



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume L

SECOND SESSION

Number 28

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

Thursday

April 27, 2023

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Statements by Members

SPEAKER: Today, we'll hear from statements by the hon. Members for the Districts of Conception Bay South, Exploits, Ferryland, Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans, Harbour Main and St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows with leave.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, on April 20, I had the pleasure of attending the Conception Bay South Annual Volunteer Appreciation and Awards Night ceremony. Ms. Norine Taylor, an exceptional lifelong volunteer was named the 2023 Citizen of the Year. This is sponsored by the Conception Bay South Lions Club and the Town of Conception Bay South.

Norine's dedication to our community is second to none. Her volunteer work includes volunteering with the Big Brothers Big Sisters, Canadian Cancer Society, Girl Guides of Canada, CBS Minor Softball association, CBS amateur sports organization and a school council representative on St. Edward's School, Frank Roberts Junior High school and Queen Elizabeth Regional High School councils. For over 10 years, Norine has been a member of the Conception Bay South Chapter of the Children's Wish Foundation and she is also a Special Olympics coach.

Conception Bay South is a great place to live and raise a family. Our community continues to thrive because of dedicated volunteers such as Norine Taylor.

I ask all hon. Members to join with me in congratulating this outstanding individual on receiving this well-deserved award and to thank Norine for her unwavering commitment to our community and our province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, on April 15, I had the privilege to present Mrs. Clara Reid of Bishop's Falls with her certificate and helped celebrate her 98th birthday.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. FORSEY: Born and raised in Fortune, at the age of 17 she left and attended summer school in St. John's to start her teaching career. She taught in Hare Bay, Twillingate, St. John's, Bell Island and Bishop's Falls.

On July 18, 1950, she married Mr. Raymond Reid at the age of 20 and together they had five daughters. Mrs. Reid resides by herself in her own home in Bishop's Falls and is the oldest living resident in the town.

Mrs. Reid is still very independent, cleaning and cooking for herself. There is always an assortment of bottled soups, which she has every day and says it's what keeps her healthy. She is known to have a great social life and enjoys going on excursions with her friends, the Bubble Buddies. She loves doing puzzles, reading and watching game shows when she has the time.

Speaker, I would like for all Members of this House of Assembly to join me in wishing this remarkable lady, Mrs. Clara Reid, a happy 98th birthday.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker.

Just this past weekend, the Southern Shore Senior Breakers were awarded Newfoundland and Labrador senior hockey glory –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

L. O'DRISCOLL: – the Herder Memorial Trophy for the second consecutive year as they defeated the Deer Lake Red Wings in a thrilling five games.

Following an impressive year in the Avalon East Senior Hockey League and finishing in first place, the Breakers defeated the Conception Bay Blues and the St. John's Caps to win the league championship and advance to this year's Herder final.

The Breakers are a phenomenal team that have captured the hearts of many with their incredible talent, passion and dedication to the game. Not only are they exceptional on the ice, but they also serve as fantastic role models for aspiring athletes along the Southern Shore.

It was great to see so many passionate fans pack the Ken Williams arena in Mobile this past weekend to show their support for their home team.

Congratulations to the Breakers on another stellar season. I can't wait to see you all on the ice again next year in search of their third consecutive Herder.

Go, Breakers, Go!

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

C. TIBBS: Thank you very much, Speaker.

On June 16, 2012, near Red Cliff, then six-year-old Bradley Reid was on an ATV with his grandfather, Walter Small, when a moose distracted them. The ATV turned over with Mr. Small pinned underneath. Bradley did not panic; rather he sat with his grandfather all day, despite it being very hot.

Later in the evening, they heard a truck on the trail and Bradley ran for help but despite his best efforts, he unfortunately never got the driver's attention. It was not until the following day that they heard another vehicle and Bradley managed to flag down the occupants of the truck. Two men came to help and managed to remove the ATV off Mr. Small and call an ambulance to the scene.

Bradley, never leaving his grandfather's side, other than to seek help, displayed bravery well beyond his years during the entire ordeal.

