



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume L

SECOND SESSION

Number 28A

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

Thursday

April 27, 2023
(Night Sitting)

The House resumed at 6:25 p.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Motion 1.

SPEAKER: We are now debating the amendment to the budget.

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

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to stand and have a few minutes and have a little speech. I'm glad today that the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology had a good speech on how this House changed and the Speaker gave him about a 10-minute latitude to talk about how the House changed.

It did in this House. The House did change, but the way certain Members are treated – and I can speak for the two independents – it got worse rather than better. I'm just going to read something – and everybody knows the situation I was in back in 2018 and the situation has been going on. I'm going to read something into the record, Mr. Speaker, because this House is funded by this budget. The Management Commission is funded by the budget and Officers of the House of Assembly are, so it's all related to the budget.

I'm going to read something: I, Brian Warr, of the Town of Springdale, in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, make oath and say the following: On October 30, 2018, I was Deputy Speaker of the House. On October 29, 2018, Mr. Eddie Joyce, MHA for the Bay of Islands, raised a point of privilege in the House of Assembly. On October 30, 2018, Mr. Perry Trimper, Speaker of the House of Assembly, made a ruling there was no prima facie case on the point of privilege.

In November, Eddie Joyce asked me to join him in a meeting with Speaker Trimper. The three of us met in the Speaker's office. Eddie Joyce showed him the two emails that he wrote, saying it was the in camera session. Eddie Joyce stated: Perry, you were in the meeting. You heard Bruce Chaulk say I refused to participate. Eddie Joyce then said: Perry, you told me in front of the Speaker's Chair that this is not what he said in the morning; you were definitely willing to meet.

Eddie Joyce said: Perry, you heard Bruce Chaulk say, I forgot those letters. I will correct the record. Eddie Joyce then said: How can you make that ruling? Perry Trimper replied: Eddie, I know you were right but he's an Officer of the House of Assembly; it's hard for me to do. Eddie Joyce turned to me and said: Remember this conversation and see the BS that I have to put up with.

What I'm talking about, how this changed, here's the Speaker of the House of Assembly –

SPEAKER: Order!

I will remind you to stay relevant.

E. JOYCE: Pardon me?

SPEAKER: Stay relevant.

E. JOYCE: It is relevant.

It is. The Management Commission is relevant.

SPEAKER: We're debating the amendment to the budget.

E. JOYCE: This is a prime example, Mr. Speaker, how independents get shut down.

SPEAKER: I ask you to stay relevant and I ask you to respect the Chair.

E. JOYCE: Well, I am. It is part of the budget. We pay for the Management Commission.

SPEAKER: How is relevant to the budget?

E. JOYCE: We pay for the Management Commission.

I'm going to read another one in there, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER: The Management Commission is not a paid position.

E. JOYCE: It is not a paid position –

SPEAKER: They're elected officials from the House of Assembly.

E. JOYCE: They're the Officers of the House of Assembly.

SPEAKER: Officers?

E. JOYCE: Yes.

P. LANE: Who pays there salaries?

E. JOYCE: Who pays their salary? The budget.

SPEAKER: I asked you to stay relevant to the budget.

E. JOYCE: It is relevant, Mr. Speaker. This is a prime example. Here's the Minister for Industry speaking for 10 minutes on how the House changed and I'm putting here in the record that the Speaker admitted that the Commissioner for Legislative Standards made false statements in the Management Commission and there was nothing done and it was never brought to the House of Assembly.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

That particular matter was brought to the floor of the House of Assembly, it was dealt with, it was ruled upon and the House ruled.

E. JOYCE: Okay.

SPEAKER: So I ask you to stay relevant to the debate.

E. JOYCE: I'll ask you one question, Mr. Speaker, as Speaker.

SPEAKER: No, you have no right to ask.

E. JOYCE: I'll ask the House a question.

SPEAKER: You can ask the House a question when –

E. JOYCE: I'll ask the House of Assembly. Who in this House of Assembly, when they heard about it, knew the Speaker withheld information and wouldn't bring any information to the House of Assembly? Who? That's how this House of Assembly changed in the times. Here's an affidavit.

I have another here; I won't even read it. The Member, who was the minister of Industry, Energy and Technology, another affidavit, what he said in the Management Commission. Do you know who asked that question? It was the Deputy Premier who asked the question.

SPEAKER: Again, I ask you to stay relevant. You're discussing a matter that's already been brought before the House. It was ruled upon; a decision was made, so I ask you to stay relevant to the budget.

E. JOYCE: But it is relevant, my blessed. How can we say in this House of Assembly that we can give Officers of the House of Assembly all this money to run their office, yet they can go into a Management Commission and make false, misleading statements – the Speaker admits it. The Deputy Premier asked the question. The minister who was minister of Justice at the time – but how do we hold them accountable? This is our funds. How do we hold them accountable? We, as the House, approve their budget. So how can you say it's not relevant?

SPEAKER: I know you're questioning the Chair, but I say it's not relevant because the issue that you're discussing right now has been dealt with by the House of Assembly. A ruling was made on it. You're going back to try to bring back issues that have been ruled upon by the House.

P. LANE: I guess we're not going to bring up Muskrat Falls again?

E. JOYCE: Well, I guess we can't bring up Muskrat Falls. I guess we can't bring up Muskrat Falls any more because we already debated that in the House. The next time someone brings up Muskrat Falls, we're not going to be able to talk about Muskrat Falls. We can't talk about the ferries anymore. Anything before that was relevant in this House we can't talk about it.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

E. JOYCE: Pardon me? You're right, this should have been brought to the House of Assembly then, but this is a prime example of why and how this House of Assembly changed, Mr. Speaker.

I'll just talk about it again in general terms. Officers of this House of Assembly are responsible for this House because we approve the budget. We approve the budget for the Officers of this House of Assembly. How do we keep Officers of this House of Assembly accountable if you can't bring up things that come to light about things that's done and said? How can we do it? What do we do? Just write the cheque out now and say you go do what you like, say what you like, mislead the Management Commission and there's no reprisal.

P. LANE: Trying to bully and harass Members of the House.

E. JOYCE: Trying to bully and harass Members of the House of Assembly.

P. LANE: Use the power.

E. JOYCE: Use the power.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is the point that I'm trying to make. I understand you're the Speaker. I understand that you're saying that this happened in the past, but I'm trying to explain to you why this House of Assembly needs to keep those Officers of the House of Assembly accountable. The Management Commission is part of this House of Assembly and we need to keep the Management Commission accountable. We have to.

I ask you one question as Speaker – I know I can't ask you a question – but I ask that you table it for me, the October 24, 2018, meeting when these statements were made that we had two affidavits – and I'll give the Member for Burgeo - La Poile credit, you've got courage. The Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology, he's got courage for standing up. That's why you've got principle, I've got to say.

I'll ask you a question, Mr. Speaker, and I ask that you table it in the House. Here are two affidavits that were presented. One person at the meeting, personally, the Deputy Premier was at the meeting, personally, I'll ask you to do it because I couldn't find it. Would you be kind enough to table the minutes of that meeting of October 24, 2018, in this House of Assembly? Because the duty to document, which we're all accountable for, at the meeting is supposed to be documented. The advice was that Eddie Joyce wouldn't participate.

So I ask you, Mr. Speaker, as the Speaker, as Chair of the Management Commission, would you please table those minutes because if those minutes aren't tabled in this House of Assembly and if there are no minutes available, then the Management Commission didn't do their duty. If we're funding all this here for the Officers of the House of Assembly and I can't stand up here, after going through this for four to five years of false allegations, and now we know, through affidavits, people are willing

to stand in this House, that the Officer of the House of Assembly made false statements and there are no minutes to prove that, we've got a bigger problem in this House of Assembly.

So when I said to the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology today, yes, the decorum in this House of Assembly has changed. It was much louder, much tougher. I was here. I used to try to keep it quiet all the time, but I was here. But I have to say what changed, Mr. Speaker, is now the two independents, I can't get into the other situation, not yet.

P. LANE: That time is coming.

E. JOYCE: That time is coming. Can't get into it. But now what they do, instead of having debate across the House of Assembly, they'll wait and try to get you in some room somewhere and try to crucify you because you bring up the stuff to the government too much. This is a prime example.

Do you know what's going to happen? I'll say here, I did receive some letters from the Management Commission about this.

Before I go any further, I just want to thank the people of the Humber - Bay of Island who supported me the last four or five years through all of this, and this is not more about me because I feel if there was an election called tomorrow, I'd get elected again. I feel I would. You never know, but I would work at it to get elected.

But the thing about me is that I'm trying to keep this House accountable. I'll just give you an example, Mr. Speaker. I wrote the Management Commission on this two or three times, wrote them again. The letters I got back is that Officers of the House of Assembly are answerable to the House; they have to be answerable to the House of Assembly. You signed the letters, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that. You signed the

three letters, I think, two or three; you signed the letters.

I asked a question in this House: If they're going to be accountable to this House of Assembly, the report that was done by the Citizens' Rep on the Commissioner for Legislative Standards, why wasn't that brought to the House of Assembly? Why wasn't it? Question.

You wrote me, Mr. Speaker – and this is holding this House accountable – and said any report by the Office of the House of Assembly has to be tabled in the House, has to be accountable to the House. Do you know what happened to that report, Mr. Speaker? You sent it to a third party, which I've been asking, the two letters that you sent me, saying we can't do that.

I say to the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair, you had evidence you didn't bring forth also and I'll tell you who was at the phone call when you said you would go as a witness, if you want to deny it.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Address the Chair.

E. JOYCE: I'm sorry.

I would say who was at the phone call when the Member for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair was going to come and present evidence, I'll tell her who the two people were on the phone call.

SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The matter that the hon. Member is referring to – I've been around the Legislature long enough to know it's important to keep records. He asked me to support a matter. I said I need some time to think about it. Then the tables turned and he replied: I don't need your help. I said: Good luck with

your issue. He came back and said: I don't luck just the facts. I have all that kept because he actually was reaching out to me in government email. The rest of it is foolishness.

E. JOYCE: Once again, Mr. Speaker, the email that was sent to my lawyer was that I was in Ottawa. I never got her notes. If you want me to produce it, I will. So please, please –

L. DEMPSTER: (Inaudible.)

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Address the Chair, not back and forth.

E. JOYCE: (Inaudible) the two people she was with it when she agreed to do it, Mr. Speaker, if need be. I have no problem with it because sometimes you have to stand up for yourself.

