



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FORTY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume XLVII

SECOND SESSION

Number 25

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Ross Wiseman, MHA

Wednesday

06 November 2013

The House met at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Before we start today's proceedings, I want to welcome a couple of special guests to our Speaker's gallery. One, no doubt, some of you would have seen around the Confederation Building complex. We are joined today by Kim Hawley George, who is the Chief Legislative Counsel. This is *Take Our Kids to Work Day*, and she has taken her daughter, Sarah, with her today.

Welcome to our gallery, and welcome to our House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Sarah may be drafting future bills that we will debate in this House.

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today, we have members' statements from: the Member for the District of Humber Valley; the Member for the District of Burgeo – La Poile; the Member for the District of Conception Bay East – Bell Island; the Member for the District of Placentia – St. Mary's; the Member for the District of Terra Nova; and the Member for the District of Port au Port.

The Member for the District of Humber Valley.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to honour a dear friend who recently passed away, Mr. Wayne Trask. Wayne contributed a great amount to many worthwhile causes within his community and in this great Province.

Wayne played leadership roles in the many undertakings that he was a part of. Wayne's most important role was being the quintessential family man who included them in every decision he made throughout his life.

Mr. Speaker, Wayne was probably best known for his efforts in bringing the 1999 Canada Winter Games to Corner Brook. This achievement was only part of the inspiring individual that those close to him knew. Wayne was a true leader whose success was based on his ability to empower and to motivate those around him to make his community and our Province a better place to live.

The echoes of Wayne's voice will be heard many decades from now. Wayne Trask was a man who gave much love, and his legacy as a leader and a man of action will always be remembered by those who knew him.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in paying tribute to a true gentleman, a devoted father and husband, and a dear friend, Mr. Wayne Trask.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I rise to recognize and congratulate Captain Frank Skinner of Burgeo; Mr. Ben Savory of Channel-Port aux Basques; Mr. Thomas Upward of Rose Blanche; and Mr. Ed Strickland of Kippens, upon receiving medals of bravery.

On the night of September 21, 2004, the four crew members of the tugboat, *Point Viking*, were contacted by the Canadian Coast Guard to render assistance to a forty-five-foot yacht, *D'Accord*, which was caught off guard by the remnants of Hurricane Ivan. The *D'Accord* had lost its rudder and was drifting in the Strait of Belle Isle. The sea was too rough for Search and Rescue to dispatch its own boat from Lark Harbour.

When the four men entered the Straits off Cape St. George at 4:00 p.m., the ocean swells were between ten to twelve metres high and wind gusted up to ninety-six kilometres. The men had

to strap themselves to the spars to keep from going overboard. They managed to get a towline onto the yacht and after one reattachment got the *D'Accord* to shore at 8:00 the next morning. The *D'Accord* had been carrying four adults and a ten-month old child.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join with me in extending congratulations to Captain Frank Skinner, Ben Savory, Tom Upwards, and Ed Strickland upon receipt of this prestigious award.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand today to acknowledge a noted municipal leader in this Province, and particularly my district. I speak of Mr. Gary Gosine, the Mayor of Wabana.

This past Sunday I had the privilege of conducting his swearing-in ceremony at the Dr. Leonard A. Miller Centre in St. John's. In attendance were fifty of Gary's family, supporters, and municipal colleagues.

The ceremony gave me an opportunity to acknowledge the contribution he has made to municipal politics in this Province and his unwavering commitment and dedication to the Town of Wabana and the larger community of Bell Island.

Gary has been a champion for his community for the past twenty-six years as a municipal leader and I am confident he will continue to fight for the rights of his community. I look forward to partnering with him to improve the services for the citizens of Bell Island.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Gary on his re-election and wishing him a

speedy recovery from his quadruple bypass surgery.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Placentia – St. Mary's.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. F. COLLINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate Anne Whelan of Placentia. Last week at the Newfoundland and Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs 2013 Entrepreneur of the Year Awards, Anne received Entrepreneurial Excellence Award, which is the pinnacle award of that organization.

Anne operates several businesses, including Caregivers Inc., Blue Sky Family Care, Brenkir Industrial Supply and Seafair Capital. Her portfolio includes holdings in health and community care, industrial supply and real estate.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, Anne has been named one of the Top 50 CEOs in Atlantic Canada by Atlantic Business Magazine two years in a row. She is the recipient of the Diamond Jubilee Medal for her work in advancing quality home care in Canada, and especially for children in care. She was named the RBC Canadian Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Award in October 2010.

Anne serves on a number of business and volunteer organizations in the Province and epitomizes the success of women in business.

I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating Anne Whelan of Placentia on her tremendous business successes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

On October 17 of this year, a son of Glovertown passed away at the age of eighty-seven, the Honourable Dr. Maxwell House.

Born in Glovertown in 1926, he would study at Memorial College in 1943 and then went on to pursue a medical degree from Dalhousie in 1952. After which he would gain a specialty in neurology, acquiring that from the Montreal Neurological Institute.

In 1959, House returned to his home in Newfoundland to practice in St. John's where he would be the Province's only neurologist until 1966. He would be instrumental in establishing MUN's Medical School and would later teach neurology at the university for thirty years. During that tenure, he would pioneer the Telemedicine program – a massive achievement.

Doctor House would receive many awards during his life, including the Canadian Medical Association's Medal of Excellence; he was appointed to the Order of Canada and later appointed as an officer. Perhaps most notably, he was appointed as Newfoundland's tenth Lieutenant Governor, serving from 1997 to 2001.

I ask all hon. members to join me in recognizing Dr. House's huge contribution to this Province and its residents.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Port au Port.

MR. CORNETT: I rise in this hon. House of Assembly to congratulate the Seville Singers who celebrated their forty years of performing and entertaining.

Under the direction of Jean House, the Seville Singers have dazzled audiences of all ages with

their outstanding performances throughout the years. It was a delight to be at the opening of their reunion weekend to see such a large gathering, celebrating the success of this group. It was great.

The reunion weekend was a tremendous success and a real treat for all those in attendance. It was a fantastic weekend of music, singing, and memory making.

From the motorcade to the meet and greet, the brunch to the floor shows, their church choir performance to the 1950s and 1960s dance, it was a time to reminisce over precious memories for fellow Seville members, family and friends, and an opportunity to form many new ones. It was also an opportunity to once again enjoy the talents of this fine group of singers.

I ask all hon. members to join with me in congratulating the Seville Singers for their dedication and hard work in organizing this fortieth reunion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to applaud the agreement with Husky Energy and its partners to advance the development of the White Rose Extension Project.

Amendments to the benefits terms of the 2007 White Rose Expansion Project Framework Agreement enhance employment and industrial benefits for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. This will allow for the development of the West White Rose using a wellhead platform, instead of the subsea development as originally planned.

A wellhead platform represents an innovative way for smaller satellite developments in Newfoundland and Labrador. This option demonstrates prudent resource development by increasing recoverable oil resources and extending the field's life. The platform will deliver an estimated 115 million barrels of oil.

Based on the latest PIRA crude oil price outlook, full development of West White Rose is estimated to return \$3 billion in royalties, return on investment through Nalcor Energy, and corporate income tax to the Province.

To enable construction of the concrete gravity structure, a graving dock complete with gates will be built in Argentia by the proponents. This will position Argentia as an important new player in the Province's oil industry, spurring continued opportunities for regional growth and development, as well as spin-off benefits for residents and businesses in the area. The gates represent a new, significant piece of infrastructure in the Province and are reusable for future industrial work.

Mr. Speaker, there will be 1,000 people employed at peak construction for the White Rose Extension Project, which includes 500 skilled trades positions involved in the construction of the concrete gravity structure in Argentia. Once in operation, there will be 250 new platform positions created in the Province.

The White Rose Extension Project builds on the exciting momentum happening in the Province's offshore petroleum industry, which continues to provide tremendous benefits to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the minister for the advance copy of his Ministerial Statement. This has been good

news for the people of Argentia and that area, as we find ways to extend the life of our oil well, in this case, 115 million barrels of more oil. Of course, all of this is built on a foundation that has been started, when you think about it, back in 1985 with the signing of the Atlantic Accord, and this particular case here, with White Rose, a project that was first signed and developed and negotiated by a past Administration – the Liberal Administration.

Interestingly enough of that concept too, the major discussion of the day was: Do you use a GBS or do use an FPSO? What they did at the time was fund a group of interveners upwards to about \$100,000 who went around the Province and sought public consultations, which were very key to the decision to use an FPSO in this particular case. This particular development has brought many benefits to our Province that we are extremely proud of. The past Liberal Administration is proud of it, as I am sure this Administration should be as well.

Thank you.

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. Obviously, this is great news, but there are serious concerns that government is not yet addressing. Government must ensure that no offshore workers have to travel at night to and from work on current or future oil production platforms.

Government must also ensure we heed the warnings of a federal report this year and be properly prepared in case of a major oil spill offshore. The extension project does provide tremendous benefits for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, but we must make sure to protect the workers who reap those benefits and the environment that produces them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

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

MR. KIRBY: Thanks to the minister for an advanced copy. It is great to see that this is going to benefit a rural region of the Province now. This is great for the whole Province. We would still like to see more development of our vast natural gas resources, which amount to some several trillion cubic feet of natural gas. With global demand for natural gas about to soar in the coming years, I think we would all like to see government working with our industry partners to bring that ashore as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our government is continuing to drive positive change within the child protection system through our Continuum of Care Strategy. This strategy, which is improving the care options for children and youth in need of out-of-home placements, includes the Foster a Future...Foster a Child Today multimedia campaign.

Building on the success of phase one of the foster parent recruitment campaign, phase two was launched this past September and continues to feature *Republic of Doyle's* very popular Mr. Allan Hawco. This compelling campaign has been extremely successful to date with the creation of almost seventy-five new foster homes in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, our ultimate goal is to not only create a greater awareness about the critical

shortage of foster homes in our Province, but to also attract more Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to open their hearts and their homes to children and youth who need a safe and nurturing place to live for a week, a month, a year, or longer.

As the number of foster families throughout our Province continues to increase, our efforts to eventually eliminate the need for Alternate Living Arrangements is becoming more of a reality. In 2010, there was a high of seventy-two children living in Alternate Living Arrangements and as of October this year, with children being matched to more suitable placements such as foster homes, this number has been reduced significantly to approximately twenty children.

In addition to the recruitment campaign, the department has fully implemented levels 1 and 2 of a new four-level system. Mr. Speaker, these first two levels provide compensation specific to each level by recognizing the experiences, training, and skills of foster parents and matching children and youth with a foster family which best meets their specific needs.

Implementation of the remaining two levels is underway as the department has awarded a Request for Proposals for the development of a training program for specialized – level 3 – foster homes. In addition, the department is currently in the evaluation process of a Request for Proposals for level 4 contracted staffed residential placements with an expectation to award in the coming months.

We are delighted with the progress to date and I encourage all members of this hon. House, as well as the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, to view the campaign materials and learn more about becoming a foster parent by visiting www.fosterfuture.ca.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I would like to thank the minister for an advance copy of this statement. I am very happy to stand and respond to this Ministerial Statement. It was roughly one year ago, actually, that I stood and responded to the previous minister's statement about the launch of the campaign. Obviously, this is a successful story and it needs to be acknowledged.

I applaud government of this initiative and for the good work that they have done to make this happen. Whether that be the current minister, the former minister, the staff and the CYFS workers who are out there on the ground doing the interviews, doing the work to make this happen.

This is a great project and there is obviously a need for that, and that has been acknowledged. When we can see seventy-five additional homes being created since the start of the campaign, it is proof that this is working, that awareness is the key to making real change.

Again, as someone who has looked at the Web sites and looked at TV, these ads are effective, you see them, and you notice them. I would also like to congratulate and thank Mr. Allan Hawco for his work in making this a success. When we have somebody who is certainly a celebrity, not just in this Province, but all around the world now with this show going everywhere, to have them contribute their force to this has to be appreciated and acknowledged, and I would like to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to, hopefully, standing up one year from now and looking at the third phase, or where this goes in the future. It is a great project. I commend the government for doing it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. The recruitment of more foster homes into the system and the reduction of children in ALAs were desperately needed, and this is all now thanks to the generosity of foster parents and the staff who has worked so hard at Child, Youth and Family Services.

Also, it is crucial that the new contracted residential facilities be up and running soon without delay. We still have a critical problem of youth coming out of care as young as sixteen without safe, designated places to live in the community. Many are going into substandard boarding homes, many are at risk of exploitation, and some of our most vulnerable youth are becoming more vulnerable because of our housing crisis. This has to be addressed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FRENCH: Mr. Speaker, our government remains focused on the Province's long-term prosperity by encouraging job creation, strong communities, a vibrant economy, and natural resource development that benefits all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Our tourism industry is a major economic generator in Newfoundland and Labrador and is a sustainable industry that delivers maximum economic, social, and cultural value to communities all throughout our Province.

Once again, this year has proven to be another successful tourism season in the Province. In terms of our tourism performance to the end of August this year, the number of non-resident automobile and air visitors to the Province is up over 2012. The number of non-resident air visitors to the Province increased 2.1 per cent over the same period last year, and occupancy rates reached 53.2 per cent, an increase of 1.6 per cent over 2012 levels. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, Visitor Information Centres reported

more than 117,500 visitors for the period ending September, 2013, representing an increase of 3.6 per cent over last year's statistics.

Mr. Speaker, our online presence continues to grow as well, with visits to NewfoundlandLabrador.com up 24 per cent over last year. In fact, Web site visits for 2013 have now exceeded 1.6 million to date, and visits to tourism operator sites on NewfoundlandLabrador.com have increased by almost 30 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Our social media fan base also continues to grow year after year, and our online communities are more engaged than ever in terms of likes, comments and views. As an example, our YouTube views increased from approximately 361,000 to close to 1.4 million last season.

With the guidance of our ten-year strategy Uncommon Potential – A Vision for Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism, government and industry are taking provincial tourism to unprecedented levels of success and showing tourism to be a growing economic powerhouse in this Province. Tourism spending reached \$1 billion for the first time in 2011, putting us ahead of schedule for achieving our Vision 2020 goal of \$1.6 billion in spending.

Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate another year of growth in our tourism industry, we take pride in knowing we have firmly established Newfoundland and Labrador as a premiere tourism destination.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. We, too, agree that tourism is a great economic generator in this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, some of the concerns we have; if we take the \$4 million that was cut from the advertising budget, we will not be seeing the effects until next year, because the \$4 million – it is great ads, which I stood up in this House and agreed to. The \$4 million has been cut without any consultations with the industry on this cut, I might add. We see tourism sites around the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador cut. People are going to these sites with no one there.

Mr. Speaker, I just received a letter from the minister, over 300,000 people flew in and out of Deer Lake Airport, breaking records. Here it is a decision to move a seasonal operation to the Deer Lake Airport to maintain a casual presence. We have to promote tourism, and by cutting back on all these services it will not promote tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I look at the ferries, the ferry system. I was on Fogo Island, and the biggest impediment to their tourism is the ferry. This is the same ferry that was promised since 2003 to help tourism.

This all goes in one package to the government of what we need to do. Once we get people here we have to be able to get them to the sites. We have to have people at the sites and we need people there to ensure that visitors know where to visit in Newfoundland and Labrador.

