out for prisoner's rights, Aboriginal prisoners, but I am not, not today. I am speaking out for people that this government does not speak out for, the victims of crime. I have heard them preach it and I quoted it, but when you come out with what is going on in our justice system and what is going to continue with the Budget cuts, I do not see any of them practicing the fact that they are mandated to look after those who have been victimized by crime. That is their job.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial government is mandated to look after provincial justice in our Province. We do have federal justice alternatives as well. The problem I see now, Mr. Speaker, is that it is going to get worse. It is going to get a lot worse, Mr. Speaker, in the interest of the courts time. I have heard that so many times that I want to jump up and scream in the interest of the courts lack of resources, which is the reality of it all. I will continue to say that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, before I sit down I would just like to say that I was glad to hear the Minister of Justice stand up and say they are going to review policy. I do remain hopeful, but I would like to see reviews done in other areas as well, because

as I said earlier, we saw the Budget. We are starting to see so many twists and turns in this Budget, in terms of revision, that I find myself wondering when the Budget is going to actually come out.

With that, I will take my seat. I will be monitoring the review of the justice initiatives by this government. I am hopeful they will live up to the statement that was brought forward by the Member for Topsail – and words to live by, I might add. It is very good advice the minister gave, that we are there to protect the people from crime and that is our job.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Seeing as how we are sitting this evening, I think by agreement we will move now to take a recess and come back at 7:00 o'clock.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that this House now recess until 7:00 p.m.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

This House is in recess until 7:00 o'clock this evening.