I stood up about the cataracts numerous times for Western Newfoundland. When I feel something is right, I'm not going to stop. Now, I feel I'd get elected tomorrow. I feel I would. Maybe not, but I think I would. So this is more about the credibility of this House of Assembly. Mr. Speaker, this is the credibility of the Officers of the House of Assembly.

When you write me and tell me that all the Officers have to come back to the House, yet you take a report and send it out to the Management Commission, I'm asking for the same thing. That's all I'm asking. Keep the House accountable in this House of Assembly.

I'll let that go for now, Mr. Speaker, but I'm just glad that I could put those two affidavits in there, where the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology stated what the Commissioner said, that I refused to participate. I could table these if you want, if

I can have permission to table the two affidavits for the House.

SPEAKER: Is leave granted to table the documents?

E. JOYCE: Okay, no one? Perfect.

Okay, thank you.

I'll table the two affidavits, Mr. Speaker, for the record.

SPEAKER: Is leave granted?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: (Inaudible.)

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll table these here so everybody in this House of Assembly – and there were some here that voted for it, I'll show the affidavits where actual facts matter, actual facts.

I'll let that go for now, Mr. Speaker, but I just want to remind all people in this House of Assembly that if you don't hold the House of Assembly accountable, how can you have confidence? How will people in this province have confidence in you?

How can people have confidence when you, as a Member of this House of Assembly, have documents – I ask a simple question to every Member in this House of Assembly: If someone stole \$200,000 and you find out two years' later that it happened, would you bring it back to this House of Assembly? Sure you would. Time doesn't matter if there's something that went wrong and you add new documentation to it.

So I'll leave that, but I look forward, Mr. Speaker, for you to get back – and I am asking you to get back to me so I can table it so I can see it myself: October 18, 2018, the minutes of that meeting. Because if there was no minutes of that meeting, whoever was in the Management Commission, the duty to document, they failed to do their duty. I was put in a very

precarious situation because there were no minutes of that meeting. If you're the Speaker and you're holding everybody in this House accountable, you have to hold the people also accountable on the Management Commission.

I just ask for that, Mr. Speaker, because if those minutes of the meetings were presented to this House, I'm sure that people would have had a different – if there are minutes. I don't think there are because I did apply for them under the access to information act and I couldn't get them. So if they're not, I would like to know why the duty to document, which is in the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act* that you had to do it, why wasn't it done?

When the minister was talking about how the House changed, that's how it changed. Instead of standing up now and people debating back and forth here, saying you're wrong on the issues, that's not right and here is a better way to do it, they go through the back door to try to keep you quiet. I know, I for one and I know the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, he isn't staying quiet.

P. LANE: No, Sir.

E. JOYCE: He isn't staying quiet.

P. LANE: Now they're going to tell you if you're allowed to ask a question or not.

E. JOYCE: Now they're going to tell you if you can ask a question or not.

I use this here, Mr. Speaker, because a lot of people bring this up about the House of Assembly and they always ask me: What is it like? The cataracts were an easy thing to do so people don't suffer. It took me a year and a half to push that. So people say, well, why is the House of Assembly – they know it should be done; the Members there know it should be done. And then I explain this is where politics steps in and other things step

in and you have to go ahead and try to convince people that it is the right thing to do.

I tell you, the same thing with the nurse practitioners now. This is why we need – so people in the general public have confidence in the House of Assembly. So when I raise concerns with affidavits and you, Mr. Speaker, I understand what you're saying: this has already been dealt with. But now you know and it is on the record and I am going to table these two documents that the Management Commission was misled. You cannot let that happen in this House of Assembly and not hold someone accountable. At least send it out and say do an investigation.

Just like, Mr. Speaker, the Management Commission just did for the Citizens' Representative, who did his job. The Citizens' Representative did his job; the next thing you know he's being investigated for doing his job. Can you imagine? Then you wonder why people question what we're doing here in the House of Assembly. The Citizens' Rep was doing his job. He presented his report in the House of Assembly, presented it to the Speaker. When the Speaker gets his report, the report is sent out, it comes back and they said yes, b'y, there were serious issues with this here. Now he's being investigated, the Citizens' Rep. Then you wonder why people look at the House of Assembly and look at politicians and they turn around and say, b'y, we don't trust you. This guy did his job. This is a prime example.

Mr. Speaker, I know there's a request in there to send out the report that was done October 18, 2018, to a third party. I hope now with this document that is going to be tabled that you now have the Deputy Speaker, you had the minister of Justice and Attorney General stating what was said in that meeting, Officer of the House of Assembly, a former Commissioner for Legislative Standards – the Speaker said it was true in front of the Deputy Speaker. The

Deputy Premier was the one who asked the question and the minister of Justice and Public Safety, wrote an affidavit, said here's what he said. So it has to be sent out. It has to be done, because now there's new evidence, a document to show that there was a wrongdoing done in this House of Assembly.

Like I said, I'll stand for anybody's rights. I know when there was a situation with the Leader of the Opposition I stood up for him because it was the right thing to do. I don't play politics with that. Because there's life after politics. When we get outside this room, there's life after politics. I understand all that. So that's why we're only here 40, we have enough issues.

I'll take my seat, Mr. Speaker, and I say thank you for the latitude to present these documents, and thank you for the latitude to speak.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Thank you, Speaker.

Again, it's certainly a pleasure to get up here and represent the people of Exploits, the people who put me here to discuss the budget again. It's a pleasure to do that.

Certainly I've mentioned lots of things about the budget, the concerns of what's in Central and we've mentioned health care. Health care is a big one in Central again with regard to the doctors, long-term care. Long-term care has been a real problem as of late, especially getting the units open and getting the acute beds streamlined, getting everything occupied on that so people can get in and get their surgeries and keep everything on a rotation, on a basis, so that health care can be delivered in a fashionable manner. Of course, we need the physicians and the health care people to do that. So it's a big concern in Central. I mean doctors have been leaving, hand over fist. I've heard it's a global problem. We can

send people out for different procedures and have it done out of the province. So they must be seeing doctors –

E. JOYCE: Speaker, point of order, please.

I don't meant to cut into your time.

SPEAKER: Point of order.

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

E. JOYCE: I was just granted leave to present these documents. My understanding, I was given leave by the House and you are on the record saying leave has been granted.

SPEAKER: There was nobody objected to it, I don't think.

E. JOYCE: So no one objected?

SPEAKER: Is leave granted?

AN HON. MEMBER: By leave.

E. JOYCE: Leave granted. Yes, okay.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

E. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

P. FORSEY: I'll take back 60 seconds. So are we good to go again? All right. Thank you.

Anyway, Speaker, I'll go back to where I was to. I don't know if anybody else got anything else. But anyway I'll start again.

Having said that, we will get to the part of the Budget Speech. I was looking at, like I said, health care is a big problem in the district. The cost of living, again, is a big problem in the district. Seeing that the minister was almost up about the roads, I think he wanted to get up on the roads

again but anyway the roads in the district need to be updated. He did tell me there was some money in the budget. So I do appreciate that. We've talked about it. So hopefully the areas that we need to fix up there to get addressed this year hopefully gets addressed and we can move along with that and get some of that fixed up because tourism, certainly, is a big part of the area again, and that we need roads there fixed up so that we can continue with the tourism.

Mr. Speaker, in the Budget Speech, in the booklet, I have a couple of more important issues in the budget, like fishery, forestry, Crown lands, they really affect my district as well. When I look through the Budget Speech here on page 27, fishery and forestry starts halfway down the booklet.

AN HON. MEMBER: Page 27.

P. FORSEY: Page 27, halfway down the booklet. Basically it would take up a quarter of a page of the two probably biggest industries, biggest resources we have in Newfoundland and Labrador. It takes up probably a quarter of a page of what they anticipate to do. It's amazing, for fishery and forestry.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

P. FORSEY: Yeah. Well, if you want the one on the forestry, in *Budget 2023*, \$3.8 million is allocated to plant six million trees. We're going to need it because Central Newfoundland is being raked –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Address the Chair, please.

P. FORSEY: – with permits. You already had 280,000 cubic metres allocated from the Abitibi permits back in 2018. All that went away to the bigger players, which nobody in Central Newfoundland can get a permit to operate. You're going to need six million trees to replace what's being taken

out. You're really going to need that; you're going to need more.

So to know that there's no industry viable, especially secondary industry, in Central Newfoundland, it's really a downer for the people in Central Newfoundland. We're looking at trucks and everything going east and going west every day with pallet loads of logs, our timber and our fibre in Central Newfoundland that's being moved out.

I know it's important to all areas, of course, with regards to logs and timber. I know there are pulp mills; I know there are logging mills, lumber mills. Sure, they need fibre as well, they really do. But it can be allocated. It seems like everybody is congregating on areas 10, 11 and 12 because that's where the prime fibre is, where the softwood lumber is, that's where the good spruce is. They're all congregating on there and access to it is prime access. They can put in a harvester, it's cut away for days and hardly use up a bit of time.

Whereas, some of that industry is located in area 2; there's not much allocation in area 2. Actually, access in area 2 with the rocks and the hills, they don't even want to access the permits in that area. The same thing with area 6; very little activity in area 6 where another operation is located. Areas 17 and 18 where the biggest operation is located, instead of going to those areas because of the timbers that are easier to get at, the bigger players are congregating on 10, 11 and 12 and taking all the fibre out of Central Newfoundland.

To see that there's only a quarter of a page on forestry that you're going to invest into in Central Newfoundland, it certainly needs to be paid more attention to. We certainly need permits. We need allocations for industry in the area.

The fishery, again, in my area, of course, Leading Tickles, off the Northeast Coast, Notre Dame Bay, that's where I came from. That's where the fishery is the biggest in the

district. I have about 40 fishermen down in that area who rely on the fishery heavily. That's their mainstay. That's their main industry. They have a small fish plant there, so even to start off this year – the fishery always starts off on a rugged note for them. It always does.

The same again this year. I mean, we know about the crab fishery. We've heard about the crab fishery. So that affects every part of the fishery, all across the Island, of course, but especially in my part of the Island down in Leading Tickles. I know that with the price on crab fishery, they just can't afford to go fishing.

We're hoping that something is going to get done in regard to that to help them keep going until they get back at probably the lobster or other parts of the fishery because we certainly need attention given to that right now. Every year, like I say, when the fishery starts up there are always problems in the fishery. Those people deserve to be guided along, to be helped and do what we can in the fishery so that we can have a great fishery again this year.