Please join me as we honour a true hero at a tender age, who loved his grandfather enough to remain by his side. Bradley Reid, we are very proud of you as a community for ensuring the safety of someone so important to us all.

Great job young man.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: I am honoured to stand in this House of Assembly today and recognize George and Bertha Youden from Georgetown in the District of Harbour Main.

On April 22, 1923, George and Bertha, who lived almost next door to each other walked to the Brigus United Church to be married. Seventy glorious years later and they are celebrating their platinum anniversary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: As a jack of all trades, George supported his family by working a lifetime at H. B. Dawe, while Bertha was a stay-at-home mom who raised five children: one son and four daughters. Today, they are grandparents to 10 and great-grandparents to eight, with number nine on the way.

George and Bertha are both healthy, active and so youthful looking, you never believe that he is 90 and she is 87. They both still have driver's licences and it is not unusual to see George up tarring the roof of the family home, or Bertha out mowing the lawn. As their daughter Jessie described, they live a modest and simple life and are good parents to their children.

Please join me in congratulating George and Bertha on this milestone occasion and wish them many, many more years of love and happiness together.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows, with leave?

Leave granted?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows.

K. HOWELL: Speaker, G. William Fitzgerald settled in St. Anthony as a general surgeon in 1976. With his wife, Dr. Trudy O'Keefe, a general practitioner, they committed 40-plus years of dedicated service to people of the Great Northern Peninsula, Labrador and the Quebec shore.

As a Member of the Order of Canada, recipient of the Royal College's James H. Graham Award of Merit, President of the Royal College and Canadian Association of General Surgeons, Dr. Fitz demonstrated selfless dedication to patient care, vast scope of practice, technical wizardry, a love of teaching and service to profession and his community.

Students and professionals from all over the world flocked to St. Anthony, despite its remoteness, to learn and work with him. He had an international reputation. His impish sense of humor and unwavering support of his colleagues created a system of care second to none. A patient referred was a patient accepted. No question was too silly; no task was too small, if it meant learning or improving patient care. We all felt safe and supported when he was present.

He passed away on April 17, 2023. It was my pleasure to have known and worked with such a incredible human.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in celebrating and honouring the life of Dr. G. William Fitzgerald.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: I ask all Members to rise for a moment of silence.

(Moment of silence.)

SPEAKER: Thank you.

Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

J. ABBOTT: Speaker, access to stable and affordable housing is key to improving health and social outcomes. This is why our government has prioritized the creation of

new housing options, with more than 750 new housing options constructed or under construction or subsidized over the past two years.

Budget 2023 includes almost \$140 million to further increase affordable housing options throughout Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, including: \$70 million over three years for a new Affordable Housing Program, to construct over 850 new affordable rental homes through private and non-profit sector partnerships for seniors, young adults, Indigenous peoples, individuals experiencing homelessness, persons with disabilities and recent immigrants; \$25 million is for emergency shelters, transition homes and supportive living for those experiencing homelessness or intimate partner violence; \$17 million is included to maintain, repair and modernize provincial social housing, including vacant units – including Northern Labrador – for individuals and families in need; \$10 million in grants to help lower income homeowners complete repairs, accessibility modifications and energy efficiency retrofits to their homes. These programs primarily serve seniors, supporting them to age in place. Finally, \$30 million for an integrated health, housing and supportive services hub to support those experiencing homelessness in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay area.

Speaker, everyone deserves a home and a safe place to live. We will continue to work with federal, municipal and Indigenous governments and community partners to address the diverse housing and homelessness needs in this province.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Speaker, and I would like to thank the hon. minister for an advance copy of his statement.

Though we look forward to this, Speaker, I am shocked that this government would stand to pat themselves on the back for this. As we learned in Estimates, the minister has overseen a period of exploding wait-lists and growing desperation among people trying to find affordable housing. The wait-list has exploded from 1,523 to 2,352 families, a 55 per cent increase over two years. That is an extra 829 seniors and low-income individuals and families who are desperately trying to find safe and affordable housing.