So I ask you to revisit your cuts, revisit the decisions you made to ensure that when people come here to visit, that they will have a pleasant visit and to make sure they will want to come back again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

We have much to celebrate in the marketing of Newfoundland and Labrador as a tourist destination. Our brilliant ad campaign was managed by the staff of the department and executed by Target Marketing and won lots of awards. However, many in the tourism industry today challenge the numbers presented here today. They feel they may not accurately reflect what is actually happening with tourist visits in the five regional Destination Management Organizations. In fact, how many are actually just business visits in and out of St. John's? Nor do they reflect the fact that there are much shorter tourism weeks.

The last Budget also saw an increased pullback in funding to cultural products, which are the backbone of our tourist industry, museums, theatre productions, and more. Some had to close all together or provide reduced hours of operation. Some are managed only by volunteers. Theatre groups could not continue –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the member that her time has expired.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Member for The Straits – White Bay North have leave?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Leave.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, I too thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

We certainly have exceptional people working in the tourism industry, and new products are being added all the time, like the Fogo Island Inn. Roots, Rants, and Roars is becoming a success, and so is the Iceberg Festival in my district, and I was pleased to see the minister attend this past season.

One of the things we really need to do – and it is a continuous process – is looking at advancing transportation and telecommunication to really expand the tourism industry. What I would say, it is great to see the online content, like the goat on a horse – it has over 365,000 hits on YouTube. That is pretty exciting. It is that type of creativity that is going to see us reach 2020.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, in 2009 government said the exterior renovations for the Confederation Building would cost \$20 million. So far you spent \$36.5 million.

I ask the Premier: What is the total expected budget for the internal and external renovations to the Confederation Building, and when do you expect it to be completed?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As we all know, the Confederation Building is an icon for the history of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and it is something that we feel as a government should be preserved.

In doing the renovations, when they were started the price tag was put on it for the \$30 million, but once we got into the work we realized there was a lot more work needed to be done with the concrete, for example, and around the windows and that. What we have done, right now there is an estimated price of around \$50 million that the total cost will be.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, back in the spring we questioned the Premier's move from the eighth floor to the fourth floor. At that time the Premier said you had to manoeuvre your way through buckets through a rainstorm; however, an ATIPP request shows from December, 2010 to April, 2013 Transportation and Works did not receive a single request regarding leaking windows, ceilings, et cetera.

I ask the Premier: Was this extra expense to the taxpayers of the Province really necessary?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleague, the Minister of Transportation, just outlined, Confederation Building is an iconic building in this Province. It also houses the majority of government departments and headquarters for services that are provided to the people of the Province.

Mr. Speaker, this building had been sadly, sadly neglected in its fifty-year history, and it was necessary to replace all of the windows. Until the windows were replaced and the relevant work that went with that, Mr. Speaker, it was hardly worthwhile to put in a request to the Department of Transportation and Works to fix a problem, to patchwork a problem that needed more fundamental work done. That work is being done now, Mr. Speaker, and we are glad that it is.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, we know now that the so-called rainy buckets that you had to kick out of the way, it is just not true through this ATIPP request.

Premier we ask: The renovations that are going to be done for your convenience on the eighth floor –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I do not mean to interrupt Question Period, but several times yesterday I directed the hon. member to direct all of his comments and all of his points to the Chair. I remind the member again today; if he would do that, please.

MR. JOYCE: Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we understand that some of the newly replaced blue windows are faulty. I ask the Premier: Is it true that these windows will have to be replaced; and, if so, at what cost?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The bluest thing in Confederation Building today is me having to answer these kinds of questions from the Acting Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, \$50 million is being spent on this building because it is required to happen, needed to happen. To replace this building, Mr. Speaker, would require hundreds of millions of dollars.

The Opposition, or the Opposition as it is composed today, have never gotten their facts right. I was accused of renovating my particular office on the eighth floor by the Member for St. John's South, when, in fact, there were no renovations being done to my office; renovations were being done to his.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, it may be a laughing matter to the Premier and the members opposite, but her parliamentary assistant, when he was the minister, admitted that there was an extra cost to put blue windows in this thing. It is not a funny matter when there are people out there trying to make a living and you are here making windows blue. It is a serious issue, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, last week the Premier said in the media that she would table the documents on CETA in this House, but we are now in the third day and still no sign of any CETA documentation.

I ask the Premier: When are you going to finally table the CETA documents that you promised to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador so we can make an informed and fact-based decision?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, last week I made a commitment to table our documents regarding CETA, particularly the documents that were exchanged over the last six months in this sitting session of the House. I am looking forward to doing that.

I do not know what you are going to make an informed decision about, other than to endorse what we have been able to negotiate for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, access to a wonderful new market and support for an industry to grow and become all that it ought to be, all that we know that it can be.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, the Premier continues to change her position on processing job losses due to CETA. Two days ago, she said no job loss; yesterday, she said the \$280 million could be used to cover job losses.

I ask the Premier: How many jobs will be lost, how many communities will she sacrifice, and how much of the federal payoff will be used for job losses?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would assume that the Fisheries critic for the Liberal Party would have some understanding of what is happening in our fishery. We are losing plants; it is a struggle and a challenge. What our government saw and what our Premier saw was a real opportunity, an opportunity through CETA, and an opportunity through negotiation with the federal government to lift the fishery, Mr. Speaker, to give it a boost, to give it a chance.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, we are not saying we are solving all the problems in the fishery with CETA and the \$400 million, but we are saying that we stood up for the fishery and we believe in the fishery. It is about time that the Fisheries critic for the Liberal Party of this Province did the same.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I see that the former Fisheries Minister – who lasted less than a year as Fisheries Minister and now seems to fully understand the Fisheries department –

answered the question and gave us a non-answer for the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, Europeans have been coming to our shores and taking fish back for over 500 years at a profit. Yesterday, the Premier said that it is not economical to come here and get fish, bring it back to Europe, process it, and sell it at a competitive price – verbatim, she said that.

I ask the Premier: Is she saying that the Europeans have been losing money on our fish for 500 years and now want more access to our fish so they can lose even more money?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, again the Fisheries critic – I do not know, I guess he is reading too much about 500 years ago. Today, there are no MPRs in the Atlantic Provinces. The Europeans are not here taking their fish.

As a part of this process, Mr. Speaker, it was important for us as a government to engage the industry. We met with, and I personally met with, the head of the FFAW who represents plant workers and harvesters in this Province, Mr. Speaker. The very first comment from the head of the FFAW was that the Europeans cannot compete with us in processing.

The Europeans processing, Mr. Speaker, pay for more for cost, more for labour. I can tell you they do not have the skilled workforce that we have in our plants.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, I asked the Minister of Natural Resources to commit to having an independent committee of experts review fracking in our Province and host public information sessions. Instead of an open and transparent process, the minister is insisting on an internal review.

I ask the minister: Why are you again choosing secrecy instead of an open review, an open review process by an independent committee and experts, from the beginning?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have to say, the member is hard to please. It is a major issue in this Province, hydraulic fracturing; our government took a stance in the interest of the health of the people of the Province, the environment of the Province, and the interest of industry in this Province.

We have indicated that there is a process that we are going to follow; it is the internal process, Mr. Speaker. When we get all the information that we need, Mr. Speaker, that will inform the next steps, which I can assure you will be a public consultation. It will be open; it will be transparent, Mr. Speaker.

We want the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to have the right information so that when we make a decision, all aspects of this will be covered, people will be informed, and we will do what is right in the best interest of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I am not that hard to please and what we are trying to please is the people of this Province who obviously have concerns right now with what is going on about fracking. It is time to get

this external, get public engagement in it. You should have started it months ago. Internal reviews on fracking should have been completed months ago.

Will you now commit to public consultation sessions and an independent committee of experts for fracking in Newfoundland? Will you make that commitment from the beginning?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have no problem standing in this House today and committing to the member opposite, the people of this House, and the people of the Province that we will engage in the public on the issue of hydraulic fracturing – no question. We will be open, transparent, that is exactly why we are following this process; but we are not prepared to go out into the public and engage in a very polarizing issue, a very emotional issue, until we have the facts right so that we can present it to the people of the Province and, collectively, we will make a decision about hydraulic fracturing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It has been over a month since we have heard anything of the potential sale of the Come By Chance refinery. People in the area and throughout the Province are concerned about the future of this business and the 500 jobs that has been attached both directly and indirectly to this.

I ask the minister: What is the status of the refinery and what is your government doing to ensure its survival?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to share the hon. member's concerns. There have been rumours about the refinery and the pending future. Of course, first and foremost, for us as a government is the concern for the workers and the people in the region and the impact on the economy. I can tell you we take that seriously.

Mr. Speaker, I was only on the job a week or so and I met with the owners of the refinery. We have had a good discussion about what their plans are. They have a number of options that they are looking at. They have assured us they will keep us informed, and right now they have moved into phase two where there is a potential buyer for the refinery. At this point they have not shared full details with us, but I know they are actively pursuing to try to keep this refinery active in the future of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, delays in court hearings and breaches of undertaking continue to cause victims hardship in Labrador. Victims' rights are not being protected.

I ask the minister: Why is there such a delay in the delivery of justice in Labrador?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, we have made considerable investments in the justice system in Labrador. It was only recently, actually, that we added an extra Crown attorney to make sure an easy and smooth facilitation of court cases through the process.

I am not aware of any particular instance that the member is referencing where there is a significant delay or an infringement on justice being carried out or being served. If the member

wants to provide me with further detail, I am certainly prepared to have a look at it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Tornгат Mountains.

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, I could provide hundreds of situations.

Mr. Speaker, justice delayed is justice denied. In Labrador today, offender protection trumps victim protection, and the victim is the person who suffers because of the delays in the justice system.

I ask the minister: Will you provide the necessary resources in Labrador to ensure victim rights are protected and offenders are dealt with in a timely manner?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, as I said a few moments ago, we have made considerable investments in the justice system in Labrador. I find it a little offensive that the member would stand on the floor of this House and suggest that anybody over here is going to support offenders in this Province over victims. If there is a particular issue the member wants to reference or provide me with information, I will certainly follow up. I can assure him that the priority for this government is to ensure justice is carried out in this Province.

What I cannot do is I cannot assure him of what any particular judge is going to rule as a verdict on a particular day. The judges are independent of governments; they are independent of everyone. They apply their own knowledge of the judicial system and the legal system when they make determinations of what cases and what the verdicts will be. We have no control over that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Department of Environment's policy on the use of creosote is very clear: Creosote is banned from any use in a protected water supply area because of very serious health and environmental concerns.

I ask the minister: Does government have an inventory of creosote structures and water supplies in this Province; and, if not, will government take immediate action to ensure one is completed?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, at any time, if there is any damage to the environment or to our water systems we certainly want to take action to ensure that the right precautions are in place.

Just recently I received correspondence indicating that there may be some issues in one particular place. We will take that letter very seriously, we will investigate and if there are any matters that need to be cleaned up, Mr. Speaker, we will take the appropriate action.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, the department is now aware of the creosote dam in the Town of Terrenceville as indicated by the minister.

I ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs: Given that your department funded the removal of a creosote dam in La Scie just a couple of years ago, will government now do the same for the residents of Terrenceville?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I had indicated, there was an issue or a potential issue that was brought to the attention of the Department of Environment. We will look into the matter, Mr. Speaker, and if there needs to be remediation or any action taken, we will certainly, as the Department of Environment, work with other departments that may be needed to assist in this issue.

I want to assure the hon. member that we did receive the correspondence, we are looking into it, and we do intend to take the appropriate action.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, creosote is a very serious environmental and health concern. It contains carcinogens and a number of other ingredients that cause very serious health concerns.

I ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs: Your department did remove a dam containing creosote in the Town of La Scie a couple of years ago; if they deserve it, don't the people of Terrenceville deserve the same?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear that we are not going to suggest a solution until we understand the problem. This issue has been brought to our attention, we will take it seriously, we will investigate and if there needs to be remedial action, we will work as the Department of Environment with any other departments that may be able to assist to ensure that we address the problem.

I would not want to suggest today that we have a solution until we understand the problem, the extent of it, and what the remediation may involve. Mr. Speaker, we have taken this letter, letting us know what may be wrong, we are taking it seriously and we will investigate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

MS DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, the recent report of nurses leaving Labrador-Grenfell Health for more lucrative positions at Muskrat Falls is leaving a tremendous void in the Labrador health care system.

I ask the minister: What measures are being taken to ensure that health care at Labrador-Grenfell Health is not compromised?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Issues around staffing of any of our facilities are very important to us. The quality of care that we give, the kind of care that we give, is exceptionally important. Mr. Speaker, what we have happening in Labrador at this moment in time is actually a very hot economy. With that comes many, many opportunities, Mr. Speaker, and people have the right to decide where they are going to work.

In the meantime, in terms of our healthcare facilities there, we have the kinds of incentives

that are unseen anywhere else, Mr. Speaker. We have bursary programs. We have market adjustments. We have a number of different signing bonuses as well. We have housing bonuses, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of initiatives that we employ. Labrador-Grenfell Health is working diligently to ensure we have the number of people we need.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

MS DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, it saddens me that we are not benefiting in Labrador from this hot economy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS DEMPSTER: In the meantime, health continues to be an issue. Having fifteen unplanned vacancies in nursing positions at one health care facility – Mr. Speaker, it has to have an impact on health care delivery in our region.

I ask the minister: Why has Labrador-Grenfell Health failed in their recruitment efforts to fill those vacancies?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Fifteen unplanned vacancies – what we are talking about here, for the most part, are maternity leaves. Eight of those people will be back early in the new year, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of what we are doing around recruitment, I would advise the newly elected MHA to come over and have a chat with us around the number of incentives that we have in place. Labrador-Grenfell Health, Mr. Speaker, have been doing an enormous job around recruiting. We have recruiters at Labrador-

Grenfell Health. We have recruiters here in the Department of Health as well. We are recruiting nationally; we are recruiting internationally, Mr. Speaker. We are making every, every effort possible to see to it that we have the right numbers of professionals working in our hospitals.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister of violence prevention cited the two treatment centres for youth as actions resulting from the sexual exploitation report. Those treatment centres were announced in 2009, a full two years before the report was even completed.

So I ask the minister: Will you now release the report, its recommendations, so we can see what actions you have actually taken?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, the member accused government of not acting, and I listed off a whole suite of things. There are many more that I could continue on, that we have been doing. Certainly the report helps inform that, but it was an example of all of the great work that this government is doing around violence prevention.

Mr. Speaker, my mind does not change, our government's position does not change, and we take the advice of the RNC very seriously. Mr. Speaker, as a former lawyer and a Member of the House of Assembly, I would assume that all of us here would take the advice of the RNC very seriously as well.

Mr. Speaker, I also heard the member talking about putting fear out into the public. This is not about putting fear in the public. This is about a

specific, vulnerable group of people who could be put in harm's way, and we are not going to live for that, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order, please!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I would also say that as a lawyer I can tell when somebody's statement is actually not correct from the facts. Government did a survey in 2010 which revealed that 25 per cent of people –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. A. PARSONS: - are more likely to get involved in violence prevention and be more concerned for victims as a result of increased awareness. In fact the minister, in 2012, celebrated that government is making great strides in increasing awareness of the issue of violence and abuse in our Province.