Of course, we all know how important the fishery is to our province and to Central Newfoundland. I know that the Central area is a hub for the fishery, especially in the Leading Tickles area. There is hydraulics; there are boat parts, repair places for engines, the sale of new motors and boats, that kind of stuff in the industry. A lot of that is bought in communities like Leading Tickles so we need the fishery up and running. So, Speaker, to see little being done to aid the fishery in this budget, it's very, very disappointing.

Crown Lands, again, has been a big, big factor as of late. We've all heard the stories of Crown land, of course, people trying to sell their land and they can't get access to their land because of providing of documents because of the squatter's rights situation.

Back in the '50s, '60s and '70s, back as far as '56 to '76, they can't get access to the land. They can't prove that they owned the land back then, so basically they've been illegally occupying land. So even when they go to try to sell their homes, they even get penalized for fines because they've been occupying the land for 40 or 50 years illegally, which is hard to prove that they didn't when the deeds and the documents are there. It's just that Crown Lands are still taking access to the land and they can't seem to get that straightened out.

Agriculture: Beef is another one actually. I just wanted to touch on the beef situation, the beef enhancement project. A couple of years ago the government did a project on the beef enhancement. They spent \$1 million for 200 cows. I'm hearing this through the industry. It's something that's been brought up to me. So this is part of the industry that when you're looking at food self-sufficiency, and we know what's happening to food self-sufficiency. We heard just today alone of the hikes in ferry rates from Marine Atlantic, which are going to cause more havoc on our food self-sufficiency this summer and the coming months, along with the carbon tax that's coming in July.

So how we apply to get our food grown and being accessed here and more fresh food here in Newfoundland and Labrador is going to become more important in the next few months than what it has been before because of the price hikes, especially with Marine Atlantic today and the carbon tax, which is just going to put the prices up there. We're not going to be able to depend on that transportation anymore.

So, again, beef enhancement was a project that came in. They spend \$1 million on 200 cows. I haven't heard much on the – I've heard that the cows have been leaving the province and being slaughtered outside. So the cows are leaving the province, being slaughtered outside, they're not slaughtered here. So we've lost our beef.

I don't know if the government has really taken a look at that beef example again and tried to improve our beef. I mean to say, every time the minister gets up he'll tout about the 20 per cent that we're up to; he'll tout about milk, how self-sufficient we are with milk. But we've been self-sufficient in milk and milk products for years and years and years. We want that to continue, of course. So in order for that to continue, we need to be placing emphasis on those kind of industries.

Again, the carbon tax and the cost of living. The cost of living, they go to the stores, they're trying to make those choices. The sugar tax, they're trying to make the choices in the stores and it's very difficult for those people to make the healthy choice. According to the budget, this was supposed to make them make healthy choices. Make them live healthier and make healthy choices.

It seems like the ones who are making choices are the ones in the health care themselves because they're overworked and overburdened with workloads that they're making the choices to get out of there. That's who are making the choices.

It is things like that we need to certainly look at in the budget. Again, we need the long-term care units fixed up. We need to be able to get the surgeries done, acute care – I'm getting lots of calls from families who want to get their loved ones in –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The level of chatter is getting much too loud. I can't hear the speaker.

P. FORSEY: I don't know why they don't want to listen to me.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: I got interrupted the first time going on and now they're not listening to me. I don't know, Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

P. FORSEY: I should get four minutes back on the clock.

Anyway, we'll continue, Speaker. We'll go back to the roads in the district. That's where we should go because the roads in the district have been terrible. We need to certainly have the pavement in our district done so that we can travel on those roads safely and efficiently.

We have health care certainly that's in dire straits. We have our emergency units bottled up and bottlenecked. People in hallways and we're trying to get ambulances to an already overloaded sector. So we certainly need good roads for those ambulance to be driving further distances because of the diversions that we hear of every day, especially from the Connaigre Peninsula, Baie Verte Peninsula, and trying to get up over those roads.

Even in a good time, it's not easy. So you put in bad weather and rough roads, it certainly makes it harder on the patients, makes it harder on the workers. We need to get good roads done up so that we can have access to transportation that way.

Mr. Speaker, again in my district, I'm hearing of the housing. Housing certainly is another big, big area. I know my colleague from Grand Falls-Windsor has touched on it in the past few days, but every time we call now for housing, someone is looking for housing and there is no housing. There are no units. They're putting them up in hotel rooms basically and a lot of those are going to Gander. I've been talking to single parents with children, couples out on the street that need somewhere to stay. Some of them are in hotels there in Gander. I know that for a fact.

We need those units upgraded and fixed up so that we can get some of those people back in those units to help out with the retention of getting people back in those units. We know that there are some single units and double units in the area that need to be upgraded. Yeah, they are dilapidated and they need some care to get them fixed up and get those units back up to where they should be. We need to get people out of the hotel rooms and back in their homes and that kind of stuff.

Again, I touched on this yesterday. Seniors, of course, are finding it very, very difficult. They're on a fixed income. They're finding it very, very difficult. Even the seniors that are living in their own homes, they can't afford to live in their own homes anymore. Especially if sickness takes them and they need home care. It's getting harder to get home care, especially in their own homes. They don't qualify.

In 2016, there was a program there for home care for seniors. In 2016, the government decided to cut the home care on seniors, which that wasn't right. We want people to stay in their own homes. When you're making healthy choices, that wasn't a healthy choice to make when we want to keep seniors in their own homes. That's where they're healthier, that's where they feel better and that's where they're living better. They are more comfortable in their own homes. Health-wise, they feel better and they're less stressed. So to cut seniors' supplement back in 2016 doesn't make for a healthy choice, I guarantee you that. We need seniors looked after.

So we need to help them along a little bit more. Again, when they go to the grocery stores to buy groceries, they're finding it tough to buy the meats, to buy the fruits and vegetables, the staple foods of what they need to have. We certainly need to be looking after the seniors in the area and to get them healthy and keep them living in their own homes a lot longer and keep the health care – because like I said, they're

happier in their own homes and we certainly need to look after the seniors.

Again, the low income, same thing. There's a border there that the low income, they can't even afford their rent now in their units that they are buying. When they do get a rental place, they can't afford groceries. So that's very sad to see that kind of stuff happening. So we need to see more happening in that area.

Getting back to the fishery, forestry area in Central and Crown lands and agriculture, we needed to put more into that part of it so that we can keep our food self-sufficiency. We can get our industry going in our own province. Mining is big in Central. Good and we need it. It's certainly a good part of the industries in Central Newfoundland. So that's a good thing.

But we also have, like I say, our fishery, our forestry. Agriculture can be doubled in Central Newfoundland as well. And a good start with that is land and with the kerfuffle currently with Crown lands now to occupy a piece of land is – so we need that fixed up.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

I'll certainly speak a little bit about the whole notion of the well-being budget and the opportunities that were missed, probably, in this budget.

I want to start with regard to dental and the medical necessity of dental work. I've raised this issue with regards to seniors who are in need of dental work. I raised the issue of Golda Nichols, the 73-year-old who needs teeth removed. What has amazed me, of course, is the expensive, I would argue, and unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles that are

needed just to get this work done as opposed to letting a dentist do the work.

For a person to qualify under the dental surgery program, it has to be a medical necessity. There is a list of conditions such as uncontrolled diabetes, a complex medical history, associated chronic health conditions and so on and so forth but it needs a physician. The program needs a physician to say that teeth are complicating treatment.

Now a dentist can make the call as to the necessity of a treatment but only an oral surgeon or a doctor can make the call on whether the patient qualifies under the Surgical Dental Program.

So think about this. What we've asked for is for this government to have a stopgap measure until the federal program kicks in to take care, to head off, I am sure, the uptake that will come in the fall to get ahead of the problem. I can't help but think that it would seem that government is prepared; this policy is prepared to allow the health of seniors, of people with these dental issues to get so bad, to the point that they're going to require hospitalization, general anesthetic and surgery. As opposed to the cheaper, more efficient option of sending them to the dentist for teeth extractions. It has to be simpler. Even the bureaucratic process to make the decision has to cost more than the cost of having the tooth extracted by a dentist.

The doctors I've spoken to, quite clearly, Speaker, have made it clear that they are mystified by this because, as far as they're concerned, if a dentist has identified the need for dental work, then simply that should be more than good enough.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Again, the level of chatter is getting too loud. I can't hear the speaker. If you need to have meetings, please take them outside.

J. DINN: So that's one area where we could be doing more for the citizens, for our seniors for sure.

Housing, I'm looking here at the dashboard, the Infogram from the End Homelessness St. John's and this is for the St. John's metro area, 236 people were experiencing homelessness in February. Actually, if you look at November up to February, and even to this month, probably we've had some of the highest rates of people experiencing chronic homelessness. Forty-two more people were added to the chronic homeless list, it increased by 28 people. The percentage of people who are chronically homeless is 59.

Now those are statistics. Yet, my office had a call from a person, a foster parent who is looking to adopt a foster child; yet, they are now facing eviction and they'll be out next week. Where are they going to go? No home, it's going to jeopardize the adoption process.

But on a very personal level, it's having this impact on the lives of individuals in my district and I know throughout this province. It's something that just didn't happen during the pandemic, it's been building.

I want to talk a little bit in relation to housing, the Estimates Committee meeting of the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills, because housing was an issue there as well. Now, at that point, the question was asked, it's been raised here before about the temporary accommodations of Ukrainians, of people who are newcomers, who are living in temporary accommodations in excess of 50 days by the minister's own admission in that meeting.

The concern was raised: What are we going to do to make sure that not only newcomers

but everyone who is in need of a house, of a home, is going to be taken care of?

Now, to me, it's a very serious issue. Yet, it was turned around, more or less, if we have to solve every problem before we ever take action, we will never, ever act, according to the minister. The alternative would be to simply stop welcoming Ukrainians to say that we really don't want you here because housing may be kind of tight right now.

Well, do you know what? That is not the solution. But the solution comes in that once we start a process – I'm not asking every problem to be solved, but for God sake, we should be making sure that people have that opportunity to have a decent home where they can start their family life here. Because, to me, a hotel room is a good intermediate respite, but what they're looking for is a place to set down permanent roots and a home is part of that.

The minister did go on to say, though, that he suspects that with April 1 – and here's the solution or part of the solution – and the switch out of leases, the movement of students outside of accommodations and other thing, we expect to see more Ukrainians move to market housing.

Now, here's my issue with this, because obviously when we talk about the movement of students, we're talking about the metro area where there are universities, post-secondary institutions, whether it's here, Corner Brook, you name it. My point was well, what happens when the students come back? Where are they going to be living?