Yes, incredibly many of the housing units sit empty. We are in a housing crisis while 290 Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation units sit empty. That is right; 290 units should be home to seniors and families; they sit empty waiting on repair. If you are wondering why that is, some 20 per cent of the minister's staff positions at Newfoundland and Labrador Housing are vacant still and these are the positions who would repair the vacant units and get families put in place.

So while the government touts their success, maybe they should talk about the 1,000 Ukrainians living in hotels or hundreds placed in hotel rooms every single night around our province and our emergency shelters.

Yes, Speaker, this is not quite a success story just yet.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

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

I remind the minister that the New Democratic Party caucus has been a

champion of accessible housing in this province. Since he has become minister, emergency shelter housing has increased. If you look at the dashboard of End Homelessness St. John's in the last few months, we've experienced the highest rates of chronic homelessness in over a year.

We called for housing expansion last year. Government was too late to act and people suffered. It is easy to make announcements, but it takes real work to address the inequalities and social determinants of health.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Are there any further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

D. BRAZIL: I apologize, Mr. Speaker; I was under the impression there was going to be more Ministerial Statements here, so we'll take the one.

Speaker, another day, another increase in the cost of living for the people of our province. Marine Atlantic has announced a 4 per cent increase in their fuel surcharge, just in time for the carbon tax increase.

I ask the Premier: What does this increase mean for grocery store prices in our province and the effect it will have on the people of this province?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, as the Member opposite knows, it is the federal agency responsible for that, Mr. Speaker. We share his concerns. We share his concerns with respect to this increase. I know the Minister of Tourism has concerns. We all have concerns with how this will impact the supply chain to Newfoundland and Labrador. I can tell you we will continue to advocate on the people of Newfoundland and Labrador so that the federal government hears and understands our concerns, Mr. Speaker,

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

It's ironic that when there's something that they can tout is positive for Newfoundland and Labrador, it's a rah-rah pat on the back but when it's something that is detrimental to the people of the province, all they say is, well, it's a federal responsibility. It's not good enough, Mr. Speaker, and they support them going through.

Speaker, the cozy relationship between the Liberals and their federal cousins pays off once again. Flights are inaccessible and ferries continue to increase in cost.

How are tourists supposed to get to our province this summer?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology.

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

I just want to stand up here as someone who has had a bit of history in this House when we talk about cousins. I can point out that when we talk about Marine Atlantic, it was the Member's federal cousins that actually started cost recovery and increased it over their time in office. And, in fact, did nothing while they were in government to take care of it.

I can tell you it's still an issue today. It's an issue that we want to take care of. It's an issue that we have advocated for and we will continue to do so, but for anybody on the other side to take the moral high ground that they got something done is absolutely false and has been for some time.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, three, maybe four elections later, I thought we were beyond what's gone on in the past and they were going to have the future, (inaudible).

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: But I will clarify, an 18 per cent increase during the Liberal reign just in the last 7½ years, Mr. Speaker. So that's what's been done for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The *Terra Nova FPSO* is back in Bull Arm, Suncor has refused to provide a timeline as to when all production will resume. When the vessel left our province it was supposed to return to production in late 2022.

Premier, please tell us what is going on with this production platform.

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

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

I just want to take –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

S. CROCKER: I just want to take a minute, Mr. Speaker, to address the preamble and

address the earlier question about tourism. This –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I heard the question; I want to hear the response.

The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation.

S. CROCKER: The Member raised an important question and it's a question that the department that I represent and my colleague in IET have been, quite frankly, on to for quite some time.

Access is a major challenge. We see Marine Atlantic as a challenge and we expect the federal government to step in here, similar to what they did for Prince Edward Island, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to advocate for that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I agree, we all should be supporting that, which I know on this side we are, but an 18 per cent increase over the last 7½ years is not actually getting their federal counterparts to do what's good for the people of the province.

I ask again: Premier, the *Terra Nova FPSO* is back in Bull Arm, Suncor has refused to provide a timeline as to when all production will resume. When the vessel left our province it was supposed to return to production in late 2022.