I ask the minister: Which is it? Does increasing awareness of violence perpetrate or hide it?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of our record on violence prevention, and we are particularly proud of the piece around awareness. It is critically important that we educate and make people aware of the serious issues that are involved, particularly when it comes to vulnerable people, and in this case predominantly women, Mr. Speaker.

We have a very solid record. When we came into government in 2003, many of the groups that you see today, the regional co-ordinating committees, the women's centres, the multicultural women's centre - very little funding under the previous Liberal government. Mr. Speaker, we have increased that three times

in the last ten years in our government. We are very proud of what we are doing around awareness.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

We are hearing in the media about women suffering miscarriages alone, after long waits in the Health Sciences ER. I am also hearing from people with horror stories of ER wait time and other experiences. Despite the ER wait time strategy released last year, congestion is still an urgent issue as this year's Eastern Health accreditation report reveals.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Health and Community Services: How is she going to immediately address the critical ER overcrowding and long wait times?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reference the first part of the statement first of all, and that having to do with the miscarriages that we have read about in the paper. Those are certainly very unfortunate and very emotional issues and we are very concerned about those, Mr. Speaker.

I have on a number of occasions, and I will continue to do so, say that quality of care is exceptionally important to us. We want to ensure that members of the public know they have a route to go should they need that through our Client Services offices. So I want to put that out there first.

In terms of our emergency departments, Mr. Speaker, we are making incredible progress there, but it does take time. We have invested

over \$400,000 in wait times just in the emergency departments alone. A number of initiatives have been undertaken, some of it having to do with fast-tracking whereby we take

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

We know all the problems. All we have to do is listen to people telling us what the problems are. We also know solutions that have worked in other places.

What I want to know from the minister, Mr. Speaker, is: When will she commit sufficient resources to end the suffering endured by ER patients? That is what is needed.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I will just continue on. We have invested \$400,000 in the new fast-track system in our emergency departments, our Category A emergency departments, whereby we look at the acuity of patients when they come in. There are some that are fast-tracked into other areas because they can be in and out in a faster period of time, thereby freeing up our physicians and our nurse practitioners, Mr. Speaker, for some of the other patients who do come in to our emergency departments.

We have also invested \$4.1 million – she is asking about investments, so I am allowed to say it this time. You will recall last year she told us not to talk about how much money we spend. We are looking at \$4.1 million in renovations, Mr. Speaker, at St. Clare's emergency

department as well, and we will continue to do that. We are also looking at increased hours of physicians and so on within the emergency departments, and other health care professionals within the emergency departments during times when we know there are peak times.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I suggest that the minister better look at the value she is getting for the money that they are putting in.

A condition of Nova Scotia's public utility board requires that Emera file regular update reports with them throughout the construction of the Maritime Link.

I ask the Premier, Mr. Speaker: Will she allow our public utility that independent oversight role during the construction of the Muskrat Falls Project?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the one thing that we cannot be accused of as a government and as a provincially-owned Crown corporation is of keeping information away from the people of the Province with regard to Muskrat Falls. Our friends opposite try on a daily basis to make that accusation and it just does not stand up. There has been more information released on Muskrat Falls than any other project in the history of our Province.

Mr. Speaker, on Nalcor's Web site there is a monthly update of the number of jobs, the benefits that are occurring, particularly in Labrador because of the development of

Muskrat Falls. We are going to continue to do that, Mr. Speaker, and we are going to broaden the information available to the people of the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Third Party.

MS MICHAEL: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: Will that broadening include releasing the engineering oversight reports, including the independent engineer reports that they are getting in Nova Scotia and we are not getting here?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I know this is Question Period and they get to ask us questions and we provide the answers, and we are happy to do that. I would just like to know what the Leader of the NDP would do with the engineering reports, Mr. Speaker, because we have a proposal now in response to the UARB request on the availability of non-firm power. It is a pretty straight concept if you have been mired down or studying about Muskrat Falls for the last two years, Mr. Speaker, and we can see in the questioning of this House this week that the NDP do not understand the difference between a firm power sale and a non-firm.

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

MS ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, the Family Violence Intervention Court was a successful program that finally understood the complex dynamics of domestic abuse. It intervened immediately, women and children were safer, offenders were treated, and the victimism rate was much lower with a budget of only \$500,000, 0.2 per cent of the entire Justice budget.

I ask the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women: What efforts did she make to stop the closure of the court?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am certainly pleased to take that question and remind the member opposite about the tremendous investments we continue to make in support of violence in this Province, in particular violence against women. We take that issue very seriously. The Family Violence Court was one tool, and albeit an important tool that helped just shy of thirty individuals last year go through the process, I am very pleased that it was a successful process; but we must be reminded that there are other ways to provide supports to violence against women and to provide it Province-wide, not just for people on the Avalon or in the St. John's region.

We have ensured the RNC have made it a priority as one of their long-term plans. Constable Suzanne Fitzgerald is actually employed in a position that works to provide supports, and that is a result of budgetary decisions that we made in supporting the RNC. The RCMP, as well, have made it a priority to focus on violence against women.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KING: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Time for a very quick question without any preamble.

MS ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women: Will she demand to have the court reinstated?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice, for a very quick response.

MR. KING: I can assure the member opposite that the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women has made every effort to represent the views of women in these decisions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

The hon. the Member for St. John's South, on a point of order.

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, during Question Period, the Premier had said I had renovations done to my office. I did not have any renovations done to my office. It was suggested by the House and I refused, saying it was a waste of money.

If the Premier is suggesting that I had renovations done to my office, I ask her to table the evidence.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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 humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS there is no cellphone service in the Town of Trout River, which is an enclave community in Gros Morne National Park; and

WHEREAS visitors to Gros Morne National Park, more than 100,000 annually, expect to communicate by cellphone when they visit the Park; and

WHEREAS cellphone service has become a very important aspect of everyday living for residents; and

WHEREAS cellphone service is an essential safety tool for visitors and residents; and

WHEREAS cellphone service is essential for business development;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to partner with the private sector to extend cellphone coverage throughout Gros Morne National Park and the enclave community of Trout River.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, Trout River is a beautiful little town of around 650 people. It has its own school, its own clinic, and its own services. You still cannot get blood collection done there from the Woody Point Clinic, but it is a nice self-sufficient community. It is a fishing community, a park community, and a tourism community.

To get to Trout River, you go through Trout River Gulch. On one side it is like the Garden of Eden; on the other side is like the face of the moon. One side is green and lush; the other side is pretty desolate. Driving through Trout River Gulch is so hazardous that in the wintertime the Department of Transportation and Works has a gate across the road on both ends of Trout River

Gulch so that if there is enough of a storm in the Gulch, you are simply not allowed to travel on the highway.

Mr. Speaker, these are the conditions people find themselves living in, in Trout River, without access to cellphone service of any kind. It would be a simple matter for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, for the government, to partner with private enterprise and have the people of Trout River agree to pay a certain rate on their cellphone coverage, in addition to any ordinary rate, so they would have a cellphone tower erected in their town. This is a petition from the residents of Trout River asking government to partner with the private sector to extend cellphone coverage.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. KIRBY: 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 in 2006, the provincial government created a commission to review the Individualized Student Support Plan/Pathways model and make recommendations to improve the delivery of special education programming in the K-12 education system; and

WHEREAS in 2007 the ISSP/Pathways Commission delivered a final report to government outlining seventy-five recommendations for creating a better system for the delivery of special education programming; and

WHEREAS to date, many important recommendations of the ISSP/Pathways Commission have not been acted on, including those related to public disclosure of assessment and wait-list information; guidelines for comprehensive and ethical assessment practices;

procedures to address the needs of all at-risk students; creating an effective appeals process for families; meeting the needs of exceptionally able or gifted learners; expanding the role of student assistants into teacher-assisted roles; introducing special education department heads in schools; and improving on –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KIRBY: – special education teacher qualifications and certification;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to fully implement the recommendations of the ISSP/Pathways Commission in order to improve the delivery of special education programming for all students, parents, teachers, and schools.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I notice, Mr. Speaker, I am running out of time here. I just wanted to say that this petition is timely, seeing that government is going through its pre-Budget process right now. We all know we have great schools, we have great teachers and staff, and we have great students. These changes will only make our schools better.

Thank you.

Orders of the Day **Private Members' Day**

MR. SPEAKER: This being Wednesday, Private Members' Day, I now call upon the Member for Humber Valley to introduce the Motion that stands on the Order Paper in his name.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Earlier this week I introduced a Motion:

WHEREAS one of the key points of the Muskrat Falls development was the ability to use 40 per

cent of the power for industrial development in Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS the Premier and other government members repeatedly said that 40 per cent of the Muskrat Falls power would be used for industrial development in Newfoundland and Labrador, with a focus on Labrador; and

WHEREAS the new arrangements between Nalcor and Emera of Nova Scotia mean that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has now committed excess power to Nova Scotia; and

WHEREAS this power will be sold to residents of Nova Scotia at rates well below what Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will be forced to pay; and

WHEREAS residents of Nova Scotia have benefited from a full Utility and Review Board hearing on Muskrat Falls and will be the primary beneficiaries of our resource;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House calls upon the government to send the Muskrat Falls Project back to the Public Utilities Board for a full public review for the protection of our ratepayers.

Mr. Speaker, this is something that we have discussed in the House in the past. When you think about when did this all start in our Province you can actually, I believe, go back to 2009, maybe even before that within meetings when there was a way that we could develop the Lower Churchill. That has been a dream for people in Newfoundland and Labrador for many years. It has been a dream that we be able to do that, primarily driven by the fact that we wanted to go around Quebec. We felt a stranglehold by the province of Quebec because of what we consider to be the bad deal on the Upper Churchill.

To develop the Lower Churchill in our minds was something that we have always dreamed about. We all knew as people who have been elected officials and people in this Province understood the importance of 2041. To us that

meant we would get control of Churchill Falls back.

In 2009 and going into 2010 when this project was announced, it was announced on the concept, and we have often heard it, 40 per cent for the closure for domestic use. We would then close up Holyrood. It would mean that we would decrease the amount of greenhouse gases in our Province, something that would help protect our environment. We would be into a partnership with Emera and 20 per cent of the power would be used by Emera to support their investment into the Maritime Link.

A lot of people we have heard publicly say: Well, this is actually free power to Nova Scotia. I have never really said that because what happens is Emera would build the Maritime Link and in return for building that link they would get use of 20 per cent of the power. That power, of course, would go to them at no charge because they made the upfront investment.

The third and final piece of this was 40 per cent of the power would be used for extra demand in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have often had a major focus on the industrial development, and in particular the mining industry in Labrador.

One of the things I have often questioned about that is that this particular project never did include a transmission line from Muskrat Falls into Lab West. We have been always told that we would build that as they needed it. Well, there is no question we could say that about many things. The demand within our Province we could say they would build as we need it, but right now the transmission line into Lab West is not part of this project.

The project itself is about a generating station at Muskrat Falls with some tie-back transmission into Churchill Falls, the Upper Churchill, and then there is a 1,100 kilometre transmission line that comes into the Island portion. That is connected then with the Maritime Link which will be built by Emera, and that of course connecting Nova Scotia and customers beyond, we were led to believe.

When you think about what has changed, there have been a lot of changes in the world since this project was first announced. Very few people back a few years ago would have any idea what shale gas and what would happen in the US because of the recent discovery, and the way they actually extract oil and gas in the US right now. A few years ago people never really looked at the US as a country that would be self-sufficient in such a short term, but that is what we face right now.

This project now, this \$7.7 billion project that we talk about, is currently not finalized. Even today, we find ourselves in Nova Scotia answering questions to get our partner, I guess Emera in this case, so that this can actually become an official project where we can then go and get the federal loan guarantee, which is a big part of this.

When you come back to our Province just a few years ago, and you say once the project was announced, well then what happened? We had the joint panel review that came back – and they actually reviewed both the development of Gull Island and Muskrat Falls. They came back in August, 2011 and they were not convinced that this was the right time to do this project, for a number of reasons, and made a number of recommendations.

Our own Public Utilities Board here in Newfoundland and Labrador, their role, Mr. Speaker, is that the rates charged – what they do is they want to ensure that rates charged to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are just and reasonable and that the service is safe and reliable. That is the role of the PUB.

In this particular case, when this was put to them they were not – when the discussion with the PUB on the development of Muskrat Falls, they said then they were not satisfied that we would need the demand for this kind of development, and they said they needed more information. Indeed, what happened then, they asked for more time. They asked for an extension, it was not given.

In this particular case, the PUB – we went out and used outside consultants, and there were quite a few. We saw those consultant reports that have been put forth in this House. They became the foundation to go ahead and sanction this project back on December 17, 2012.

I guess what I am trying to say here is that the PUB in our Province did not do – or Nalcor and this government did not do a good enough job in satisfying the answers that they were asking at the time. They said their mandate was limited. There was no technical briefing, which I find very ironic when you look at what is happening in Nova Scotia right now. We have Nalcor officials at the VP level who are actually presenting at a technical briefing in Nova Scotia now. That is exactly what is happening with the PUB, or the UARB as they are called in Nova Scotia.

When this deal was signed – formally, I guess – in July, 2012, there were a number of very detailed and complicated, I would say, Mr. Speaker, agreements between Emera and Nalcor. The sanctioning piece of it came on December 17, as I said, back in 2012. To me, this is where the real uncertainties about this project started because we were not sure if we had a partner in Emera. We had said that on that day. We said: Can we count on Emera to be there as a partner? Because there was a piece of the process that they are not finished with in Nova Scotia yet. This was to go through the UARB, which is our version of the Public Utilities Board.

On July 22 of this year, they came back with a number of conditions. What they said was they really wanted to codify or formalize the discussion that was occurring during the negotiation between Nalcor and Emera. There were conditions, and those conditions were about access to surplus power. Because what they wanted to do was not just take the power in return for their investment into the Maritime Link, what they wanted to do was take excess power so that they would create a blended rate for the people of Nova Scotia.

Of course, this blended rate which would be much cheaper because they would get this power

at market price energy, which in today's world is somewhere between three-point-eight and five cents. We do not know where that is going to go because it is market-based pricing that actually changes, some say, by the hour. So we have no idea where that will go in the future.

The important thing is that Nova Scotia wanted to make sure they had this available to them so that they would blend it in. Now, all they are saying is – this was a first right of refusal, essentially. They never said they had to use it. They said you have to come to us first. This government sees this as: well, this is a customer. This is someone there waiting to buy our power. In this particular case, any of that revenue, as we all know, will not go back to the ratepayers who will use it.

Sanctioning the deal on December 17, 2012, I believe that was prematurely sanctioned right then. We should have made sure Emera understood what was going on, that there would not be conditions that would be coming some seven months later or eight months later.

This actually changed it a lot, because what has happened now, just a few weeks ago we had to go back and do a compliance filing to satisfy the six outstanding conditions of the UARB of July 22. How do we deal with this? They have made it quite clear that these conditions – as a matter of fact, I have it right here, the Market-priced Energy Condition.