Therein lies the problem. I was accused of being St. John's centric. Well, I'm not the one that raised the issue, the fact that students are moving out of housing. But, to me, I take housing very seriously because so many people who phone my office are in desperate need of housing. They are desperate. It weighs on my constituency assistant, it weighs on me and it weighs on our office.

So, in many ways, if there's anything I will say plays priority on what resources, well I don't care how, modular homes, it doesn't matter, get people into a place, all people, so that we don't have the numbers of people being chronically homeless go up and that the newcomers that come here have a place. Fifty days in temporary accommodations, and it's gone up, it's not good enough.

Now, I've heard from many newcomers, they're looking for meaningful work. I thank the minister because he did offer to come to our caucus and to help us identify employers who are prepared to pay a fair wage on a year-round, full-time basis to Ukrainians, to newcomers. Do you know what? I would support that, but here's a better solution. Here's a much better solution. Let's raise the minimum wage for everyone. Give small employers the necessary break they need to do it. But make it such that there's a livable wage for everyone regardless of where they are, so that anyone who is seeking work, newcomers or otherwise, can have it and can earn a decent living. Or, as the many newcomers who have spoken to me, they want to practise within their scope of practice, within their credentials. That's the thing that they come to me about.

We're at a loss as to how to help them. We don't have control over the credentialing or the access into the market. That's the thing that's going to keep people here. That ability to practise in their own profession, according to their degree; a plan for housing; a decent minimum wage, a livable wage.

With regard to post-secondary education, an opportunity here. Last night, I attended, as did other Members here, the minister and the House Leader and the Education critic for the Official Opposition, we heard the concerns of student quite clearly about what tuition increases will mean for them.

Now I'm not really interested, I guess, as to who is at fault one way or the other. In the end, it comes down to a budget shortfall. It's government that controls that budget. It's students who are feeling the impact. Those are going to be the ones that will be impacted.

My brother and I, two of seven children in our family. Our father worked at the railway; mom worked at home looking after us. Every one of us, all seven children, completed a university degree and post-graduate as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

J. DINN: He may be.

P. DINN: Well, we're both here, I don't know.

J. DINN: That's right we're both here, but I will tell you, part of it was, it was important, education was important to my parents. As my parents would say or my mother would say: Get an education, you don't want to be digging ditches for a living. That's what my grandfather and my mother would say to me.

Sometimes I wonder, but I will say this: We were able to attend Memorial University. Our parents subsidized our education, not necessarily financially, but the fact that we were able to stay at home and we had that income. I can still remember my summer job at Bowring Park, \$3.25 an hour, minimum wage; \$1,000 a month is what I made for that summer job. Speaker, that still allowed me to pay for two terms, tuition and books, with a little bit left over, maybe.

I would challenge here is the thing – and I use that standard, because a lot of students who attended university didn't have that privilege or that luxury of having parents or family in town. But I would propose that right now it would be very difficult for someone

living in town, even, to pay for two terms of university and the fees with a summer job. That speaks clearly to just how unaffordable education has become or is becoming.

If anything else, let's look at investing in our students. There are people in my office who came to study at Memorial because of the inexpensive, the cheap tuition and the quality education and they ended up staying here. They made Newfoundland and Labrador their home.

With regard to the K-to-12 system, and I'm transitioning to cover a bit of a scattergun approach here with this, how do we invest in the K-to-12 system? Now, we have heard very clearly from teachers that the teacher shortage is resulting in doubling up of classes. It's causing teachers to cover all classes just to make sure the students are in school. I've brought this up already.

I was thinking last time, whether MHAs or ministers, we have our CAs, administrative assistants, our ADMs, researchers, office managers, administrative support. That's what we have here. At times, we might think that we're still overwhelmed. We have all those resources at our disposal, yet I can tell you that's not what a teacher has at his or her disposal. It's all on him or her. Yet, what often happens is that more and more is put on the plate of teachers and educational staff and support staff and the plate is not getting any bigger, but what's on it is doubling up.

Now, I listened with regard to that the Minister of Education said that there is no real teacher shortage issue in Labrador West. He downplayed the seriousness of the problem, Speaker. Yet, one of the things he mentioned there was about the half-time unit. There's a half-time unit that wasn't filled and two quarter-time units that weren't filled, fractional units. Well, here's a solution. Turn all these fractional units into full-time positions because no one is going up to Labrador –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. DINN: – or anywhere else for that matter for a quarter-time job. It's not going to happen. So if you want to start relieving the issue so that teachers are not giving up their preparation period to cover off classes or to double up classes, let's start making it an incentive for teacher recruitment that all positions are full-time positions because whether you're full-time or quarter-time, it's a full-time job.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. DINN: There is a solution.

The minister spoke – and I can tell that teachers tell me that there is a VP position up and none of the teachers there are applying for it because they know what's involved. It's an untenable situation. That speaks volumes.

The minister can speak to his staff, can speak to the district but speak to the teachers on the ground because I found that problems don't often make their way up.

I will say this, the minister spoke of the need for curriculum renewal of the delivery of education, of teacher duties, of outcomes. What the minister did not speak to were the needs of the students in that class, the social detriments of health, the class composition and size. We're focusing on the wrong things.

To me, in many ways, to use the minister's words, we are using a rather discreet and granular approach to things because do you know what? If you want outcomes, if you want better outcomes, if you want curriculum to be effective then start looking at the number of students who are going there hungry, who come from food insecure and below the poverty line families. That's how we deal with these issues. That's how we start to deal with them.

Because if we're focusing on the outcomes, if we're just looking at simply the marks of the scores and so on and so forth, we're missing a huge part of it.

Now there's often talked about – and I bring this up here – I heard referenced outcomes and international assessment, OECD PISA. Often, that's the organization that gets quoted or set the standards is PISA assessment. The OECD is an economic organization. It has nothing to do with education. They had their own agenda. Why are we letting that determine what we value, what's important here, what are the outcomes we need? If anything else, I will say, the term I will use is authentic assessment – a teacher, that professional in the classroom is the person that best knows what outcome those children are meeting.

I'll finish with this because I heard an awful lot here on the one comment about how issues in our health system – and I would argue in our education system – is a worldwide problem. I was reading an article on the Bank of England's chief economist, Huw Pill, saying that we're all worse off and we all have to take our share. Not, of course, if you're an oil executive or a supermarket executive. The need for pay restraint, he said, and the pass the parcel game of wage and price rises with generating inflation – in other words, those same people who were the heroes of the pandemic, you're being a little bit too greedy right now. You've got to take the hit again.

My argument is we have a worldwide problem because there's been a similar approach worldwide when it comes to public services. No wonder it's everywhere in the world. It's been the same approach. I saw when I was with the Canadian Teachers' Federation, the CMEC, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, we knew when they were getting together and the policies they were discussing, we saw it come our way very clearly.

When it came to Education International, we saw the same issues that were being discussed at CMEC that were coming through in our province were being discussed on the world stage as well. So I think here it's time to walk the talk of the pandemic. Talk about how valuable our front-line workers and our public service during a pandemic is cheap but now it has come time to put the money where the mouth is and recognize the workers in our province as the valuable commodity that they truly and really are and pay them accordingly.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I look forward to addressing the House and my constituents in the District of Bonavista. We know that historic Bonavista, the district, has been built on the fishery. I am pleased to have embarked upon the learning and a voice of the fishery for the District of Bonavista and maybe even the province if I can add my voice to it.

How significant is the fishery in Bonavista? I think the Member over across now is curious. I can see. We've got an OCI plant in Bonavista that processes primarily snow crab; \$18-plus an hour. I wish I could give you the exact amount. It might be \$18.25. They have overtime amounted to it. They have two 10-hour shifts going seven days when the product is coming into the plant. If you did the math on that, you would find that the payroll in that plant is over \$310,000 a week that goes out into the economy on the Bonavista Peninsula.

My colleague from Terra Nova hasn't spoken yet, but he may acknowledge that later and say the benefits of the District of Bonavista, for his service centre in the District of Terra Nova, Clarenville; businesses in Clarenville will say, as goes

the Bonavista Peninsula, goes Clarenville. He's speaking in a short time and hopefully he can speak to that, how important the District of Bonavista is to Clarenville. But let me repeat that figure, \$310,000 a week into the economy. Right now, the plant isn't open.

I won't discuss the reason why it isn't open. It's just that we can't access the snow crab for a variety of reasons. But one thing that would concern me would be that, as of today, April 27, we've got 40 workers in the Bonavista area, not just Bonavista to serve that plant, it's the peninsula; 40 next week will see that they no longer have EI benefits. They have no long any income.

Of those 40, as I stand here today, April 27, 30 of them now do not have any EI benefits coming in. I would say to you I never use the word crisis, but surely goodness we know that there's a lot more in different areas of the province that would find that their EI is out because the snow crab fishery has not commenced. But we haven't heard a whole lot about that.

That will be something, I think, that should be addressed to know that we're voicing, we're advocating for that. If what the Premier had stated that the letter was sent in to the federal government requesting the EI, maybe there should be a letter a day. Or maybe we should all unite in the House to say let's have one united group to make sure that those people out there, who no longer have income, we show them, maybe we should go to the steps of Confederation Building as MHAs and say let's raise the profile of those people out there who no longer have any income.

I stated a petition today and when I stated the petition there was no answer, but I just –

AN HON. MEMBER: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

C. PARDY: – want to state it again. I've got a lot of respect for environmental groups that aim to protect the environment. Oceana is one of those. I think nobody would disagree with what their goals and their mandate would be. I'm not one, I'm not critical. The only thing I would say to you is that they put a release out, as I stated in my petition, that the commercial fishery ought not to occur this year in Newfoundland and Labrador for capelin.

We don't have many species. Mackerel – we're really getting down to the bottom where you're not allowed to fish too many species out there and if you are, the quota is very, very low. That's where we are.

We said many times, you depend on one species, if something happens to that one species you're in a tough spot. We find ourselves this year in '23 in a very tough spot. We know there are many, many factors.

Oceana would state with the capelin: no commercial fishery. You think of an environmental group that wants to make sure that we have balance in an ecosystem and balance in an ecosystem, they never mention predation, anything else predating on capelin, then the commercial fishery.

Did they mention seals? Absolutely not. They are a scientific-based organization and the gentleman that was on VOXM this morning, he was a biologist, an ocean biologist. I'm sure he knows his stuff. I was waiting for him to talk about seal predation, because DFO, Fisheries and Oceans, would tell you what the seals consume. But not a mention.

Then when they asked, the host, Gerri Lynn had asked him: What is the significance of the commercial fishery? His answer was: We want to make sure that those species in the ocean that depend on it have forage because capelin is very important. She said: Like? Well, he mention whales, mention puffins, because they all need forage. They

need substance and we know that we value both of those species in our ecosystem.