What will you do to find out what's happening and get this production up and running?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

A. FUREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Happy to address this question, Mr. Speaker. Of course, we recognize that the *Terra Nova FPSO* is an incredibly valuable asset. We have made sure that we supported the hard-working women and men who work on it and work around it, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to do so.

I would point out to the Member opposite, had we taken their strategy, had we taken their plan, we would now currently own 20 per cent of the liability that is continuing to build with respect to that particular project. We took a different tact, so we will enjoy the royalties without the liability; very different than the equity approach that they demanded, Mr. Speaker, in this House when we were debating the FPSO.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, had they taken our advice, the production and all the work would have been done in Newfoundland and Labrador by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and any equity share we would have been getting our return on that, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: That's how we would have done business in this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

D. BRAZIL: Government allowed refit work on the *Terra Nova FPSO* –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Both sides, I can't even hear the question.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Speaker.

Government allowed refit work on the *Terra Nova FPSO* to go to Spain. Now Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are working on the FPSO in Bull Arm. These are the people who should have been working on the vessel all along.

Are we now redoing work which was supposed to be completed overseas?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology.

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to make a few points about this project, which I will point out, without the investment of this government, would not have had happened.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. PARSONS: It would not have happened and 70 million barrels of oil would have been left stranded offshore.

I will point out a couple of things. Number one, as of December, there were 658 Newfoundland and Labrador residents working on the *Terra Nova*.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. PARSONS: The second thing I'm going to point out is yes, we want the production to start up right away, but we know, and we're quite comfortable knowing, that the resource is not given away, it's not going away and it will be there and this will happen.

I will point out lastly that the Members know when they talk about work being done here, it was the PC administration in 2006 that

sent the *Terra Nova* to Rotterdam to get their work done.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: I'm glad the minister reminded me of seven elections ago of what was being done by the administration there. Well done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: Speaker, I also want to acknowledge, at the end of the day, what we were proposing is for the last year when that FPSO was in Spain, that work could've been done in Newfoundland by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and the communities that were adjacent to those construction sites –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

D. BRAZIL: – would have also benefited from that in this province.

Speaker, we hear all or part of this work may go to Houston.

Does the Premier have any assurance that Suncor will not ship the *Terra Nova* off again to have work done which could be completed by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians done in Newfoundland and Labrador?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology.

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me continue on from the first answer. The Members know that the reason that work went overseas then, back under a PC administration, was because there were no facilities that could handle it. Again, I will point out that this vessel was in dry dock. There has been no oil coming out since 2019.

If it wasn't for our administration, we wouldn't even be talking about the hundreds and millions of dollars of capital expenditures that are benefiting Newfoundland and Labrador right now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. PARSONS: Before I'm going to take a lesson from the Member opposite about work going overseas, how are those boats that you bought in Romania when you were the minister?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I had asked and expect the minister to take a reference to the Auditor General's report and the Public Accounts that outlines exactly the two best vessels built for passengers in Canada and in the world and delivered on time, on budget and qualified to do exactly what they're done for.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

D. BRAZIL: I will clarify for the minister who is here; his predecessor and the predecessor there could not manage a contract.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

You have another 20 seconds.

D. BRAZIL: I'll clarify before I go to the next question.

They could not manage a contract, Mr. Speaker, and we lost millions because they could not put the quality assurance program here, that's now in use in Newfoundland, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker, we hear the *Terra Nova FPSO* was supposed to be back in production months ago, but now Cenovus has removed all production from its 2023 forecast. This is alarming.

When will the vessel return to production?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology.

A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, when I was in university I was a history grad and I have to tell you I love a bit of history. He's over there trying to defend the hypocrisy of talking about work going outside when he was the minister that bought boats in Romania and then forgot to put a wharf there. That is the lesson that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians need to remember when we talk about that Member and that administration and what they did.