The board directs as a condition to its approval of the Maritime Link Project that Nova Scotia obtain from Nalcor the right to access Nalcor market-priced energy – they make reference to some paragraphs there. They want right to access this energy when needed to economically serve Nova Scotia and its ratepayers; or provide some other arrangement to ensure access to market-priced energy.

What we have heard so far is that if we want to satisfy that condition, we will go out and we will use either the surplus energy from Muskrat Falls or other sources. I have heard it said that we will dip into our warehouse and we will build wind or we will develop small hydro, but I have

never seen the financial or business case to suggest that we can actually produce any of that at prices where it would be profitable. This is a limited condition. This expires in 2041.

What we are talking about here right now is we would use other sources of energy that we would have in our Province. I am looking forward to the debate. I am looking forward to some of the information that will come back out of this, but there is another key thing in all of this. On July 22, when we heard from the UARB in Nova Scotia, we also heard from Quebec, and that would be Hydro-Quebec. They were challenging the Water Management Agreement that we have in place, that we put into our PUB in 2009 saying that we indeed have a right to manage our water supply on the Churchill River. Indeed, this has been a challenge.

I understood this was going to be introduced into a Quebec court in September. I have not heard if it is there yet. We have not had much luck with challenges we have made in Quebec courts. I hope, and I want to, for the next generations of Newfoundland and Labrador that we win that court case, but there is a lot riding on that court case.

Nalcor, even in their own words, would say that a project like Gull Island with a water management agreement has a potential to be around 2,250 megawatts of power or 12 terawatts with a water management agreement. They also say, though, without it, it could be as little as 400 megawatts. Muskrat Falls without it could be as little as 140 megawatts.

We can dismiss all of this, but this is not me saying this. This is Nalcor saying this. This is not the Official Opposition saying this or MHI saying this. Nalcor is saying this. This is the importance. It is Nalcor saying this. It is in their annual reports, actually.

Other than that, we did meet with Nalcor on a number of occasions right now, and I did ask: If you had to run Muskrat Falls for twenty-four hours a day, how much energy could it produce? We have been told on two different occasions that at 824 megawatts total capacity of Muskrat

Falls, it would be around 70 per cent, so that would be 570 megawatts. That came from officials at Nalcor. That is not me standing there as a critic of Natural Resources, not anybody else here standing as the Official Opposition, or any other interest groups that are outside today. This is Nalcor themselves saying this.

So we have questions about where the surplus power would come from. We have questions about the excess power, how much can be generated, and what is the future cost for Newfoundland and Labrador to supply this condition in Nova Scotia. Without this condition met, we have the federal loan guarantee. There is a federal loan guarantee that everybody took great joy in celebrating, worth \$1 billion. Right now, if we had to meet those conditions, our value on that federal loan guarantee I can guarantee you now will not be worth \$1 billion. Someone else will reach that benefit, I say, Mr. Speaker.

This is the reason we will continue to ask those questions. This is the reason we will continue to say that our own Public Utilities Board, acting on the behalf of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, should have another look at this project, I say, Mr. Speaker.

My time is about to run out. I will back in the last fifteen minutes, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to the comments from the minister. He is on his feet right now. I will be taking notes.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER (Littlejohn): The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to make some comments about the motion today. There are many statements made that I want to have a discussion on. Today, Mr. Speaker, there are some key important points about this argument that I want to put forward.

The Liberals today, Mr. Speaker, are trying to make a case to send the Muskrat Falls Project

back to the utilities board for review. I have two issues with it: Some of the arguments that they are using to put forward shows that they really do not understand Muskrat Falls; secondly, the Public Utilities Board has had an opportunity to review Muskrat Falls. The board was asked to examine whether the development of Muskrat Falls as the Interconnected Island Option is the least-cost approach to providing power for the future of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians as compared to Holyrood, which is the Isolated Island Option.

Mr. Speaker, following nine months of review and \$2 million, the Public Utilities Board concluded that they cannot make a decision; they do not have a conclusion. They were not in favour of saying it was the least-cost option, but what is always lost, they certainly did not say it was not the least-cost option.

Mr. Speaker, despite these facts, Manitoba Hydro, the experts that were hired by the Public Utilities Board, the consumer advocate, who himself hired an expert, Dr. Wade Locke a provincial economist, and Navigant, a company out of the US, had all the same information that the Public Utilities Board had. Mr. Speaker, all four of them independently returned a decision, a conclusion, that the Muskrat Falls Project is the cheapest way to provide reliable, clean energy for the people of the Province.

Mr. Speaker, the expert analysis provided by Manitoba Hydro in particular represents a real productive piece of work that came out of the efforts and initiatives of the Public Utilities Board. It was a good piece of work. It is just unfortunate that the Public Utilities Board could not do the same. Mr. Speaker, the conclusion was early on that this is a great project for Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, we hear reference all the time to least-cost option. What that means particularly so I can explain to the people watching today, it is the cheapest option that we can find to make sure we have the power we need in the future.

Mr. Speaker, we have to find the cheapest option because the ratepayers, all of us, have to pay for the cost of whatever we are going to do to provide energy in the future. Mr. Speaker, the next option is \$2.2 billion more than Muskrat Falls. We have looked at all other options, Muskrat Falls is the cheapest. What I do not understand is why the Opposition continues to fight Muskrat Falls with no alternative, when we have proven it, and experts have proven it, Nalcor has proven it, that it is the best option for Newfoundland and Labrador to get their power in the future.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we build this, when we build Muskrat Falls, we are guaranteed an amount of power. We need the guaranteed power. Twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year, when you turn the switch, the power comes on. It does not matter, Mr. Speaker, if you have a mining development in Baie Verte, a fish plant in Twillingate, or a hospital in St. John's, we need that guaranteed power, and that is called firm power; we know we have it.

Mr. Speaker, when we develop this, we are going to have a lot of firm power. In 2017-2018 when we throw the switch we are going to have a need for about 40 per cent of that power right away for the people of the Province. We also have an agreement with Nova Scotia, an agreement with Emera, where they would build the Maritime Link. Essentially, what they are doing is taking 20 per cent of the capital costs of the Muskrat Falls Project, which includes the Maritime Link, they are taking 20 per cent of the operational costs of Muskrat Falls, and in return they are getting 20 per cent of the power.

Mr. Speaker, we still have then 40 per cent we are going to use, 20 per cent for Nova Scotia, and now we have 40 per cent that is surplus to our needs right away. So what are we going to do with that, Mr. Speaker? We have to make a choice. You have heard it said that we can spill it, which means open the gates and let the water flow; but no, Mr. Speaker, this government is responsible and looking to the needs of the people in the future. We have a chance to sell that power and make money.

When we hear talk of things like paving roads, when we hear talk of child care, more programs for seniors, Mr. Speaker, all of this costs money. We have to find ways to get more money into the revenue for the Province, and get that revenue from our resources. The Liberals say it is a bad idea. We say no, it is surplus, and rather than let it flow, let us sell it and make money for the Province.

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake, we will sell that 40 per cent surplus power. As time goes on, when we need that power we will not be selling it; we will be using it. We have said there is industrial growth; there are growing demands in the Province. When we need the power, Mr. Speaker, we will have it available.

You see, Mr. Speaker, our Premier, our government, is driven by principle. One of the fundamental principles of this Muskrat Falls development is that we are going to develop this for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians first. We will meet the needs of power for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians first and foremost. All that we do, through these agreements, will protect that principle, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, this gets me to Nova Scotia with the Maritime Link. So because of the Maritime Link and that 40 per cent power, we now have a chance to sell that power when we do not need it because we have access to markets. We can sell it in New England, we can sell it in New York, we can sell it in Ontario, or we can sell it in Nova Scotia. It does not matter to us who buys it. It just so happens that Nova Scotia wants access to that power.

Mr. Speaker, how much are we going to have to sell? This is where it gets a little complicated, and I will not get it tangled up with numbers too much, but we have 40 per cent of the firm power that is going to be available right away. So we sell it until we need it. I want to be clear. We have not signed a contract that commits the 40 per cent of firm power to Nova Scotia.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals think we have guaranteed this to Nova Scotia, but we absolutely have not done so.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the guaranteed amount of power we have, that firm power, well, every year there is excess rain and snow that will add our ability to generate more power. This power will depend on how much rain and snow we get. It is not guaranteed. We are guaranteed to get some, but we do not know how much rain or snow we are going to get.

What we have done, what Nalcor has done, is studied the hydrology, studied the river, and studied the climates. Fifty years of work and data, Mr. Speaker, tells us that while we will not know each year whether it is up or down, we will have an average supply of 1.2 terawatts of power that is surplus to our needs. This power coming from the excess rain and snow is called average supply, but it is non-firm because the actual amount is not guaranteed every year. It will depend on the rain and snow levels in the Province.

So, Mr. Speaker, this power is also surplus to our needs. Again, we are back to making a choice: do we let it go or do we sell it? Well, we are going to sell the non-firm power and that is the commitment we are making. We are going to sell this non-firm into Nova Scotia. We are not giving away anything. We are not committing to sell power that we need right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. We are only guaranteeing that Nova Scotia has access to the power created from the rain and snow, the non-firm power, which is an average of 1.2 terawatt hours.

So, Mr. Speaker, regardless of the spin or the lack of understanding from the Opposition, we said 40 per cent of Muskrat Falls' power will be kept available for industrial development in Newfoundland and Labrador, and we have kept that commitment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Now, Mr. Speaker, the Opposition and the critics have said there are no markets for our power. Well, the rate we are going, we are not going to get out of the Atlantic Provinces with our power. Nova Scotia wants it.

Mr. Speaker, the agreement we have, the Energy Access Agreement, will provide 1.2 terawatt hours of power between Nalcor, Emera, and Nova Scotia Power and is what the UARB wanted as one of their conditions to make the Maritime Link for Nova Scotia the best option for them as well, understandably. It is a win-win.

It is a good business deal, Mr. Speaker. We need to sell our extra power that we not using, Nova Scotia needs access to more power, and they agree to buy it, but they also agree to buy it at market price. We are confident that this business arrangement meets the UARB requirement for access to more energy, while providing more value for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, just to be clear, Nova Scotia needs more power, we have power to sell, and they are going to pay us market price. That gets me to the markets and rights, something that is fundamental to this and it is important that you understand it. Market price and ratepayer costs are two different concepts. The market price is the price that power companies, like Ontario Hydro, Emera, and New Brunswick Power, are willing to pay for the power for their customers.

There are a lot of companies that do not produce power like we do, Mr. Speaker. They have to go out and buy it, and there are many markets. There is a bidding process. Let me tell you how it works. There is a bidding process on the power and the highest bid sets the price that the power companies have to pay for their power, no matter if you are in Boston, New York, or Nova Scotia. Companies buy power at market prices set by the bidding price. We do not set the market price. We do not control it.

In an agreement to supply Emera with an average of 1.2 terawatts of non-firm power, they have guaranteed the going market price for

power. It is important to understand market price is what the power companies pay for power; it is not what the ratepayers pay. The ratepayer pays more than the market price.

Mr. Speaker, here is how it works. In Nova Scotia, the UARB will determine the rates. They will calculate Nova Scotia ratepayers' price. The UARB does that. They will use the following: 20 per cent of the capital cost of Muskrat Falls including the Maritime Link, 20 per cent of the operating cost of Muskrat Falls, the market price Emera pays for the power, the cost of Emera to deliver the power to their customers, and there will be a return built in for the Emera power company. That is how the rate will be set.

The Public Utilities Board in Newfoundland and Labrador will be determining the rates we have to pay, based on the cost of Muskrat Falls, the cost for Newfoundland Hydro to deliver that power to the customers, and a return to the Newfoundland Hydro company. Muskrat Falls is the cheapest option to ensuring that we have the best rates in the future. It is not about Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker; it is about Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, so we are clear about the discussion we are having today, the Opposition is absolutely wrong in their claim that power will be sold to the residents of Nova Scotia well below what Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will pay. We are selling the power to Emera at market prices. The UARB will set the rate for the ratepayers of Nova Scotia, not Nalcor, not Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, and I can assure you not the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. They are going to calculate their own rates based on all the costs that I just explained.

Mr. Speaker, regardless of the rates for Nova Scotia, Muskrat Falls is the best, cheapest option for Newfoundland and Labrador. Nothing will change that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, they keep pushing every day, questions here and there. I am not sure if they agree with Muskrat Falls or not. I think maybe it is time for them to stand up and make a definitive statement: We are or we are not. If you are not, tell us what the alternative is.

Mr. Speaker, the Muskrat Falls Project is the least-cost option. It is the cheapest way for us to get power we need in the future. It is clean, renewable energy. It is reliable. It will minimize the increase in our monthly utility bills, which is important for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is going to ensure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have the cheapest rates possible. That is what this is all about.

Mr. Speaker, as an added bonus to all that, which the Liberals want to say is a bad idea, we are going to be able to sell the surplus power. We are going to be able to take a renewable resource and sell it time and time again when we do not need it to make money for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, how can you stand or go on Open Line and say this is a bad idea? We have always said and our history shows the past ten years we have been firm, dedicated, and highly successful in developing the resources of Newfoundland and Labrador in the best interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to get full benefit.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, back to the motion. The Public Utilities Board will have a chance to set these rates. There is no benefit to bringing this back to a Public Utilities Board review.

Mr. Speaker, the motion lacks understanding and I hope I have helped clarify it. I can tell you, this motion is not in the best interest of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and I will not be supporting it today.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. Babe.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, before going through why this matter should be referred back to the Public Utilities Board, I would like to discuss briefly the background of Public Utilities Boards in general.

Mr. Speaker, we live in the free enterprise system. The free enterprise system is the best system in the world to produce the most benefits and the best benefits at the lowest cost for most people. It is well established worldwide.

Hallmarks of the free enterprise system worldwide are the language of business, the English language; the currency of the world, the free enterprise system, is the US dollar. That is without dispute. It may be disputed here, but that actually is without dispute.

One of the most important hallmarks of the free enterprise system is competition. Competition among actors, people who play a role in the free enterprise system, brings down the costs of good, increases the volume of goods and creates a better standard of living for everybody worldwide who lives under a system that embraces the free enterprise system.

Mr. Speaker, only democracies embrace the free enterprise system. Other systems that are not democracies may well have business, but they do not have the free enterprise system. The Public Utilities Boards were created in order to offset some of the worse aspects of competition.

For the last 100 and maybe even 200 years, it is the nature of competition that strong players will gobble up small players and small players eventually will create monopolies, and monopolies mean that only one party controls everything. Only one party controls supply; one party controls the demand. Individuals, consumers like the people of this Province and the people of this country, are not well served by

monopolies; however, sometimes it is necessary to have a monopoly. Sometimes some major undertakings are required where there can only be one player.

Mr. Speaker, that is in the case of large utilities in years gone by of railways, water utilities, and electrical utilities. Because a utility, a company that would engage in producing such a major undertaking, needs to be assured that they will not have competition and needs to be assured that they can get a reasonable rate of return for their investment. That is not disputed.

On the other hand, consumers need to be assured that they will not be gouged by a major monopoly like an energy company, or like a gas company, or like in some places where water rates are supplied, or in the old days when railways were more regulated that the freight rates would not be gouged by that.