But did they mention the fisher people that right now, many of them, whether it be in a plant or a harvester, do not have income? No, there was never a mention of our communities and the people in Newfoundland and Labrador who depend on the fishery. Not a mention.

I was a little concerned this past summer, no sorry, it was probably a few months ago, they had planned that there was going to be a symposium in Gander and it was hosted by The Harris Centre and Oceana. I was a little concerned, after what I just mentioned to you with Oceana.

I have, all of us I think have the utmost respect for The Harris Centre and the science that they would espouse to. But I wondered and worried about the partnership and that caused me a little concern when we have an environmental group partnering with The Harris Centre. I don't know what happened with that. Maybe the minister may or somebody other than I would know, but I know it was cancelled. After it was postponed or cancelled – I don't think it was postponed, cancelled – I heard many people talk about it after and had the same concern.

So as I sit across here and look over at the government side, I'm thinking they must tap into somebody who has a vast degree of knowledge about the seals and seal predation and the seal industry. I was curious as to who do they communicate with? Who is their lead person and what are that person's credentials?

I would say if it is Bob Hardy and Bob Hardy is your source, the one that you're going to centre a plan about and is your resource person, I would say good on you. Because it's not too many people in this province who know more about seal predation and their place in the ecosystem than Bob Hardy.

But if I ask Bob Hardy, I'm sure Bob would say no, I'm not. Then he'll say: How can the Member for Bonavista say such a thing when he doesn't know? Because I would know that there would be action. We would hear something about what we're going to do to find balance in the ecosystem in order to provide sustenance out in our oceans for our rural communities and our harvesters. In the absence of that, it can't be Bob Hardy.

So on Estimates next Tuesday, I would like to find out who was the resource and the person, because we know and Bob Hardy would say and many others, whether it be a Morley Knight or a Ray Andrews, would all say: We are in quite the situation. Is it a crisis? Yes. Based on the numbers that we've got, it is a crisis that we've got.

Let me share this. Bob Hardy sent out – I had asked to get it and he put me on the mail-out list. Apparently, he's been doing that for a while and many Members in the House, I'm sure the minister – I would think the minister would be; if he's not, he should. Some Members are nodding. He sent out an article, which was a nice piece of research and he cited all his sources on capelin, when he looked at the research. The title of the research was: Seals eat fish and the cost is?

When I spoke previously in the House, I gave the numbers. But let me highlight a few things that I didn't highlight. Let me say this to you: DFO would say seals consume 10 per cent of the fish out in the ocean that we don't harvest. They're not part of our commercial harvest, 10 per cent. Another 10 per cent, would be the – does anybody know, if they read the article? Another 10 per cent would be shellfish. That's our snow crab and lobster. Thirty per cent is our groundfish, our Atlantic cod that we're waiting since '92 and beyond to recover. And, here's the kicker, 50 per cent on pelagic fish, which is our capelin that Oceana wants to close. Secondly, we have mackerel, which we had a moratorium last year, you couldn't catch. Herring: I think

herring, if I'm not mistaken, would be less than 1,000 metric tons. I would say to you, if that is not a bleak outlook I'm not sure what is.

I stated the other day, DFO have done some science on the harp and grey seals. They have done no data and no research, Mr. Speaker, on the hooded, the bearded and the harbour seals, no data. Here is what all six species of seals in Newfoundland and Labrador consume according to, in part, Fisheries and Oceans.

The annual consumption of seals in the Northwest Atlantic rounded is 13,887,000; let's round it to 14 million metric tons. They consume 14 million metric tons. He put a dollar value, and here's the dollar value, Mr. Speaker, on 10 per cent of shellfish. The 10 per cent of shellfish that is eaten by predation, here is the dollar value: \$9,513,259,450 is what is predated on the seals on shellfish alone. Groundfish: 30 per cent, their appetite is 30 per cent. The value determined for the groundfish eaten by seals: \$13,082,470,880. Pelagics: the harvester value is \$4,305,271,940.

I say to you when we on this side stand and say don't celebrate our fishery at \$1.3 billion or \$1.6 billion – I'll never forget last year when the minister stood in her place and presented the budget, when she announced the fishery everyone had to turn around to bang on the desk. I would say, look at those figures, what we're drawing out of our waters, we ought not to get overly excited about that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

C. PARDY: I would say long overdue for action and I think everyone would agree, we need to take action. Is it easy? You bet your bottom dollar it's not. But we have to make steps to make sure that we begin to make sure that the harvesters are reaping the benefits and bringing it in to rural Newfoundland so when we want things like

cost a living in our budget, we know that our economy has increased.

You wouldn't give up oil and gas because it brings in \$1 billion. Look at the economic value that we are losing as we have.

Let me finish by saying this, I presented a petition in the House of Assembly on behalf of residents of the District of Bonavista, harvesters that could not get in in order to get their licence in to harvest, to become the fishing master. They couldn't get in and I presented a petition.

The day that I made the petition, the executive director of the board had contacted me while I was here, via email, and asked for a copy of my petition. I sent it to him. Less than two days later, I received a very unflattering letter stating that, not only was the wording of the petition factually inaccurate and misleading, it's spirit and intent represents a threat to independent owner and operator fisheries in our province.

The next speaking engagement I would like to speak on, I think my colleague from Ferryland will do the same thing when we go to Estimates, is a nice time for the minister to be able to brief me where the error of the harvesters in the District of Bonavista, the error of the harvesters in Petty Harbour, the error of the harvesters in Twillingate and the error of the harvesters would be in Placentia Bay. Let me know so I can tell them where they're wrong.

Let me know where the Minister of Finance and the President of Treasury Board, her department, releases figures where we're going to have a shortfall in the fishing industry of 6,000 to 8,000 people within the next six to eight years. He will let us know –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

D. BRAGG: The Member who reads out the letter should table the letter so everybody can have a copy of the letter and see that it came from the Provincial Fish Harvesters Certification Board who certifiers fishermen in the licensing. The Members should see that. It didn't come from me. It came from an outside interest.

I'll table the letter if he can't, Mr. Speaker. I'll table the letter.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Do you want to respond?

C. PARDY: I posted it on my Facebook page. I've got no problem with that. I've got no problem because I stand by the petition because the petition represents the harvesters that are out there and until the minister can stand to his feet and tell –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

SPEAKER: He's responding to the point of order.

C. PARDY: – where the error is, then at least let him do it. I'd like to hear him talk about the capelin and find out where the action plan is. Let's do that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: There's no point of order. It's just –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

There is no point of order. It's just a difference between Members.

Are there any other speakers?

The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Always an honour to stand in the House of Assembly and speak.

Mr. Speaker, as my esteemed colleague from Bonavista has noted, he said as goes for the District of Bonavista, so goes the community of Clarenville. Well, I'll take it a little further. As goes rural Newfoundland, so goes metro Newfoundland.

Now if you think about it, when the fishery is robust or when things are happening in rural Newfoundland, you can go to Costco any day of the week, the parking lots are full and people are in there. The same thing happens in Corner Brook, Grand Falls, Clarenville, Gander, any larger community in the province that is a service centre depends on rural Newfoundland, which mostly depends on the fishery. So my esteemed colleague was not wrong when he said that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: Mr. Speaker, earlier today Members across the way there were using their time machine so I'd like to take the same time machine and take you on a journey back to 2015.

Back in 2015 –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

L. PARROTT: Oh no doubt, mine don't.

So back in 2015 –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

L. PARROTT: Yeah, I'd be in infancy, diapers.

Back in 2015, in the last election, there were lots of things happening. Now there were lots of questions about what was happening when government took over, we all know that. We know there was a massive debt,

there's no question, but we had Hebron. We had Long Harbour. We had Muskrat Falls. We had Voisey's Bay. We had Wabush (inaudible). We had Argentia getting ready to come on.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

L. PARROTT: I noted that minister. I have no problem saying it. I actually identified that. But if you take that debt and you start thinking about – just eliminate Muskrat Falls, because at one moment you guys argued that Muskrat Falls is the worst thing that ever happened to the province. Then in the next breath you talk about how we're dependent on Muskrat Falls for our transition to green energy. So you can't have it both ways.

As a matter of fact, you stood on your feet and promised that Muskrat Falls will be done in 2017 on time. That was done. That's a quote that I read a little while back actually.

Anyhow, let's just say this: Imagine that the people in Newfoundland and Labrador did not have the jobs at Muskrat Falls. I'm not saying Muskrat Falls was done properly. What I am saying is it wasn't managed properly either. So 2017 was when it was going to be finished. It's 2023 and we're still not finished. But there's lots of good that came out of that. There are billions of dollars in salaries that were paid out to the men and women of this province – billions of dollars. We also believe that Muskrat Falls is our transition or a big part of our transition to green energy. There's no question.

We're now talking about wind and hydrogen and how do we sustain new mines and our expansion of any kind of services in this province, certainly with the mining industry and the wind creation, hydrogen plants, what's going on with the refinery. How do we do that? Well, we need electricity to do that and we all know that Holyrood couldn't

do that alone. So here we are. We know the cost but it's ours and we're stuck with it.

But here are the other things that we don't talk about when we talk about Muskrat Falls. We don't talk about how it was said in 2015, '16, '17, '18, and '19 our deficit would be eliminated by '21-'22. We don't talk about how in 2020 there was a letter pre-COVID that said we were going bankrupt. So we were nowhere near that target, but this government set that target. It was this government that made those promises and said that.

So here we are in 2023, going down the same road, coming out with a budget that we all think is fresh and fabulous. There are a lot of good things in this budget. I said that earlier. I believe there are a lot of good things. I don't believe some of it goes far enough. I don't believe that 19 cents a day for seniors goes remotely close to far enough. I don't believe that what we're doing for home heating rebates and stuff goes far enough. I don't believe that our ability to transition into heat pumps gives other people opportunities to do it.

I've said it a thousand times and I'll say it again, and oddly enough the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs said it today: Population and geography is an issue that we have in this province. I would argue it's one of the biggest issues we face. When we face the issue of population and geography, we don't ever consider metro and rural and how things are different and how one size doesn't fit all. Well, I don't know that we do.

We create legislation and solutions that are global and we go out of our way to try and accommodate some different situations but it doesn't always work. I think we need to look at it with a different lens. When we do legislation, we need to have a lens that looks at it and how it affects rural Newfoundland versus urban Newfoundland.