The compromise and one of the beauties of the free enterprise system is that our legislators, including the members of this Legislature, created boards, regulatory boards – that some would say all regulation is bad; others would say you need maybe absolute regulation. The Public Utilities Board is the board that strikes a balance between an investor getting a reasonable profit so that a major undertaking is done and a reasonable rate of return – otherwise, they simply would not do it, and why should they – and a balance between that and the consumer saying that I can only afford to pay so much. The consumer needs the electricity – in this case the service, which is electricity – and the investor needs to guaranteed that there is a reasonable rate of return to assure lenders and investors that the debts that are incurred, which are usually massive debts that have to be repaid over a long time, have a guaranteed income stream.

Part of the legislation that enables Muskrat Falls is that we have, in fact, created a monopoly for Nalcor in this Province for electricity rates. This brings us to the Public Utilities Board. This government claims that they have seven experts who have guaranteed that this is the so-called least cost option; however, having practiced law

for nearly two decades, I can easily remember cases whereby if somebody wants to advance a case and to prove a case, you get an expert. If that expert does not give you the answer you want, you get another expert. If that expert does not give you what you want, you get another expert.

The Premier said two days ago we had to go to seven experts to get the answer we want; seven experts say that this is the best deal. If one expert would say it, why would you need to go to seven? The one expert, Mr. Speaker, in this case is the Public Utilities Board. The Public Utilities Board is the expert. The Public Utilities Board is charged with ensuring the interest of the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. They are the best at it. They have no stake in the outcome. The Vice-President of Nalcor, when I spoke to him, said: Look, we are going to do what is right. He said: I have no skin in this game. It does not matter; we are going to do whatever is right for the people.

Well, I say even more so that the Public Utilities Board has absolutely no stake in the outcome, except doing what is right for the people of the Province. This government sent this matter to the Public Utilities Board and said: Do your job, tell us what is the best outcome, you are absolutely the best people to look at this, and you are the ones who we trust, that we have empowered, that we have appointed people to sit on the board. These are people who are not unfriendly to government; they are people who are friendly to government. The government says: You tell us this is the least-cost option.

In fact, that is the wrong mandate to give to the Public Utilities Board. It is not to tell the Public Utilities Board to rubber-stamp this for us. It is not to say to the Public Utilities Board: You tell us this is the least-cost option. It is for government to say to the Public Utilities Board: Tell us what is best. Tell us what is best for the people of the Province because that is the job of the Public Utilities Board.

The Public Utilities Board had this matter before it for many months. Over the period of months, they had hearings, people made presentations,

they listened, they struggled, they struggled, and they listened. At the end of it, they came back and they said: We are really sorry; you have not given us enough information for us to be able to give you a decision. We just do not know, based on what you have told us.

Did government do the right thing? The right thing would have been for government to say: Well, we are really grateful for your feedback; if you do not have enough information, clearly it is in the public interest that you must have enough information. What does the Public Utilities Board need in order to be able to provide an answer that this is in fact the best decision, the lowest, or the government says the least-cost option? Then they would have empowered the Public Utilities Board, and said: Take more time, what resources do you need, go back, and then tell us.

This government did not want an unbiased answer. They did not want the answer from the Public Utilities Board unless it was saying yes, this is a great deal. It is not the job of the Public Utilities Board to have a rubber stamp and say: Government, put whatever you like in front of us; we have a rubber stamp that says okay; and everything you give us to stamp, okay. It is not okay.

Now, they did not say it was bad either. They just said: We do not have enough information. What are we supposed to do? You do not chastise the Public Utilities Board like I saw in this House less than a year ago. They were accused of not doing their job, of falling down on the job, and really leaving government in the lurch. They did not do that. They did what I would say is probably the most responsible thing, and they said: We just do not know based on what you have told us.

So government plowed ahead, hired some more experts, and got the answers that they wanted. You can pretty much buy any expert you want in this world and get whatever answer you want. If you do not like one answer, then buy another expert and then buy another expert. How much have we paid now for seven experts to say what it is? MHI, for example, Manitoba Hydro, that

did the Wasquatam power deal, had an overrun of 85 per cent. They had an 85 per cent overrun on a project that was only a fraction the size of Muskrat Falls. If they had an overrun of 85 per cent that is only a fraction of the size of Muskrat Falls, they are probably not very reliable for us to take a chance on. I say we will put our luck and our future, and stake our outcome with the Public Utilities Board. That is why this resolution is here, it is a private member's resolution.

In addition to what was before the Public Utilities Board a year or so ago, two years ago when they had their hearings before, now we have had – as one of the former Minister of Fisheries and a few other things used to say, the water is changed on the beans. Clearly, there has been a lot of different fallout in this project. Now we have court challenges, water reversion rights, issues with the UARB in Nova Scotia, and a change of government in Nova Scotia.

This party, the Official Opposition has said, set all of this straight, send this matter back to the Public Utilities Board. The Public Utilities Board might very well say: government, you kind have made a mess of it so far but at this point you cannot unwind the clock; you cannot get out of this. You are going to have to finish the project, but here is what we think you should do. This will be the rate for certain consumers.

The government might say to the Public Utilities Board: What do we do with the eighty-five-year-old widow or widower, old age pensioner living on a fixed income with electric heat? What are we going to do for that person when power from Muskrat Falls comes in at twenty, or twenty-five, or thirty cents a kilowatt added to the regular price that we have right now and this person is just scraping by living on a Guaranteed Income Supplement? What is the protection for that person?

The Public Utilities Board might hear from small businesses, the ones that the Minister of Justice calls the mom and pop businesses that cannot afford an increase in minimum wage. I accept that there is a legitimate concern for these small businesses. If they cannot afford an

increase in minimum wage, how on earth can they afford a catastrophic increase in the price of energy? If they are running on the price of energy and if they are paying now \$2,000 or \$3,000 a month to run a little business in St. John's, or maybe in some rural area, and all of a sudden the price becomes another \$1,000 or so a month, it adds to their overhead substantially and literally drives them out of business.

This government has just improved the Municipal Operating Grants. I take my hat off to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for those increases that we have seen. This is a help. It moves forward, but the tiny municipality that I live in, that I grew up in, two years ago had an energy bill of a little over \$20,000 a year for street lights and to keep the town hall heated and to pump water. For 250 people and a \$20,000-odd power bill, how much will it mean to these communities?

Mr. Speaker, the Public Utilities Board is the one that is absolutely unbiased. They already have demonstrated the strength of their perseverance and their will power to say we cannot give you an answer because you did not give us enough information. The people of this Province trust the Public Utilities Board. So I say this government should trust the Public Utilities Board a little more and then maybe the people of the Province would trust the government.

At this point, trust in government is at an all-time low. That could be restored in part maybe by referring this matter to the Public Utilities Board and ask them: What do you need, now that so much more time has passed, in order for you to render – not the decision that we want, not the decision that government wants, but the decision that is in the best interest of the people of this Province. What do you need?

There is no big hurry any more. Maybe you can use some of the work you did previously but we really need an independent, unbiased opinion from the Public Utilities Board, and that also needs to be based on the changes that have taken place in the last six months, or the last year since this deal was sanctioned.

Since this deal was sanctioned roughly a year ago, who knows how much money has been spent so far. The only safe and realistic and reasonable thing for this government to do is to refer this matter back to the Public Utilities Board to ask for a clean review, a new review, and integrate all of the facts since the project was sanctioned. I have no doubt there will be some issues arising for them, some negative issues; however, it is doubtful that we can stop the project at this point.

Maybe we need the power. Maybe we have made a bad deal with Nova Scotia. Maybe the so-called free flowing reinvestment of a non-renewable resource of oil into a renewable resource back to back with a fifty year mortgage, most of us will be long gone before that mortgage is paid off, yet we are saddling the people of this Province with a fifty year mortgage in the mega billions of dollars, and we have no idea where the price of energy will be over that time.

We have no idea where technology will evolve over fifty years, but we are signing on the dotted line for the people of this Province for a fifty-year debt without the benefit of the Public Utilities Board reviewing this matter. That is why I support this private member's resolution, and I call on other members to do so.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Well, first off, let me say it is great to be back in the House of Assembly. I know all my colleagues on this side of the House echo that. I am particularly happy the member across the way who just spoke is in the House of Assembly. I know he was all bent out of shape about coming back, but I am glad he did show up and I am glad he spoke to this today, although I do not know how much of it stuck.

It was a pleasure to get the request to be able to speak on this today, because I have quite a bit to say about Muskrat Falls and all the benefits that obviously we will all have from it. Now, I could talk about a number of different angles. There are a bunch of different ways I could go on this, talking about the benefits and the overwhelming positives regarding Muskrat Falls.

I could talk about the business case, I could talk about how it is the least-cost option, but I know the crowd across the way has heard this from one of their potential leaders. I do not want to beat a dead horse, because they have heard it. They have heard it many times. Not only from a potential leader this time, but from the golden boy they tried to get before. They understand that, so I want to go on to the next one. I could talk about how it will stabilize electrical rates. It is very important.

We are here as MHAs, we have to obviously have the best interests of our constituents in mind. Personally, for me, that is a very important one as well. I could talk about it, but I will not go any further. I could also indeed talk about the benefits to the people of this Province, particularly the Innu and the folks in Labrador. I could talk quite a bit about that, and the proposed 3,300 jobs, I believe, at peak time – 3,300 jobs. Well-paying jobs, too, might I add.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: I could, Mr. Speaker, go on to talk about how it will end our dependency on oil. We know the issues that can come up in budgetary process when you are trying to gauge something on a commodity and prices, there are highs and lows and peaks and valleys. Of course, that presents challenges, and we have seen that first-hand. We are trying to move away from that. Oil has been great. It has provided huge amounts of revenue to our Province, to our coffers, but of course, again, it is not dependable.

During the debate we had on Muskrat Falls back last December, I guess it was, in the House of Assembly, I spoke at length regarding the environmental impact and the positive

environmental impact that Muskrat Falls will create for the Province, particularly the shutting down of Holyrood. We all know, we have heard numerous people, we have heard the Mayor of Holyrood – Mr. Goobie, is it, I believe? He spoke at length of it, and how that is going to benefit his residents.

I know I have heard from the MHA of the area a number of times talking about how this has just been literally a black cloud hanging over this community for so many years. The environmental side of this is absolutely huge. Again, I could go into much more of that but I will not; I will continue on.

Mr. Speaker, today what I want to focus my attention on is the reason why we need Muskrat Falls and how that relates to industrial development, particularly the mining sector in Labrador. What I will present are facts, Mr. Speaker, because I think it is nice to present facts time and time again here in the House as opposed to rhetoric, and that is much what we hear from the other side. The information that I speak of comes from experts in their respective fields. It does not come necessarily from politicians just pulling them out of thin air for their own purposes. Of course, we have heard from the other side and sometimes that is where the conversation goes.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador needs a new source of electricity generation because demand for electricity on the Island will exceed supply in the very near future. That is a fact. That is not my opinion. It is not any of our opinion; it is a fact.

Mr. Speaker, I want to see: What is driving this demand? We can look at a few things here. It is being driven by a strong economy and new business development, business development that we have never seen before, nothing that we have ever seen before in the Province. I know I speak for others when I say no matter what part of the Island you are from, or Labrador, you cannot go anywhere without seeing this development. It is not just a Northeast Avalon thing, definitely not. I am from Glovertown and Glovertown is booming, a town of about 2,300

people, booming, that one town; we have hundreds of them. Let's keep the focus here, the Island and Labrador, the development is just booming, so that is something to keep in mind.

It is also being driven by the growth of residential customers and higher than average new home construction. Again, no matter where you go in the Province, whether it be in Labrador or Newfoundland on the Island, you see construction everywhere you go. It is amazing and it is great to see.

We see demand rising due to growing electrical use in homes due to higher incomes, as well as increased use of electric heat as opposed to traditional use of oil or wood burning. Of course, we see increased demand as it relates to industrial electricity, and that is where I want to spend some time today.

The data behind Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro's electricity demand forecast has been validated by its outside independent expert, and that would be MHI. If I can quote them, what they said about the forecast: It was diligent and reasonable. We validated that. There is an increased demand in electricity. No one will argue that, I do not think, on any side of the House.

Industrial development: Once a hydroelectric generating facility is built and commissioned at Muskrat Falls, there will be power to service the Island's increasing electricity demands and to support industrial development in Labrador. Let us not forget, about 40 per cent of Muskrat Falls energy will be available to supply industrial customers in Labrador. That is a massive piece of that: 40 per cent for the industrial needs of Labrador.

I ask the members opposite: Are you in favour of industrial development in Labrador? If the answer is yes, which I think it would be, then by default you are in favour of Muskrat Falls because you cannot have one without the other. I think that is the point here that I am trying to make today. Obviously, we are in favour of industrial development. I think everyone would

be. How are you going to achieve that? What is the key factor? Of course, Muskrat Falls is that.

I know that question in particular used to make the former Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair squirm in her seat because, of course, she was, as were all of us, in favour of industrial development in Labrador. Again, she had to play politics with us so she was always riding on the fence.

Now, folks, politics is what it is. When you look at politics, I see it can be very beneficial; but when you allow politics to handcuff you into making irrational comments and making you side one way or the other just for the sake of opposing for opposing, I think that is where that is where the problem lies. There is over \$10 billion –

MS DEMPSTER: (Inaudible).

MR. S. COLLINS: Certainly, I want the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair to listen to this, because I have heard some bizarre comments today as well as yesterday. So I want her to pay particular attention.

Some estimate it will be upwards of \$15 billion of investment possible over the next decade in Labrador – \$15 billion over the next decade. Small potatoes, I say, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: Muskrat Falls is an instrumental piece to achieving that investment, black and white.

The new Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair today, as I said – it was not today, it was yesterday or the day before – made a bizarre comment and the comment really struck me. Of course, we all know what the development is going on here on the Island, particularly what is going on up in Labrador. She said: There is a mass exodus of people moving out of the Province for work. Nothing could be further from the truth. To say that and to say it with a straight face, she deserves an Academy Award, I would say.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. S. COLLINS: – and no development. I am going to get to that in a second.

So let us just see. Let us just say that she was correct in what she said and that she was sincere when she said there has been a mass exodus from the Province – a mass exodus. Why would you not then support Muskrat Falls, which is going to put so much money and resources into Labrador to keep that supposed exodus of people staying put? You cannot speak from both sides of your mouth. You cannot say there is a mass exodus of people, yet we do not want to develop it to give us the tools to allow our sons and daughters to stay. You cannot have it both ways.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: Now, if I may say a little something more on the member's comment yesterday, while we do have obviously a population of residents who are transient, who come back and forth, and do turnarounds out West, that has always been the case and it always will be. As long as there is oil out in Fort McMurray we are going to have that, and so be it. It is great.

I just want to name off a few spots and I want to see if it jogs the member's memory, if she has heard of any of these, and she can stop me if she has not: Long Harbour, Bull Arm, Marystown, Placentia, Argentia, Voisey's Bay, IOC, and Wabush. Then there are other places like Glovertown, my own hometown, that has a contract with Hebron down at the local shipyard with over 100 women and men employed doing work on a Hebron Project.

Then I extend it right over on the side of the Island, and I noticed, actually, on the Member for Burgeo – La Poile's Facebook page – I liked the comment, actually. He was talking about how there is new fabrication work beginning soon in Port aux Basques. There is actually going to be a job fair in a couple of days, a huge contract being let.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: It is great to see.

AN HON. MEMBER: Are you talking about Muskrat?

MR. S. COLLINS: No, we are talking about White Rose Extension, that one. I am talking about all the great things happening and all the jobs. Now, I will say to the Member for Burgeo – La Poile, I will bring it back to Muskrat Falls.

I would like to talk about another contract that has been let recently, and I believe this is in the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair. It is a huge contract issued by Nalcor in Forteau. I will admit, Mr. Speaker, my sense of geography –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. S. COLLINS: My sense of geography of the Island is spot-on; it is really good. Labrador, it is not as good, but I am getting there. I am pretty sure Forteau is in her electoral district.

Yet, when she stood up to speak about the mass exodus of people and how terrible things are and how bleak they are, she failed to mention a huge multi-million dollar contract in Forteau – shame on you. If I was home in Forteau listening to that I would say: Unbelievable, she did not even make reference to it. It is not even important enough to make reference to. I say that is a shame, Mr. Speaker. It is a definite shame.

I want to talk for just a short time as well with regard to Muskrat Falls' jobs. It is not only in Labrador, of course, they are throughout the Island. I was at an event in Gambo this past summer and we were talking about jobs and all that good stuff. I was speaking to a young man; he graduated with my wife from high school and he went on to do an engineering trade. He said: I just got a job at Muskrat Falls. I said: Well, that is amazing; you are actually the first person I know personally who got a job at Muskrat Falls. He said: Really? I said: Well, I believe so.

He said: Do you know there are another four people from Glovertown who are working with me, and another two from Gambo?

Furthermore, he said, not only is it for us in Newfoundland but I graduated from university, from the trade that he has, with four people from Labrador. Every single one of those people from Labrador is employed at Muskrat Falls.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, obviously I am going to go back to the mineral side, but we can all acknowledge the huge contribution that the mineral sector plays in Newfoundland and Labrador. The annual mineral shipments – I guess this will be an estimate for this year – will be \$4.3 billion, huge money obviously.

The mineral exploration sector is robust with annual expenditures of over \$200 million. That number is set to grow greatly in the years to come. Additionally, the mining industry provides valuable jobs for many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, particularly in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

That is something that is very, very important to me as a rural MHA. I look over here to my buddy from Baie Verte – Springdale. He can tell you all about the mining industry. He does not live on the Northeast Avalon, he does not live in Labrador, yet he can tell you a good bit about it and the amount of jobs and the amount of resources that have been put into his district. It flows right over the entire Province. It is absolutely huge.

In fact, employment is at a record high with almost 12,000 individuals working in the sector today – 12,000 people working in the mining sector. It is huge; it is absolutely huge. Again, Mr. Speaker, like other facets of this project we have enlisted the help of others, and by others I mean experts. It is funny that the member who spoke before myself –

AN HON. MEMBER: St. Barbe.

MR. S. COLLINS: The Member for St. Barbe referenced that we went out and bought experts.

There are loads of experts out there. Sure, you can go and buy them; you fellows bought them. Why can't they buy one single expert?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: Not one single expert.

MR. A. PARSONS: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile, on a point of order.

MR. A. PARSONS: (Inaudible) had to pay for the Joint Review Panel to come up with the information that they did.

MR. SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

MR. S. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member rose I thought he was the expert they had paid to stand, and I am glad to say that was not the case.

They talk about all the experts out there that are there for the hiring: oh, you can get them, buy them anywhere. They cannot buy a single one. They can get random people from around here. I know they have a folk music hero from Newfoundland who is battling the cause. There are others, I will not speak of their names, but other people who have been involved in this as well. Again, are any of them experts? I can guarantee you they are not. They may be experts in particular fields whether it is painting or playing music, but they are not experts in this, and, Sir, that is what we went out to get and that is what we got.

Mr. Speaker, my time is running out pretty quickly. I just want to talk about natural resources recently – or actually it was last year, I guess – released two reports that support the conclusion that the development of potential projects will be dependent in part on the availability of power, and Muskrat Falls power is indeed needed to support mining developments in Labrador.

The paper looked at a few different things. It looked at the process of developing a mine, the importance of competitively priced power to develop it, and, thirdly, the potential power requirements of some or all of these projects were they to proceed. That report shows that while the iron ore industry obviously, currently is a huge player in Labrador right now, the sector could grow from the current twenty-six million tons to eighty-one million tons if these projects go through. Absolutely, industry will just blow. It will just blow its top. It is great.

Over a twenty-one year period, such growth would result in an additional \$80 billion in new capital and operating expenditures.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: This will be of particular interest – again, I keep going back because her comments today, yesterday, and the day before have been absolutely blown away. She has made an impression on me, I will give her that.

The Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair will appreciate this; 358,000 person years of employment and \$117 billion in GDP growth. Now, what does she have to say about that? That is 358,000 person years of employment. That is not to mention what it will do for the provincial Treasury, \$17.5 billion in tax revenues. That is the stuff that pays for your schools, which she received two new ones recently. Talk about paying for hospitals, talk about paving roads, let's talk about cancer drugs, it goes on and on and on. This is the stuff we need to make government what it is and provide the services to the people.

Mr. Speaker, to finish off, I just want to say you do not have to take my word for it. You do not have to take one of the current leadership candidates word for it. You do not have to take Justin Trudeau and the federal Liberals, or Thomas Mulcair and the federal NDP; you do not have to take any of that. I want you to look next door to them; shoulder to shoulder they have an individual there.

The MHA for St. John's South, while an Independent, voted in favour of the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project during debate in the House. Why did he do so? I will quote the CBC in my final ten seconds, if I may quote from the CBC interview from December of last year, "This is the best choice for future generations".

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: He is sitting alongside of them. All I would ask, if you do not believe me, ask your colleague next to you, he gets it. They should as well.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Third Party and Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

I am very glad to have the opportunity to speak to the private member's resolution today. This feels like *déjà vu*. It has been a while since we have had a discussion on Muskrat Falls in this House, but I think it is important we are having the discussion that we are having today.

This resolution has to do with something that was an issue we raised over and over in our debate in the House around Muskrat Falls, and that is the mandate of the Public Utilities Board and the way in which this government ran roughshod over the mandate of the Public Utilities Board. That is the issue they do not want to admit. That is the issue they keep avoiding, and it is the issue that I want to address today.

The resolution that we have before us asks, "...that this House calls upon the Government to send the Muskrat Falls project back to our Public Utilities Board for a full public review for the protection of our ratepayers." The key word is, for the protection of our ratepayers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have heard speakers from the other side totally ignore a very basic reality that I want to point out and hope that the public are paying attention to, because it is something the government wants to ignore over and over. They talk about us on this side of the House using politics. They talk about us not using facts. They talk about us ignoring what is reality out there, but they are the ones who are ignoring reality.

I have heard this side of the House; the government side of the House today say that the Public Utilities Board said that Muskrat Falls was the least-cost option. Here is what the Utility Board said, "The Board does not believe that it is possible to make a least-cost determination based on a concept study or feasibility level of information...."

MR. DALLEY: A point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources, on a point of order.

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, sorry to interrupt, because I am interested in what the member has to say, but at no point on this side of the House did anybody say that the Public Utilities Board said that Muskrat Falls was not the least-cost option.

MR. SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

I invite the minister to read Hansard tomorrow. This is something they have done over and over. They did it when we were debating Muskrat Falls in this House, misquoting the Public Utilities Board, taking one sentence out of it and misquoting. They did it over and over.

What the Public Utilities Board said is: You have given us this task too soon. They have said that they could not make a determination with

regard to whether or not it was the least-cost option with the information they had. They were dealing with 2010 figures and they wanted the DG3 figures. The government knows that. We know it.

Government said: Oh, you are not capable of doing your job because you cannot make a determination. Government set the whole situation up so that the Public Utilities Board could not make a determination. They gave them a narrow mandate, they asked them to make a decision before things were finalized, and then they said: You cannot do your job; therefore, you are out of the picture.

The Public Utilities Board, yes, it has a responsibility for setting rates and approving rates, but they also have to regulate. They also have to look at projects. They also have to be able to say: Can this project deliver a good rate for people? That is the part that has been taken away from them by this government. That is the part that was taken away from our utilities board, while in Nova Scotia their utilities board, the UARB, was left with that responsibility. That is why they are saying what they are saying about the Maritime Link.

It is not the government in Nova Scotia that is saying it. It is their utilities board that is saying and has said, and now is holding extra hearings, that what you presented to us, by itself, is not good for the people of Nova Scotia. Here are conditions we want you to meet and you have to show us that you can meet them so that the cost of electricity for Nova Scotian people will be as low as possible.

The PUB did not get a chance to say that, Mr. Speaker. Yes, it is true that down the road when they have rates presented to them they are going to have to look at those rates and say yes or no, but they will be doing it based on a project that exists and they cannot do anything about, and a project they did not have the ability to make a judgment on because the government did not allow them to do that. It has been taken out of their hands.

Yes, they will have the same mandate with regard to the rates, that is true, but like I said, they are also supposed to be in their mandate involved in the regulation. That also involves looking at a project and seeing: Will the project be able to deliver low rates? They said at the point in time when they were being forced to make a decision, at that point in time they did not have the information they needed to say that it was the least-cost option.

Saying that they will be able to do their job once Muskrat Falls is on the go and rates are presented to them, that is only the end product; they did not get the chance to say this project will actually protect the people of this Province. That is what the UARB is getting.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, we are asking – and I do support this resolution; I am glad that it is on the floor of the House. It is something that I have been calling for as well. I do say that this government has the power – they are not using it because, politically, they do not want to use it – to bring it back to the PUB and let the PUB do its job. They have the power to say to the PUB: Let's look at this whole picture now.

Why is it that this government is not concerned about the fact that the people of this Province, who are paying for Muskrat Falls, will have higher utility rates than the people of Nova Scotia? There is something seriously wrong with that picture, Mr. Speaker – something very seriously wrong. I am so disappointed that the government continues to only tell part of the story when they stand on their feet, Mr. Speaker, and that is what has happened here today.

The same way they had a joint review panel put together by both the federal and provincial governments, and that review panel did not approve Muskrat Falls. It had sentences in it that they take out and use; but, in the long run, it said it did not have enough information, and they named the areas where they did not have enough information, to be able to say that this was the least-cost option. Yet government continues to say it is the least-cost option. That is why this should be going to the PUB, Mr. Speaker. It is very, very disturbing.

We have a situation now where in Nova Scotia – and this again is the story government does not bother to say. Again, it is maybe a story that the public is not aware of because we do not get a lot of news from Nova Scotia in the Newfoundland and Labrador newscast, whether on radio, television, or in the papers, so people may not be aware of the discussion that is going on over there between the Government of Nova Scotia and Emera.

The Government of Nova Scotia is quite concerned. They are the ones who are saying – and this comes from the new minister – that the province's energy regulator is not constrained by any looming deadlines as it considers a complex commercial agreement that has become a lynchpin for the proposed \$1.5 billion Maritime Link project.

So what they have in their hands now is a complex commercial agreement. They were expecting the various concerned groups in Nova Scotia to, in two or three days, be ready for hearings. All of the people, all of the organizations, including the small business association in Nova Scotia, spoke out and said: This is way too complex. What is now put together by Nalcor and Emera is so complex that we need more time to investigate it. So that more time has been given. Instead of the hearings happening from November 6-8, they changed the dates to November 14, November 15, and November 18 to give people time to look at this complex agreement.

What they have to determine, as they present to the UARB, is this complex agreement going to meet the conditions? Is this complex agreement going to mean that it will be the least-possible cost to the consumers of Nova Scotia if the new agreement is put in place? That is the bottom line for the UARB, but that means nothing to our Province. That means nothing to the Premier. It means nothing to the Cabinet. It means nothing to that side of the House. Getting cheaper electricity for the people of this Province means nothing.

So, yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to see this complex agreement put before our PUB. I

would like to see our utility board look at: Are the people of this Province getting the best deal? That has nothing to do with the firm and non-firm power. I fully understand what we mean by the firm power and the non-firm power. It is the process that we are talking about here today.

So whether or not the 40 per cent of the non-firm power is being funnelled into Nova Scotia, whether or not it is going to the industrial operations and the mining companies in Labrador, that is not the issue; the issue is: Why are the people of Nova Scotia going to be paying less for their power than the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and why is it that this government did not put all of the information on the table for the PUB to make that determination?

We heard insults in this House during the debate, Mr. Speaker, from the government side saying: The PUB did not have the ability to make those determinations; they did not have the expertise themselves. Well, the PUB continually has to use outside expertise, just like we have to use outside expertise, the government uses outside expertise. That is all part of the process. To say that the PUB did not have what they needed to do the job that is part of their mandate is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the government: Stop telling the people of the Province only part of the story. Tell the people of the Province the whole story. I have to ask them: What is their fear? Why were they afraid to put it in front of the PUB? They have never answered that question, Mr. Speaker.

I do have a question that I have sort of had on my plate for the past couple of days but I have not gotten to ask it. I still would like the government, whether it is the minister or the Premier, I would like one of them to still explain to us – and I know it does not have to do with the issue of what the people in the Province are paying. I still need to know when the Premier says that 40 per cent of the Muskrat Falls power was for industrial development and increased demand in the Province – and that is what we have been told, Nalcor has told us that, I think

the minister referred to it already today, that 40 per cent of the non-firm power being there for mining in Labrador.

Then the new deal between Emera and Nalcor says that they have to have access to that 40 per cent; Nova Scotia has to have access to that 40 per cent so that they can then take it and sell it. Mr. Speaker, are we talking about the same power being used twice? They have never answered that question.

This government has gone full circle in saying why Muskrat Falls was needed. We know that they have never put on the table the details around other options that could have happened for Muskrat Falls. When we talk about least-cost option, the only thing they asked the PUB to look at were the three things they came up with for the determination of least-cost option, not what all the possibilities were.

Time is going to show, Mr. Speaker, whether or not their prognostications are correct. Time is going to show whether or not the usage of power on the Island is going to go up so much that we needed Muskrat Falls. Unfortunately, we will have spent billions of dollars by the time, time shows whether or not that is a fact.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today saying we should be bringing the PUB into this discussion. We should, before we spend any more money, let our Public Utilities Board determine whether or not what we are dealing with in Muskrat Falls really is for the good of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. When we had the debate here in the House in December 2012, I said very, very clearly that I could not make a determination because we did not have all the information. That is what the PUB said, and that is what I still say. We still do not know whether or not this is the best for the people of this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First, I would like to start off by saying how happy and honoured I am to be back in the House here representing the people of the great District of Lake Melville. It is my privilege indeed to be here on their behalf.

I would like to thank everybody; I have been listening intently to the debate going on here. There are a few things, I guess, questionably you could say that I have heard so far in the House today. One of those things that just kind of makes you go hmm is the fact that the Leader of the Third Party seems to be very interested and very vocal about exactly what the current Nova Scotia government thinks about the project and what could go wrong or what may happen; but back with the previous government, when it happened to be NDP as well, she totally dismissed it, did not want to hear of it, it did not exist.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: Just for the benefit of our listeners, Mr. Speaker, out there in TV land, that is something just to give a little thought towards when you are looking at the way the rest of the debate is going to go.