I'll give the example of Charlottetown. I got a community out there in Charlottetown that's land locked by a national park. They don't have access to potable water and they don't have a trail to get out of there. So since 2019, multiple times I've written the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Tourism asking for a meeting with the three of them. I got a response back from the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs saying that it wasn't in her purview.

The question wasn't whether or not she could do anything about getting a trail access out of there. It was whether or not we could support that community, through our federal member, with a letter that came from this government, stating that we would support something like that. It was the federal member that requested the letter and four years, no meeting. It's remarkable when you think about it.

Then you take a community, again, like Charlottetown, that's land locked, they literally are land locked. Even last year when they were having troubles with water, they had all kinds of issues trying to find solutions because of the park.

We need to look at things with different lenses. Smaller communities need support in different ways. I realize that we do that in different ways when we look at the way we fund the ICIP and the Multi-Year Capital Works if they're municipalities or LSDs with the cost sharing 90-10 and 60-40 and all of that good stuff. But it's different than that. Some of these communities don't have an opportunity to spend any of that kind of money. They don't. They can't afford it. It just isn't there.

Then we talked about regionalization, and people in my caucus will tell you, I was an individual who stood up and spoke out against regionalization. Not for the sake of speaking against regionalization because I believe we need to do something, I really do, but I don't believe the plan – so first let's

get it clear. This is an example of how government does things. Last budget it came out and it was a plan. Then when there was backlash from the public and LSDs were saying that they weren't consulted and they were left out of the process and MNL was basically the driving force, it went from being a plan to a path.

So a plan that was put out, boasted about, bragged about, people thought it was going to be jammed down their throats, it went from a plan to a path to – guess what happened to that? No more path. They cut the trees down across the path. This is not accessible anymore. So now we're going to look at shared services, which is what we should have done in the very beginning.

You take an area like the Eastport Peninsula, Southwest Arm, Bonavista Peninsula, Random Island and many other areas down on the isthmus, Grand Bank area, St. Lawrence, Burin, ideal places to have regional shared services and most of these communities do it on their own. They've started it. But a couple of years ago, we put in a request for snow clearing equipment in Eastport and it was shut down. I have four communities that were coming together and it was, basically, they wanted one lead; the other three couldn't be part of the process.

We can be doing this kind of stuff. There are communities out there that want to do it. There are already shared service agreements with fire departments and shared services agreements with people getting garbage collected together. They've come together. LSDs that have come together through multiple communities and, you know, small committees, different stuff, recreational committees. We've been doing that.

Why we came out with this plan to a path to non-existence. Another example of a waste of money. It is mind blowing and it's not what we should be doing.

We look at this province and we talk about how we make things better; I talk about transportation quite a bit. If you think about access for small communities and what they need, it's fine to say that we're going to supply GoBus passes in the city, but what does that do for someone in rural Newfoundland? It really does nothing. What's the solution?

Well, I'll say in my district in Clarenville, we have a CREST bus. The CREST bus is for persons with disabilities and seniors. The problem with the CREST bus – and there's literally no problem with the CREST bus other than they depend on volunteers and you can't always get volunteers.

Now, luckily, the fine men and women of Clarenville, they volunteer to do everything. Clarenville is a community that comes together on a regular basis and they know how to make things work. But eventually your pool dries up and what do you do then? We need to have some kind of a solution, certainly for seniors and peoples with disabilities throughout different communities.

We talk about access. We talk about things like access. I'll give you an example about access. I came in here when we had the emergency debate a little while ago. I was at home in a wheelchair and I came in here on a set of crutches because I couldn't get a wheelchair into the House of Assembly. It's 2023. Think about that. We pride ourselves on being accessible, but we're the furthest thing from it. The furthest thing from it, in the people's House. It's the same everywhere.

I had a lady come in last week talking about accessibility issues. So she has a daughter in a wheelchair. There are newer facilities being opened up in older buildings and they've got to make a choice to go all the way accessible, they can't be partially accessible. Becoming fully accessible is a very expensive endeavour. They can find ways to be accessible.

You look at rural Newfoundland, when I think about rural Newfoundland the one thing that jumps out at me is Southern Harbour, Newfoundland, in the district of the fine Member for Placentia West - Bellevue. In Southern Harbour, they needed a community hall and they needed a fire hall. Clarenville is another good example of this, but they needed a community hall and a fire hall. They took a minimal amount of money and they stepped away from government and they built both facilities, but they're made for rural Newfoundland. That's the difference. Rural Newfoundland doesn't need the exhaust, the big fancy systems that we got here in town, but government says we do.

Why do you think a small Local Service District needs these big training centres? They don't even want it. They need somewhere to house their firetrucks so they can get out of there. It's really amazing when you think about it.

The Town of Clarenville – and I was the town councillor at the time – we went to government for a new fire hall and the pricing came back in somewhere around \$6.7 million. The Town of Clarenville at the time thought it would take up too much funding from their Multi-Year Capital Works. They sat back, thought it over and eventually we came to a conclusion where we said do you know what? Let's try to do this on our own and see what happens. Exact same blueprint that government had said \$6.7 million, the Town of Clarenville built for \$2.5 million. They built it cheaper than their 50 per cent would've been. Same fire hall without government interference. Think about that.

I say to any of you, if you want to see a spectacular fire hall in this province go to Clarenville, it is world class, world class.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: When I say we need to do things different, that's the language I'm

speaking. I'm talking about finding ways to do things different in different parts of the province. There are ways to do that. We all know that. I mean, we're putting regular culverts in some places where we could be putting box culverts, or we're putting bridges in where we could be using box culverts. We just quickly think that one thing is the only fix; we don't look at different ways to skin the proverbial cat, I guess.

The minister stood and talked about the *Terra Nova* this morning and it's tragic that the *Terra Nova* went to Spain and came back and had to have rework done. It's industry. Here's the reality of it. That stuff happens every day. Sadly, all of the work could not have been done here in Newfoundland, but the hull work could've been done. The minister and I agreed on that on several occasions. The mechanical outfitting all could've been done here. It was done here when it was built. I believe the statistics are 72 or 74 per cent of the *Terra Nova* was done here on construction, so it could have. But sadly it goes away.

We've seen that happen. We've seen it happen with Hibernia. We've seen it happen with Hebron when modules came from other parts of the world, they came here and they had to be reworked. The one thing I'll say about it is – and the minister alluded to it this morning and I hope and pray he sticks to this – the reality of what happened with the *Terra Nova*, the reality of what happened with the drilling module from Hebron and other components, and we'll see what comes out of Corpus Christi for the White Rose, is that work can and should be done here.

We have a new project that's on the cusp of starting with Bay du Nord and I just urge the minister, I urge the minister to push as hard as he can to have every single bit of work he can get done in this province done. I'm under no illusions that it can all be done here. I believe we can do it all. I just don't know if that will happen. What I'm saying is we need to do as much as we can, certainly

100 per cent of the subsea, if we can do it, and multiple modules.

Exciting times offshore: The *Stena* arrived in Newfoundland today, I believe. The *Stena* is going to go out and drill one hole – one hole. But that will tell you how confident they are. They're bringing a drill rig in from overseas to drill one hole in a well where they think they're going to have access to five billion barrels of oil – five billion. She's here today, she'll load up, get ready and she'll go out and do her hole. Hopefully, that's the sign of things to come.

But here's the next thing that comes with that. We sat here today and we bantered back and forth and talked about our cousins; we pointed fingers and we made accusations. I don't think that we need to fight with Ottawa. I do think we need to fight for Newfoundland and Labrador. I believe we have to fight for Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. PARROTT: So whether it's a new oil project with BP or Exxon or any of these other larger, Cenovus or anyone, or it's LNG, we should be having that fight now. We should be pushing environmental regime and regulatory process and making sure that we don't get pushed around the way we got pushed around with the Bay du Nord Project. That's not about fighting for Newfoundland, it's about fighting for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. It's not about fighting against Ottawa, it's about fighting for this province and the people that we represent. That's what we're here to do.

When you look at hydrogen, the whole hydrogen thing, I've met with several of the hydrogen companies. I'm a little, I guess – I won't say concerned but the royalty package, I've heard comments from some of the proponents out there who basically questioned if they'd ever pay off their assets. I guess that's the one portion that scares me.

The other thing I would say about hydrogen is, in other places in the world, certainly in Australia and other places that are currently doing this, they're utilizing salt water. They're utilizing the desalination process and then they're, in turn, using the salt for other additives. I don't understand why we are just quickly jumping on the freshwater trend here and not asking these proponents if they can use salt water.

Several of them have indicated that they can to me and that they would be willing to. I just believe that it's a really good alternative, when we talk about freshwater. Freshwater is a commodity. You think about water and you think about 180 boil-water orders in the province, then we talk about taking water out of these ponds and lakes at an astronomical amount. It's a huge amount of water required to run these hydrogen-processing plants. I believe it's something we really, really need to look at.

The other thing I'll say is we heard talk this morning about this world-class doctor recruiting facility. Last week in my district, I met with two student doctors. Two of them university students. They asked to come meet with me and we sat down and had a great talk. They wanted to know what issues I felt were in the district. Two of them considering staying in rural Newfoundland; two of them actually considering my district. They were out there doing their internship.

So when we were just about finished they asked if I had any questions for them. So my question was very simple. I said: How many times has anyone from government approached you guys to see if you're interested in working, if you're going to stay in this province? Both of them quickly said, never, not once, zero times. Think about that. We have medical students at MUN who have not been approached by government. We have a doctor shortage. We have a multitude of medical students at MUN who have not been approached and we have a doctor shortage.

The simplest place to go and get people would be in your own province, with your own people who live here who want to stay here and they have not been approached. Now, to me, that's absolutely shameful. I have no doubt that they're telling the truth. They'd have no reason to say anything any different. I would argue that we should be talking to first-year medical students, forget about third year. We should be talking to them as soon they go into the university and trying to find a path for them to land here in this province.

Unfortunately, our world-class recruiting facility is just that, a facility. Now we're going to build a world-class hospital, a world-class facility, but if we don't have doctors to go in it, it's no good. We have to start finding a way to recruit and retain. I know I've heard the minister say lots with their efforts and I get it all, but at the end of the day, we should be approaching the medical schools and recruiting those people exhaustively hard. They want to be here. A lot of them want to be here. A lot of them want to be in family practice.

I can tell you, you talk to a senior, outside of a senior's fear of not being able to heat their house or buy reasonable food, their next biggest fear is getting a doctor. There are so many people without doctors.