It is a privilege to speak on Muskrat Falls here today and this motion. I would first like to start saying that I was born along side the river, the Churchill River, the Mighty Churchill, the Mista Shipu, in Innu-aimun if you will. Mr. Speaker, I have fished it, I have boated on it, and I have helped my father trap alongside it. It truly is a beautiful, powerful river. This is what this is all about, Mr. Speaker, is power.

I am going to spend a little bit of time, if you will, restating the facts because the Leader of the Third Party talked a little bit about reality today. So I am going to give a little taste of reality and then I am going to bring it on home. I am going to take it right back to Lake Melville.

It is irrefutable; this is the least-cost option for us. This is in the best interest of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. If you just want to take a minute and say: Why is this such a great project? Well, simply, we are looking at the stability of rates. We are looking at low-cost power for homes and for businesses as well. Who are we looking at there? We are looking at our seniors. We are looking at low-income households. We are looking at those who want to engage in business and make a way for themselves in our Province, Mr. Speaker.

We also have the ability to end our dependence on oil. We all know we have talked about and we have heard our minister talk about our inability to control markets. Well, imagine the volatility in the oil market, Mr. Speaker, and that is what we want to get away from.

We are also talking and we have heard some people – our Member for Terra Nova got up and spoke eloquently about the fact that we have an opportunity for future mining endeavours in this Province, Labrador specifically, and I am quite excited about that.

We also are allowed to now take our power into different markets across North America, so our deal with Emera, everything, it points to an expansion of revenue streams for this government and for the people of the Province, Mr. Speaker.

Again, we have also heard some commentary today about clean, renewable energy, and some commentary about Holyrood itself and what that means to us when it comes off-line and the environmental benefits, Mr. Speaker. Never before in our history has a project undergone such scrutiny and never has such a vast amount of information been publicly available. That is a testament to the openness and transparency of not only this government, but the project itself.

It has been studied for years, Mr. Speaker, hundreds of reports and studies, tens of thousands of pages of information out there for analysis. It has been presented to all government parties, the PUB, consultants, regulators, the public, critics, and many more.

While we have said this time and time again, Mr. Speaker, it bears repeating: Nalcor is our company. It is owned by me, it is owned by you, and it is owned by everybody out there watching us on TV. There are no secret shareholders, there are no owners hidden, and there is nothing clandestine about this at all. It is a Newfoundland and Labrador company, owned by the people, and staffed by our own proud Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. That should be commended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, we have gone out and we have hired the best people in the world to run this company. They just happen to be from this Province, which is a happy coincidence as well. They have done their homework. They will work diligently on our behalf and make sure that everything with this project, from the engineering design, right on down to the construction, is going to be done properly. They are going to make sure that we have fair and equitable employment for those who want to work on this project as well, Mr. Speaker.

We have had some great debate here in the House about the PUB, the review, and what had happened, I guess. The whole point of this motion is they want to drag it back into the PUB and have it undergo some further scrutiny, Mr. Speaker.

Their advisor clearly acknowledged, from the very beginning – and that is MHI – that this is the least-cost option. No, it truly is – it is too bad that the PUB were unable to reach a decision, given the time frame and the resources provided to them. The whole arrangement, when it comes down to Emera, which is one of the things we are talking about here today, as the minister had said, I will echo his sentiment about the fact that this is non-firm power. It is the sale of power only after our needs at home have been met. So, we are only talking about a surplus here; we are not talking about dipping into what we are going to need for our future mining endeavours, and for the ratepayers, and our commercial and residential needs as well.

Mr. Speaker, the PUB was instructed to examine whether or not the development was the least-cost approach, and then compare that to the Isolated Island Option, the Holyrood option. There was a nine-month review process, and that was \$2 million-plus in terms of the cost. The conclusion essentially was that they could not come to a conclusion.

Despite the fact that Manitoba Hydro – the experts hired by the PUB – the Consumer Advocate, who also had an expert – lots of experts here; we talked about how many you could possibly hire if you want to in the House today. They were both able to come to a conclusion using the exact same information given to the PUB. It is just unfortunate.

So, all of those conclusions, they both supported the fact that it was the least-cost option, and the expert analysis by MHI represents a piece of work from that PUB process. It is puzzling that the PUB chose not to form conclusions based on the work of its very own expert. That is worth saying here today.

So we have Manitoba Hydro, the Consumer Advocate, you have others like Dr. Wade Locke, you have Navigant, they all used the same data that was given to the PUB; and it is unfortunate that the PUB could not come to the same conclusion.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to talk a little bit about what is happening in Labrador. We are going to see, say, over the next ten years or so, about close to \$10 billion – that is with a B – \$10 billion of investment expected in the region. Then we are talking about mining; we are going to see a lot of our resources developed. I am all for that, Mr. Speaker. I have said time and time again in this House, this is what I love to see.

From Muskrat Falls alone – we have already talked about this – we have 40 per cent of the available power can be there for that regional economic development. So if that happens to be mining, great, the power is there. It will benefit the business community. It will be available for industrial expansion and development in the

region at low cost. So, even for some of the stuff that is there when they want to expand, we will be ready to accommodate them. This will just keep bringing further business opportunities into the Province, Mr. Speaker.

We also heard some people talk about the number of jobs that are created and the number of person years of direct employment: 9,100 direct person years of employment in the Province; and 5,800, I am proud to say, will take place in Labrador, which is where I am from, of course. It will generate approximately \$450 million to Labradorians and Labrador-based businesses.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: We talked a little bit about employment as well, and first consideration being given as provided by the Tshash Petapen New Dawn Agreement provided to the Labrador Innu, and then all Labradorians to follow suit after, Mr. Speaker. More than 75 per cent of the work for the Muskrat Falls generation facility will take place in Labrador, including the construction of the dam, the powerhouse, and the transmission lines.

In 2010, Mr. Speaker, we worked with the federal government. So we had a partnership bringing the Innu, the Inuit, the NunatuKavut Community Council, all of them together to present us with the formation of the Labrador Aboriginal Training Partnership, or the LATP. We are talking about \$30 million put together from the various groups to initiate training.

You will see Nalcor getting together with the Aboriginal groups, taking people, putting them into a vertical, whether it is heavy equipment operation, security, whatever it happens to be to get them ready to take advantage of the project. The training addresses those disadvantages to education from remote locations where people live in order to get them active in this project and to allow them to take advantage and benefit from the opportunities.

Moving on here, I would just like to say in terms of the LATP and its success, right now today we

have over 200 Aboriginal people, aboriginal youth in a lot of cases, Mr. Speaker, taking advantage of that \$30 million. That is truly a wonderful thing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: In terms of the job opportunities, Mr. Speaker, we know that the benefits strategy, the IBA if you will, negotiated between Nalcor and the provincial government, has that hiring protocol. It is Innu first, (inaudible) then it comes down to qualified residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, and then there are also people from across Canada. We can go internationally if we have to in order to take advantage of skill sets that cannot be found locally. No matter how you look at it, Mr. Speaker, it is about getting as many of our people to work at the project and get the most benefit for themselves and their families.

Right now, if you look at August, and those are the numbers I will use, we have over 1,500 people currently working on components of the project itself; 76 per cent, Mr. Speaker, so almost 1,200 people, were residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. Those are great numbers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: Now, we will come back to my spot. Come back to Labrador, Mr. Speaker, we have just about 400, 391 to be exact, were Labrador residents, and 186 of that 391 were representative of Labrador Aboriginal groups, which is a wonderful number as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: What we are seeing is that employment for those Labrador residents rose 22 per cent over the previous month. From Labrador Aboriginal groups it rose 16 per cent, which is great progress. We have 974 people directly working in Labrador, and 40 per cent of the work completed in Labrador was done by Labrador residents. I like the sound of that, Mr. Speaker.

I am not going to sit here today and say that everything does not come without its challenges, a megaproject of this size. We are aware of the tasks we have to do as a government, and I am specifically, as MHA, directly inside of Lake Melville. It is in these challenges that we will find opportunity. It is the same thing Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have done for generations, which is to succeed in a harsh environment and find a way to make ends meet.

Mr. Speaker, under the strong leadership of our Premier we are ready. I am ready as MHA, and I tell you what, the great people of Lake Melville are certainly ready to handle these challenges and to do whatever it takes to take advantage and maximum advantage at that, of the benefits of this project.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: I only have a couple of minutes left, Mr. Speaker, so I am going to talk about Lake Melville directly and what is happening. Right now, the project may seem to some people as though it is in full swing, but we are only getting started. We are just getting to the point where we can say we have the real meat and potatoes of the project.

Mr. Speaker, we have contracting companies that are local. They are seeing more work than ever before, and they are hiring more people as they go. We have local businesses seeing increased sales for their products and services in Lake Melville. We have local businesses partnering with organizations that can offer them the capacity to bid on and secure work that they never, ever dreamed of being possible.

Entrepreneurs, Mr. Speaker, are seizing the day. New businesses are springing up almost daily. We are seeing the towns, they are growing and they are prospering. We are seeing expansion with more amenities than ever before. We are having new residents come in, new groups, and new vendors. The migration is still there from the North and the South of Labrador. If there is an exodus from the Southern Coast, they are coming up to Lake Melville. They are most welcome, I say to the member across the way.

People are also getting the opportunity to work for fantastic wages, Mr. Speaker. This allows them to move ahead in life, to have a higher quality of life for themselves and their family, and take care of their loved ones along the way.

I have seen it, it is not only in the communities in my district but I will go so far as to say my neighbourhood. I am seeing people get in there, operators, security personnel, there are people in management. We are getting some great labour jobs. Mr. Speaker, the sky is the limit for what is possible with this project and the people in the district are going to take maximum advantage of that.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will say that it is time to embrace the path that we are on as a Province. This is what we have been planning for. It is what we have all been working together towards. Under our Premier's leadership, we have been fighting for this since day one when it comes to Muskrat Falls.

This path, Mr. Speaker, makes us the envy of the Nation in just about every measurable category. It will result in our continued transformation into an energy super warehouse that will ensure the success of our future generations.

In my last few seconds I will say just this, I am not supporting this motion. I think it is time to stop all of the game playing and all the political posturing, Mr. Speaker. It is time to share in the pride of this project, the pride in our strong economy –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: - pride in our bright future as the greatest Province in Canada, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I recognize the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First, I would like to make a comment to the Member for Terra Nova. Get used to looking at me; I am going to be up every day. It is only day three, but I am happy that I have made an impression on him as he said already. He said she has really left an impression. Sometimes I do have that ability. I am pleased.

I also want to say in response to a Tweet that the Member for Terra Nova sent out yesterday. I hope he read the response that came back regarding a Q2 report. I am not a big Tweeter. I am a bit like Minister O'Brien; I am not big at it. Someone else had to bring it to my attention, but in the Q2 – the member, my apologies. The Tweet clearly showed, Mr. Speaker, that we had 2,782 people coming in in the last quarter and we had 3,805 going out. I ask the members across the way to do the math. Math was not my strong subject.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few minutes to speak to the motion that was tabled on Monday. The Public Utilities Board in our Province was denied the right to a thorough review of the Muskrat Falls Project under this Premier and government after they imposed unreasonable conditions on what was nothing more than a pseudo review of the biggest multi-billion dollar investment in our history.

Mr. Speaker, the Chair of the PUB himself indicated that there was no way a proper review could be completed under such stringent conditions. In fact, the PUB could not deliver a proper ruling on the same project, as they were under such a tight timeline and they could not gain access to the same resources as Nalcor and government.

Mr. Speaker, the UARB in Nova Scotia was given an opportunity that our own PUB never had. The UARB took sufficient time to review the Maritime Link and aspects of the Muskrat Falls Project to determine what benefits would be in it for the people of Nova Scotia. A luxury the Public Utilities Board in our own Province was denied by this government. The UARB made its recommendations in order to protect the

best interest of the people of Nova Scotia. I wish we had the foresight to follow suit.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard repeatedly that this government has no respect for the PUB. In fact, it was only last year in this very House that the former Minister of Natural Resources said he had no confidence in the PUB to do their work. In fact, the minister even discussed dismantling the PUB because of its inability to make a decision on Muskrat Falls. It is evident that rather than grant the PUB the opportunity for a full review of this multi-billion dollar cost to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, this government is prepared to stifle even their own appointed bodies.

Mr. Speaker, every day the Premier and her ministers stand up and tout the lowest-cost option and benefits of the Muskrat Falls Project but there are people in my district questioning when they will benefit from this project. I can tell you now that the reality of where I come from is an awful lot different than what the Member for Terra Nova is referencing. We have businesses paying very, very high commercial (inaudible).

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): Order, please!

MS DEMPSTER: Where are the lower benefits that were promised in the Northern Strategic Plan? We are not able to have any expansion, any growth, any start up, and now we are looking at a proposed 25 per cent increase on our hydro rates and that is what we call benefits? Massive towers are going to go across our land, our berry grounds, float plane bases that have been operating for forty years, Mr. Speaker, and we are supposed to accept that as benefits?

Any jobs that are created, which I might add, the greatest majority of them are definitely outside Labrador. I know what I am talking about, Mr. Speaker, because I worked for twenty-three years in employment and career counselling, and I know about the people who were looking for jobs. I had just enough people on the inside to tell me what was happening. When my desk

was this high with resumes they were flying them in from the Maritimes and the Island and Ontario. It happened repeatedly, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to tell you that since I became elected my consistency office has become an employment office for those who are looking. Because do you know what, Mr. Speaker? They have nowhere to go with a resume to look for labour market information to find out where the jobs are. Why? Because this government cut all of the EAS offices around the Province, and that included five from my district. So they do not know who they put their resume in to. My constituency office has become an employment office, and it has taken time that I need to be serving seniors and other important people in the area.

Diesel generators, Mr. Speaker, that is what we have in Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair. While this government talks about clean energy and the importance of that, it is spewing toxins out into the air, but there is no mention of that. Yes, I would love to sit and chat with any of the members across the way and talk about the benefits that we are getting from this project.

It is only too clear that the Labradorians who were promised the jobs are few and far between. Mr. Speaker, we tried. When I was still in EAS this spring and there was a Web site set up, jobs at muskratfallsjobs.com, I said to my staff, let's go out into the district, let's have public meetings in every town, let's show people what they need to do to get their resume online to have a chance at the jobs. We did all that. We signed up several hundred people, Mr. Speaker, and seven got jobs out of several hundred people that we signed up. We did not get a chance to do any more follow up because we were all asked to close our doors at the end of June.

Mr. Speaker, I have spent years working on behalf of Labradorians to help them ensure that they get on the road to viable career options, and it is very, very disappointing when you have a project of this magnitude and we are not the primary beneficiaries. My colleague next to me, Mr. Speaker, when you go on the Web site there is a rating, Innu first and Labradorians next. I

knew we were not next. I knew my reality. Yesterday I sat next to my colleague as he received many, many calls from Innu that are trying to get in there, and they were not getting in. We do have the facts, we have the stats. We can produce it, Mr. Speaker.

I was encouraged by word, Mr. Speaker, that there would be a Labrador benefits agreement, but I am sadly disappointed that even though it has been referenced over and over again, it is not being effective. I have to ask again today here: Where are the benefits for the people of Labrador? Yes, there are a few businesses that are making a buck.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I have heard from many, many small businesses that are wondering how they are going to afford to pay the workers once they come back and they expect \$50 an hour when the businesses cannot afford that. Those are some of the problems we are going to have to face down the road as a result of all this. Yes, they are paying very good jobs in Muskrat Falls. We know all about it, Mr. Speaker. We do not have any nurses down in the hospital in Goose Bay to do the job because they have gone for more lucrative paying ones.

Where are the promised jobs for the Aboriginals, for the tradespeople in Labrador? Why is Labrador losing out once again on yet another multi-billion dollar industrial project while government continues to talk about how wonderful it is? Tradespeople, Mr. Speaker, are struggling to get in there. The Conference Board of Canada is giving us stats that by 2020 we will have a skilled trades shortage in our Province of 70,000; yet we have skilled tradespeople all around us who are not able to get a look-in at places like Muskrat Falls.

One year ago in November, 2012, the Minister of Natural Resources said, and I quote, Mr. Speaker, "...Muskrat Falls will be an important source of power for potential mining development." This was in reference to an analysis of the iron ore mining industry in Labrador, also released by the speaker. In fact, the same report states that the development of such large industrial projects "...will be

dependent... on the availability of power, and Muskrat Falls power is needed to support mining developments in Labrador."

Mr. Speaker, how things change in just a year – how they change. Here we are a year later and we have learned from this government that they have promised away excess power to Emera in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, earlier I referenced a decision by the UARB in Nova Scotia to request lower rates for excess power from Muskrat Falls.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources, on a point of order.

MR. DALLEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out 40 per cent of firm power is available –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. DALLEY: – for industrial development in Labrador, Mr. Speaker. Just to be clear.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

MS DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, earlier I referenced excess power that will be sold in that province to ratepayers at just four cents a kilowatt instead of the fifteen cents a kilowatt that ratepayers here in our Province will pay. It is because of the UARB ruling that the 40 per cent excess power from Muskrat Falls may now be promised away to Nova Scotia in the form of a power purchase agreement; another promise, Mr. Speaker, from a Premier and a government who is gambling with the future of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

There are so many mining projects in Labrador that could avail of Muskrat Falls power. The government's own press release lists IOC, Voisey's Bay, Wabush Mines, Labrador Iron Mines and Carol Lake, just to name a few. Why is it that market for Muskrat Falls power from these mining operations has finally dried up, Mr. Speaker?

I have to ask: What has happened to the demand for Muskrat power from these sources that we can no longer provide with the 40 per cent excess power? It is evident that the best interests of the people of our Province is not a priority for this government when it comes to Muskrat Falls power.

If the Premier was serious about ensuring benefits for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, she would send the Muskrat Falls Project back to the Public Utilities Board for a full review to protect the ratepayers that are here in our Province.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HEDDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just have a couple of minutes, but just on the last thing that the hon. member on the other side just talked about. She talked about our Premier. Well, I will tell you about our Premier. Our Premier knows how to get a good deal and I can tell you –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HEDDERSON: Do you want me to go down through it? I will go down through how this Premier is protecting the interests of the people (inaudible) –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JOYCE: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition, on a point of order.

MR. JOYCE: Yes, I hear about our good Premier. Ask about the pellet plant or the (inaudible) –

MR. SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Please take your seat.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main, you have a few moments to finish your comments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HEDDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I was saying, this Premier who got the federal loan guarantee which will mean \$1 billion for this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HEDDERSON: How about the White Rose Extension, \$7 billion; how about settling our public service contracts? This is our Premier. How about CETA? I can tell the hon. members on the other side that this Premier has given away nothing and there is nothing going to Nova Scotia that will affect the benefits that go to Newfoundland and Labrador. When it comes –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

It now being 4:45 p.m., I call on the Member for Humber Valley to conclude debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HEDDERSON: Stay tuned over there.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Member for Harbour Main just said: stay tuned. I am sure what that means, but he did talk about a number of different things. As a matter of fact, one of the things that he did mention in his closing comments was the federal loan guarantee. Now, unless there is something that I have not seen yet, because he said we have the federal loan guarantee, I have not seen that agreement yet; I have seen a draft form. It has not been concluded.

As a matter of fact, I understand it came up twice during recent discussions with CETA and apparently the federal loan guarantee was put back into negotiations, the CETA negotiations. I was surprised to hear that because I understood that that was signed off quite some months ago. In actual fact, I believe, in the draft form, it is.

With that said, however, there are a number of conditions around the federal loan guarantee that must be met. So I ask members opposite when you say you have the federal loan guarantee – I asked the question yesterday in the House of Assembly: Do we have those conditions met? Well, I do not believe we do. I believe there are a number of conditions with the federal loan guarantee that we have not met.

One of the things that we have not met is the cost – and people may groan and people may ask questions about that. I will ask this one simple question: Do we have the price of a Maritime Link yet? That was supposed to happen in October of this year. Do we know the price yet? Well that is one of the things that we do know. We will then have ninety days to bring this to a financial close, once these conditions are met.

When you say we have a federal loan guarantee, we do not have a federal loan guarantee yet. I hope we do, because it will make a significant difference and will be a significant factor in the Muskrat Falls Project. Do we have it? No, we do not.

We also understand that we are dealing with the Prime Minister up there right now and if he is willing to put it on the table during other negotiations then, do you know what? The deal will be done when we have the deal done.

One of the reasons why we have been asking questions about this and asking that this go back to the Public Utilities Board, because when you look back at this particular arrangement with Muskrat Falls right now it is a different deal. We are hearing a lot of discussion on non-firm power versus firm power. I mentioned earlier when we talked about firm power: How big is this project today?

Because if you add it all up, we started out with 4.9 terawatt hours. How big is it today? Is it bigger than that? We do not know. All I do know is there is a transmission line that comes out of Labrador that is 900 megawatts.

Ironically, in the submission made to the UARB just a few months ago, Emera described a 1,200 megawatt power line, somewhere between 900 and 1,200 megawatts. How big is the line? We do not know.

I have a letter that is gone in looking for the information because if the line indeed is bigger than that – because this was part of the discussion in Nova Scotia. Is it 900 or is it 1,200? Do you know? I ask the Member for Terra Nova; he is shaking his head. Does he know the answer? Is it 900 or is it 1,200? At the submission in Nova Scotia that was there.

One of the things that were very important in Nova Scotia was that they would get, with certainty, access to the surplus power. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I am just going to read a part of the Compliance Filing that just went in on October 21. There were two appendixes that went with this; one being the Energy Access Agreement, and the Nalcor balancing agreement. I will get to that a little bit later. “In particular, the condition that requires assured access to Market-priced Energy has been addressed. Emera, Nalcor and NS Power have reached an agreement to assure the availability of Market-priced Energy on the terms set out in this Compliance Filing.”

They would not be saying that if they did not want to have some certainty into this excess power. That is right from the beginning and that is fine. That is fine because what we are talking about there is non-firm power. It goes on to say that without the access to this non-firm power, this surplus power, the Maritime Link option in Nova Scotia would not be the cheapest option. They needed this power.

What they did is they went on through this Compliance Filing. This is on page 12 and it says this; "In the event that a Nalcor progress report indicates that the actual average annual amount of energy to be made available to NS Power over the term will be less than 1.2 TWh". If it is less than that, what do we do to satisfy this condition? This is what we do: "Nalcor and Emera will work together to find a commercially reasonable solution, such that not less than the average of 1.2 TWh will be available to NS Power over the term. In such a situation, Emera will become responsible for the variance to a maximum of 300 GWh per remaining contract year under essentially the same terms and conditions to which Nalcor is committed" – so there is the commitment from Nalcor – "including participating in annual NS Power competitive solicitations under the same pricing structure. Nalcor will remain responsible for the balance...".

There you go, Mr. Speaker, there is a responsibility that has been accepted by Nalcor at some point to find that power. Now, you can do that from other sources. You can do that by generating wind. You can do that by producing small hydro, and I heard the Premier say that. Maybe we will dip into the warehouse and find other ways of doing that.

What I did not hear, though, is how much is that going to cost the ratepayers here in this Province if we have to find some other way to meet that condition? What would happen? I have not seen any of that. As a matter of fact, these are all options that were dismissed in the first round. They said no, no, none of these options are any good to us.

It is very clear right now that Nova Scotia wants access to more of the surplus energy, the non-firm energy, as we call it here today. We can go up to 1.8 terawatt hours, but we have to average 1.2 terawatt hours through to 2041. So this is where we are, Mr. Speaker. This project has indeed changed.

As a matter of fact, in order to do that, when they talked about how you would meet the condition, they go on to say that either Nova Scotia Power or Emera may use wind energy or other intermittent sources of generation to deliver their portion of the market-based energy, in which Nalcor has committed to providing balancing services in accordance with a balancing services agreement. That is another agreement that gets attached to this, and it speaks to about 100 megawatts of power we would commit so that you could balance the system in Nova Scotia. So this is where it sits today.

I really believe there are more commitments here from Nalcor than we voted on last December here. The business case and what we have discussed at the PUB before it was dismissed, what was told to the public, where we spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in telling the people how great a project this is, this has indeed changed right now.

Mr. Speaker, we often hear people talk about the business case for the Muskrat Falls development. We often say we have people on Wall Street or Bay Street or every other street that are lining up to finance this project. Then you ask yourself, why is that? If it is so good, why would people like me be even asking questions?

Well, the business case for the Muskrat Falls Project is really premised on one thing, and that is a power purchase agreement with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that says you have to pay. You have no choice here. Now, in Nova Scotia they will have choice. They can use our power. If they want to they can say no to it, but we have given them the first right of refusal. Ideally, that is not a bad spot to be.

First right of refusal is a good thing. If I was Nova Scotia, I would want it, too.

The fact is in Newfoundland and Labrador our business case is not built on a revenue model that says it works without the power purchase agreement. It would not work without the power purchase agreement. I would challenge anybody to go seek financing on this project without a power purchase agreement, without taking away any options for the people in this Province to use other sources of energy. It could be gas.

Who knows what it is in future years, but for fifty years we will not have that option, Mr. Speaker. That is the only thing that makes this business case work. We have put the risk in. We are assuming the cost overruns. We do not know what the price of this project is. We do not know that. All we know is that we are assuming the risk. We are taking the risk. That is the only thing that makes this business case work.

Mr. Speaker, one the things that people talk about is the position that Emera holds in this particular project. Emera's business case is quite different. We all know it is a publicly traded company. The amount of money they spend on capital, they get their rate of return, between eight and three-quarters to about nine and a quarter. That is how it works for Emera. This is the reason why they are so interested in being a part of this project. On top of that, we have given them a part of our transmission line as well.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. BALL: Yes, a transmission line in Newfoundland and Labrador. From Labrador to Soldiers Pond, Emera will own a portion of that transmission line. You know it.

AN HON. MEMBER: They are paying for it.

MR. BALL: They are paying for it, and they are going to get a great rate of return for it too, aren't they? Are they not? They are getting a great rate of return for it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Premier, on a point of order.

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to the member that the rate of return for utilities in this Province is set by the PUB.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

MR. BALL: That is okay. We understand who sets the rate of return by utilities in our Province, but we also know that utilities are put in place to put safe reliable power. They did not give them that option though, did they?

MR. JOYCE: No, they never.

MR. BALL: Did they give them that option? No, they did not, Mr. Speaker. They did not.

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Premier, on a point of order.

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to point out that the hydro projects that were developed under the Liberal government were also –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We often talk about who is the primary beneficiary, who are the primary beneficiaries of this project? Ask yourself: who gets the cheaper rates? There is no arguing here, it will be the Nova Scotians. Reliable power, we both get reliable power. What about safe power? We will both get safe power. What about the environmental damage? We will accept all of that, I say, Mr. Speaker. Most of that will come our way.

The financial risk, who takes the financial risk? We do, Mr. Speaker. We take the financial risks. There is no cost at all to the ratepayer in Nova Scotia for this project at all – none whatsoever.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. BALL: No, that is Emera, I say to the – Mr. Speaker, we are getting some heckling from the other side. It is Emera that is accepting the risk here, not those ratepayers – not the ratepayers at all. So the financial risks are accepted right here by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is why this project should go back to the Public Utilities Board. People in Newfoundland and Labrador should have the same input into this, into our own Public Utilities Board, the same as they do in Nova Scotia.

Why is it that we have Nalcor today over participating with the UARB, the Public Utilities Board in Nova Scotia, yet we could not have the same happen here in our own Province? I say, Mr. Speaker, why can that not happen?

Mr. Speaker, my time is running out. I only have two minutes here. I have not really had much of a chance to talk about the other issue, the elephant in the room, as we say, and this is Hydro-Quebec. There is a lot of confidence on the other side here, I will say, into a water management agreement that has been put in

place by the PUB. They have laid a lot of weight and they have put a lot of our money in knowing that the PUB got it right.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly hope they have it right because without a water management agreement I can assure you this is a much different project. You talk about firm power, then; you will not have to worry about firm power because there will not be that much of it around. It is not me saying that, as I said earlier; this is Nalcor saying that.

MR. DALLEY: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources, on a point of order.

MR. DALLEY: Sorry to interrupt, Mr. Speaker, but the Hydro-Quebec, the court ruling (inaudible) –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind members the Speaker is having very little tolerance for continuing to ignore the Speaker when the Speaker is standing in his place and asking for order in the House. Just to remind members, if the Speaker stands, members are to sit in their place, and it ends the debate and discussion.

I would ask all members on all sides of the House to be mindful of the role the Speaker plays in governing proceedings of the House.

The Member for Humber Valley.

MR. BALL: I will close, Mr. Speaker, with a few final comments and the question about what is happening in Quebec right now with the water management agreement. We have put a lot of emphasis, in 2007, a piece of legislation in this House about how we apply water management on the Churchill River. I would say right now, and Nalcor makes it very clear, without a water management agreement in place we will be challenged in Quebec right now. This project will be a much smaller project.

Mr. Speaker, that is the reason I believe the people of Newfoundland –

This House now stands adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

It is now 5:00 o'clock. It is Private Members' Day. The question will be put.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

AN HON. MEMBER: Division.

MR. SPEAKER: Division has been called. Summon the members.

Division

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

CLERK: Mr. Joyce, Mr. Andrew Parsons, Mr. Osborne, Mr. Ball, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Edmunds, Ms Dempster, Ms Michael, Mr. Murphy, Ms Rogers, Mr. Kirby, Mr. Mitchelmore.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against the motion, please rise.

CLERK: Premier Dunderdale, Ms Shea, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Davis, Mr. McGrath, Mr. Crummell, Mr. French, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Jackman, Mr. Littlejohn, Mr. Hedderson, Mr. Dalley, Ms Sullivan, Ms Johnson, Mr. Kent, Mr. Felix Collins, Mr. Kevin Parsons, Mr. Cross, Mr. Forsey, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Dinn, Mr. Pollard, Mr. Brazil, Mr. Granter, Mr. Sandy Collins, Mr. Lane, Mr. Cornect, Mr. Peach, Ms Perry, Mr. Little, Mr. Russell.

Mr. Speaker, the ayes twelve; the nays thirty-one.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is defeated.