We heard today about the increase in ferry costs. You know, the one thing I say about the increase in the ferry cost, it's always blown me away how behind the times we are logistically with our food chain. We ship stuff to Port aux Basques, then we drive across the Island, we go to a facility here in St. John's and then we redistribute it back across the Island again. If anyone doesn't think that costs a lot of money; it costs us a lot of money. I think it's somewhere around \$4.32 a mile that they get charged now without your fuel surcharge per mile with a tractor-trailer. So you do the math.

You think every time that goes back and forth it's costing us an astronomical amount

of money. We've got to find a way to be better with that.

Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, I see my time is expired. I'll take my seat.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

I just want to speak a little bit on the budget, on the amendment here.

First off, just talking about our Trans-Labrador trails. We did Estimates with Labrador Affairs last night and I want to acknowledge that there was money made available for the Trans-Labrador trails, which is a really positive thing. I did thank the minister.

It's really important because some of that money is going to go towards replacing some of the groomers in my district. One of the problems we're having is actually due to climate change. The larger groomers now are not able to be used throughout the snowmobile season. We use snowmobiles on the Trans-Labrador trail as you would drive along the highway. So that's so important.

Also, another important thing I'd like to acknowledge, recognize and show my appreciation for is one of the issues that came up in the last several years when we would have our meetings regarding the Trans-Labrador trails with the Inuit Community Government. One of the biggest concerns they had was the inability to attract and retain suitable groomer operators. That actually does impact our ability to maintain our so-called highway, our Trans-Labrador trails.

So the fact that the money has come through, and the minister confirmed last night that we will be able to pay a decent

wage and add some stability to that occupation so it would be able to attract and obtain those groomer operators. I think the Inuit Community Government will really, really appreciate that.

Of course, we are suffering serious impacts due to climate change. It's impacting when the rivers actually freeze over and I guess their main environment, the sea ice forms, and that really cuts down on when we can actually start using the Trans-Labrador trails to travel. So it impacts our ability to travel within our communities and back and forth to Goose Bay to get a lot of the supplies, equipment and things that we need that's not usually available when the sea ice forms, preventing the *Kamutik W* from travelling.

Just talking about climate change now on transportation. One of the things that really sent a message to the rest of the province on how we are being impacted by climate change in Northern Labrador is the cancellation of Cain's Quest. Myself and my leader were talking about that earlier. Cain's Quest was being held in early March and the fact that it was so warm and created a lot of water on the ice and on the rivers, it actually became too unsafe for Cain's Quest to continue. That's in early March. So you can imagine the impact that it has on people who rely on snowmobile transportation for survival.

Another thing that I really want to point out is the impact of weather on our ability to travel, travel within the District of Torngat Mountains, between our communities, and also to Happy Valley-Goose Bay to travel onward. I just want to talk a little bit about irony.

There's a consultation process going on now for the pre-feasibility study to connect my Northern Labrador communities to Happy Valley-Goose Bay to the Trans-Labrador Highway. The consultation process on the prefeasibility study for a highway connection actually was interrupted

several times because of weather delays. So I think it really, really shows the point that we need reliable transportation, whether it's air or whether it's road, affordable transportation.

Also looking at the provincial government, their activities. They're doing business on the North Coast in terms of providing services has been severely interrupted as well, to the point where a lot of their flights are cancelled, even if the weather is still good, if the weather is forecasted to come down.

I'll just point out another thing, The Journey Project. It is such a great project. It's in Labrador Central and Western Newfoundland. It provides trauma-informed support to survivors of sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence. Just a few weeks ago, they were going into my communities to do some training and support and also generate awareness of the supports that this vital project provides. They had to cancel their flight in. I'm not sure when they'll be going back in again. So it seriously interrupts the way business is done. It actually interferes with the ability to do business on the North Coast.

Looking at Nunatsiavut Government, Nunatsiavut's Department of Education, severely interrupted a lot of their business. Even their House of Assembly, a lot of times their trips are cancelled because they are not able to get in or they're delayed getting in or they won't actually go in because of forecasted bad weather.

Just looking at some of these impacts now because we don't have road access, it's only air, it actually drives up a lot of the cost of accessing services that the rest of the province really don't take into consideration. They take it for granted. Such as like our program now to convert off oil to electricity. Even if you could afford electricity, and we're trying to actually get some, for example, heat pumps installed, how can we get a contractor to come in, it's so

expensive. A return trip, just to fly in, could cost \$1,000, that's added on to the job. Then there are the accommodations. What happens if they get in there and they're ready to come back out and they get stuck? They could be stuck for five more days. So that's probably another \$6,000 to \$7,000 just added on due to hotel costs and the daily charge rate that they would actually have to bill the homeowner for getting that installed.

Oil tanks, every 10 years now you have to get your oil tank replaced. How can we get somebody to come in that's certified by the province? I've called the department many, many times on seeing what the qualifications for somebody who would do the inspection of an oil tank install because it's got to be certified. You have to have that little brass tag on your tank or they won't fill it up. In actual fact, you can't actually get homeowner's insurance of your house without actually having a tank installed and inspected by somebody who's certified.

How do we get them in? The closest person I think we can get in is from Cartwright. They fly from Cartwright to Goose Bay, then into the Northern community. Then they would have to be in there for two or three days.

These are all extreme and it adds five to 10 times the cost of getting a tank replaced for a homeowner than anywhere else on the Island. Those are some of the impacts that we have.

Also, those huge rebates for converting from oil to electric heat, it's got to be done by a certified installer and somebody who's certified as an electrician. That's an additional cost as well.

Not having proper transportation and also we don't have access to affordable transportation, it really impacts my district. These are serious issues that we face every day when we talk about some of the problems that we face.

Just looking at income support, one of the problems that we've had now is we don't have anyone on the North Coast that actually is working with income support. We don't have the social worker there. Also, another problem we have with income support is last year they actually sent letters out to people on income support notifying them that they would have to respond in writing, send a letter back to the department, if not they would be cut off. A lot of people in my district didn't understand. They got the letter, they didn't understand they had to reply. There are cultural differences, language barriers, reading and writing barriers that people in my district encounter. A lot of people didn't actually send the letter back in because they didn't realize the importance of doing it or the significance of doing it. A lot of people got cut off.

I remember last year I got notified by one of the members of the Nunatsiavut Government that somebody in his neighbourhood had gone, I think it was, six months with no income. When we called and found out what was going on with this particular individual, it was because of one of these letters. It's happened over and over again. We were trying to actually let people in my district know that if this has happened to you, if you're cut off from income support and you don't know why, contact us and we'll find out. We found out that there were quite a few people that did this.

This is really a serious problem. It just shows the gaps in understanding of the provincial government service providers and the impacts it has on people. Imagine the quality of life when you lose your income support.

I said to him. What are they living on? They were living on food vouchers that the Nunatsiavut Government had provided, actually, from the COVID money that was out there to supplement the nutritional food for people to actually have during the COVID lockdowns. Imagine now, just living

on supplementary vouchers. That's what they were living on for five to six months.

So some of these issues are really substantive. In actual fact, I really have to say, in my district, the gaps in services and supports are really, really compounded by some of the cultural differences that we have and the language barriers.

Just looking at some of the things that I think a lot of people in Labrador don't realize that's happening in the House of Assembly. The legislation has changed now. We've actually gone from the regional health authorities into one Provincial Health Authority. So, in actual fact, Labrador-Grenfell Health Authority doesn't exist anymore. So that's been a huge concern to me.

In addition, when the legislation was introduced in the House of Assembly, we learned that a lot of the stakeholders like the unions and the different regions weren't properly consulted. I can witness that in my district when I tell people in Goose Bay and in Northern Labrador and actually some people from Lab West that Labrador-Grenfell Health doesn't exist anymore and they're quite shocked. So, to me, that's a lack of consultation.

There are many, many concerns that came up. So one of the problems I have with no regional health authority now for Labrador – well, actually, Labrador-Grenfell Health which is another issue – is that regional knowledge and experience for Labrador and for the Northern Peninsula now is gone. We have to rely on the decision-making of one Provincial Health Authority. Do you know who is really going to be the decision-makers? Do you know where that knowledge on the decisions is going to come from? You might as well, basically, call it Eastern Health instead of the Provincial Health Authority.

We saw what happened when they went from the regional school boards to one

school board for the province. In actual fact, who suffered? Labrador suffered. My district suffered. We just have to look at what happened, and I basically talked about it in the House of Assembly many times.

In 2021, students who were doing CDLI course, that's the advance maths, the sciences, the English, they actually were put on the Newfoundland time zone. They showed up in September, didn't know anything, were told that they were going to be on the Newfoundland time zone. What ended up happening is it interfered with their in-class lectures because each school in Northern Labrador couldn't switch to the Newfoundland time zone because, of course, they had parents getting off work, going home at 12 o'clock, so what's going to happen is, the kids are going to get home at 11:30 and leave again at 12:30. So it created a lot of problems. They couldn't switch to the Newfoundland time zone so the students alone had to bear the brunt of that decision and the consequences.

What happened was that went for a full year. Then the next year what happened – we went and saw what happened in Nain. There was a shortage of students in the junior high. They took all the high school students and put them into junior high; teaching that a lot of them actually didn't have the qualifications to do; put them in the junior high; put everybody in the high school in Nain online. We're going to see the consequences of that because the actual students are the ones who are going to bear the brunt of those decisions.

When you look at the consultations: when that decision was made, there was opportunity to actually improve, not by much, but they could have improved the speed of the Internet so the students wouldn't have been burdened with having to do online courses, which they did not have any experience doing and the studies show that for Indigenous, especially Innu and Inuit students, they really need in-class learning, most of them need in-class learning.

So when you look at that, there was nothing done in September. In actual fact, it was almost two months in before there was any improvement to the Internet and it was still really slow, to the point that there was a huge embarrassment when the pictures were circulated where we had 12 students around one computer trying to do an online course – one computer. The reason why they were all logged on to one computer is so that it wouldn't slow down the Internet even worse.

I mean, you want to talk about marginalization. Inequity is about access to education. Inequity is about access to health care, when you don't get proper access. Housing, there are so many things.

In actual fact, when I vote on the amendment, when I vote for this budget, I'm not going to be supporting the budget because there's not enough done to actually help the real, true issues that impact the people in my district.

There are a lot of other issues that I could talk about. I'm looking at the Independent Auditor's Report that came out from the Office of the Auditor General on *Adult Custody & Community Corrections*. To me, the damning report was unsettling because we have a higher rate of our people in Northern Labrador who are incarcerated.

So just looking at the summary, when people go into custody, you hope that when they're released that there will be rehabilitation, they'll come out better than they went in. But when you look at the report, really, in actual fact, the conditions they have to endure and experience while in custody, actually I think does more harm than good.

When you look in the policy section: "... the department has not ensured that timely passing of the Act and its regulations; as a result, the department continues to operate under outdated legislation" But that's not as important as the next finding: "... Adult

Custody policies on rehabilitation programming and reintegration were incomplete, inadequate, and outdated, and for the majority of the criteria we assessed, no policies existed to guide adult custody at all. There were also significant gaps in Community Correction's policies for managing adult offenders in the community, and some policies lacked critical elements found in other Canadian jurisdictions."

Really what we find is that there were really substantive gaps in people who were in the policies, in case management and in rehabilitation programming. To me, this is not just about gaps in corrections. This is about gaps in actually ensuring that our inmates are rehabilitated. To me, the findings for this just show that when people end up being in custody, there's very little chance they'll be rehabilitated.

One of the things you'll hear is that this audit is dated. I think the report is up to 2019, but I don't see any significant improvements in the last three years.

To me, I'm not going to vote in favour of this budget. I'm going to support the amendment and, hopefully, in the next few years we might see some changes. Anyway, I'm going to end it there, Speaker.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Are there any further speakers?

The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

J. WALL: Thank you, Speaker.

It's always a pleasure to stand in this hon. House and indeed at this late hour to speak to *Budget 2023* and, of course, represent the fine people in my District of Cape St. Francis.

Speaker, before I get into my topic tonight on the budget, I just wanted to touch on Volunteer Week, as we all celebrate it throughout the province. I celebrated with

many of the volunteer groups in my district over the past number of days. Actually, I'm missing an event this evening in the Town of Flatrock with the fine volunteers there. So I'd like to thank my CA for stepping in tonight.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. WALL: With all the wonderful groups I have in my district, Speaker, I look at the fire departments, I look at the Lions Clubs and the great work that they do; I look at the Allied Youth group and bringing new volunteers into the system; the church groups and the boards, school volunteers, recreation commissions and municipal leaders. I had one of the municipal leaders in the House yesterday, Marion McCarthy, celebrating 25 years.

Speaker, the Scouts, the Guides, the 50-plus club; I look at the Folk Arts Council in Torbay and the good that they are doing. I also recognize the volunteers with the Northeast Avalon Food Bank, because I can tell you, Speaker, those volunteers are getting busier each week with the amount of people who are accessing the food bank and it's directly related to the cost of living here in our province.

With respect to volunteerism, Speaker, I know many of us here are volunteers. For me, a personal story I'd like just to acknowledge my mother when she started me volunteering at the age of 15 with the Vera Perlin Society. The good work that the Vera Perlin Society does here in our province. I continue to support the Vera Perlin Society today and, of course, I know many of the staff and the clients of Vera Perlin who do such great work as well. Just to give a shout out to the Vera Perlin Society, Speaker,

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

J. WALL: Speaker, I stood in this hon. House yesterday and spoke to the budget. I touched on Education, I touched on health

care and I touched on violence prevention. Tonight, I'd like to speak to the seniors of our province and how this budget will affect the seniors.

Going back to Volunteer Week, many of our volunteers throughout the province are seniors. We thank them for what they do, day in and day out, as the seniors contribute to all of our communities in an untold amount of hours. Seniors already have the many years of work life and experience and, Speaker, they've fine tuned their skills over the years in a variety of areas. One thing that seniors do have, if they can hold their health and their strength, is the time to donate to various volunteer commitments. So I'd just like to acknowledge the seniors.

Whenever I have the opportunity, Speaker, I'd like to engage the youth with our seniors. That is a great thing because the benefit that the youth will find is that the seniors will teach them the skills that possible employers are looking for. They'll look for teamwork. They'll look for communication. Seniors can teach them task management and problem solving. So whenever you have the opportunity to pair a youth with a senior, when it comes to volunteerism, it is a good thing and I would always encourage that.

With respect to seniors and this particular budget. The Seniors' Advocate has confirmed what we already know. What we have been hearing is that certain seniors of our province are skipping meals, are splitting prescribed medications. We've all heard the stories. I go back to a senior in my district who heats one room of her house and puts on an extra sweater or a coat when she's inside because she cannot afford to heat her home with oil. I have seniors who are, unfortunately, missing doctors' and medical appointments because they can't afford to put the gas in their vehicle, if they've fortunate enough to afford a vehicle.

Speaker, I had a call this week from a senior in Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove, her and her husband have their own vehicle, but unfortunately it had broken down and they did not have the money to repair it. They had to get to her husband's medical appointment and it cost them \$72 by a taxi to go to and from the medical appointment. Well, guess where the \$72 came from? It came from their grocery budget because they didn't have it anywhere else. They can't afford to fix their car, but they had to get to the medical appointment. That \$72 came out of their allotment for groceries for that particular period.

So when you're looking at real-life experiences and talking about real-life experiences, this is what our seniors are struggling with. This is what they're going through. The seniors are speaking out. They spoke on numerous occasions on numerous issues: access to health care is one; long-term care, which most seniors are trying to stay in their homes, but long-term care is always an issue; and of course the cost of living.

So I'd like to ask this hon. House: What is the plan to address the urgent situation that our seniors are facing? I know the Minister of Energy and Technology said tonight that they are trying to go in the right direction. I appreciate that they are trying to go in the right direction, I do, but 19 cents a day doesn't cut it when it comes to seniors trying to face the challenges, day in and day out, with respect to the cost of living.

I had an opportunity to listen to one of the radio shows and heard that 32 per cent of the seniors don't have enough income to meet their basic needs; 32 per cent of the seniors of our province don't have enough of an income to meet their basic needs.

I mentioned about splitting medications. Some seniors don't have the ability to purchase the medical supplies that they need. I witnessed this first-hand from a

constituent in Flatrock who reached out to me looking for assistance with respect to trying to stay in their own home, trying to get the medical assistance for supplies and devices that they need in their home because they can't afford to buy it. This is what they're facing.

Personal care items, a lot of seniors are going without personal care items because it's not in their budget. It's not there. Some seniors have special dietary requirements and their health and well-being is suffering because of dietary requirements that they cannot afford to purchase. This is the reality. This is the life experiences that we're dealing with. As I've said before and the minister has heard me say it, there are many good things in this budget. But there are things in this budget that there are gaps in and our seniors do have issues with them.

Speaker, I have many constituents looking to stay in their own homes. They don't want to move out of their homes with the proper care and support, if it comes to physical home care to have a worker come in, unable to find workers to come into their home to keep them in their home, to keep them safe, to keep them in a well state of mind as well, the staff are not there. Why isn't the staff there? It comes back to low wages.

Speaker –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

J. WALL: I appreciate the Member opposite's humour, my friend. Thank you.

Speaker, when we look at those individuals trying to do their best, trying to stay in their own homes, we need to look at what would be needed for home modifications in addition to the personal care that they would require and, of course, we ought to do better. So I don't know if we can look at that with respect to what is not in the budget.

Speaker, we have many seniors who are claiming that they're on the poverty line. I know that the hon. minister has had good initiatives over the past number of years with respect to the finance, but we do have many seniors who are still suffering. We are hearing it. I know this is not an Opposition issue. This is within the 40 districts of this hon. House. So with respect to our seniors, I do know that we have to and ought to do more.

Speaker, with respect to early childhood education and educators, I'd just like to go back to the hon. minister's Budget Speech. Under Early Learning it says: "Early learning and child care is essential in supporting families, contributing to a strong economy, and most importantly giving children the best possible start in life."

I couldn't agree more, Speaker, with respect to that. However, we have many and I have, I can speak for myself and I know that my hon. colleagues have said this as well, but I have people in my district without the services of child care close to home. I always use the example of an individual in Torbay who drives to Kilbride for child care twice a day, morning and evening. That's unacceptable when you're looking at a single parent trying to keep the home fires burning and trying to keep the wolf away from the door.

I'd like to ask: What is the plan to create child care spaces for when they're needed and where they're needed? Is there a plan going forward? Ten dollar a day we all support, we certainly do, but there has to be a plan to look at the geography: Are there enough spaces in a particular area and for a particular demographic?

My colleague from Placentia West - Bellevue brought up autistic children and child care spaces for children with autism. A very important point that we cannot forget, and I'd like to thank my hon. colleague.

Speaker, the total budget for early learning this year – I stand to be corrected – is about \$5.4 million less than the previous year that was budgeted. There's \$64 million allocated for salaries, no doubt, but why is there less money budgeted this year than last when it comes to early childhood education?

In terms of provincial funds, Speaker, the amounts are down roughly about \$8.7 million. Last year, \$75 million was budgeted, with this year's Estimates being approximately \$66.7 million. I'd like to know, and tomorrow morning myself and our leader are going to be in Estimates with the hon. minister, we look forward to that tomorrow morning bright and early at 9. She will be ready, no doubt, and her staff will be ready. We're looking forward to that. We'll have lots of questions with respect to the budget and we will touch on that as well.

I want to share with you a very unfortunate situation, it not only involves child care, it involves health care, it involves the economy and it has to do with a constituent who had to resign her position from Eastern Health because she did not have child care for her two children. Her spouse works offshore and she could not go to work. She had to resign her position, a specialized area within Eastern Health, because she did not have child care.

So we're looking at the health, well-being and mental stability of the individuals in the family home. We're looking at the money coming into their home. We're looking at the economy. We're looking at the health care that she's not able to provide to the residents of this province because she had to resign.

I have a problem with that because of the lack of available child care spaces in my district. I know this is not confined to my district; however, when I'm hearing about it and I'm sat at their table and they don't know what they're going to do, they're down to one income now. So he's going to have to work more offshore and be home less to

make up for the loss of her income because of a lack of child care spaces.

There are many issues, Speaker, that we have highlighted within this budget that people of the province are missing out on. This is indeed one of them. It's hard to listen to. It's hard when you can't give any advice or how to correct the problem. We can help with what we can, but with respect to a solution, one needs to come not for my district, of course, but for all districts.

Speaker, I know I'm going to have some more opportunity to speak to the budget. I will share with this House, it's not very often I get to have the last word, but tonight I'm going to have the last word as I am the last speaker. So I relish this opportunity no doubt; just lucky I guess.

I do thank you for your attention, Speaker. I look forward to Estimates tomorrow and, of course, to be able to speak to this budget once more in this hon. House.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Thank you, Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, that this House do now adjourn.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

SPEAKER: Motion carried.

This House do stand adjourned until 1:30 o'clock, Monday, May 1.

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