But what I will point out, again, a little bit of history. It was just less than two years ago that every Member on that side stood up and applauded the decision of this government to invest in *Terra Nova*. It's going to happen and it happened because of our decision-making.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I think the minister is deluded when it comes to talking about history because we were here. We talked and supported what was going to happen with the *Terra Nova*. We stood on the steps, we protested and stood firm with people who wanted to work here. We wanted the proper investment that would benefit the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We didn't get the proper investment; we didn't get a good deal. We got a sell-out deal. Unfortunately, now we have to come back and fix it at the expense of delay in our industry here in ensuring that we get our royalties, Mr. Speaker. Not a good move here, not good management, but not uncommon for that administration over there.

Speaker, uncertainty now surrounds the *Terra Nova* and the timelines for its return are uncertain. Government invested hundreds of millions of dollars and royalty concessions to kick-start the project.

How much of a hole will this delay put in our provincial budget?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology.

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to continue to talk about it, because I took a lot of questions in the fall of 2020 and Members on the opposite side talked about how we should be buying equity in various projects, about what was going on with West White Rose, what was going on with Come By Chance, what was going on with *Terra Nova*.

I can just point out a few things. *Terra Nova*, that work has contributed thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions to Newfoundland and Labrador. In fact, I would say to the Member for Terra Nova, because we've talked about it extensively, his district is booming right now with the

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that are working on this project.

We could talk about West White Rose, another decision we made, and the incredible amount of work and capital expenditure and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are working on that. We could talk about Come By Chance and talk about the hundreds of workers that are going on that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. PARSONS: So, again, I say to the Member, please ask another question asking us about the investment and the support we have given to the energy industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: What a performance. They all say it's theatrics in the House of Assembly; you just seen it.

The LSPU will be calling this evening looking for the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: Because we live in the present, we learn from that past and I think government should take a lesson from us. We knew, maybe you should go on and do the same.

Speaker, last night, I was happy to attend MUNSU's student forum –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

B. PETTEN: It's them, not us.

SPEAKER: It's both sides.

B. PETTEN: – at the university. Unfortunately, the Premier and the Minister of Education were missing in action. Strange, you've heard me say that before.

Speaker, if the Premier and the minister are so concerned about the plights of our students: Why couldn't they attend as well?

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

T. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education had a medical issue that he was dealing with. I'm not sure the question is appropriate.

I was there; I was representing government, as former Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker. I believe I was quite capable of speaking to the issues.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not the minister's attending physician so I did not know he had a medical appointment last night that took him away. That is a low blow because I have a lot of respect for the Minister of Health and he should know better.

I also asked where the Premier was. We know where the Premier is to all the time; he's only good for a photo op.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

B. PETTEN: The proof is in the pudding, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Move on with the question.

B. PETTEN: Yes, the Minister of Health was there, quite interesting, he confirmed the \$68 million cut from Memorial has directly resulted in a 19 per cent drop in enrolment. This is exactly what the Students' Union said would happen.

Would the minister now admit the Liberal government made a mistake?

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That is not at all what was said last night, Mr. Speaker. I did say did tuition have an impact? Yes, it's quite possible. Did declining enrolment in our schools over the years have an impact? Yes, that's quite possible. I believe the acting president of Memorial last night had also said that the enrolment for next year is at pre-pandemic levels, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: No, no, that's not what he said.

T. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, so to say that it is directly related to one issue without studying and understanding. What I said last night is we need to look at these numbers, we need to understand these numbers and we need to look at all factors that have contributed to these numbers.

I do believe that Dr. Bose did say that the numbers of enrolment for next year is at pre-pandemic levels.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

I'll clarify for the minister, because I was there and I listened intently. What the president said was they're at spring levels,

which is less full-time students. So they're not comparing apples to apples.

We read the article. I was there last night. The minister can't cherry-pick, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

B. PETTEN: I enjoy the banter, I really do. I love the banter, actually. You know that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

B. PETTEN: Quote "The Raven" now. I'll quote more than "The Raven."

Massive cuts in funding has doubled tuition and made post-secondary education inaccessible. The numbers don't lie, Speaker.

How many more students is this Liberal government going to turn away before they admit their mistake?

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

T. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, I need to set the record straight.

The former president of Memorial University presented to government a plan to increase tuitions. Government had then reacted by saying the tuition freeze money should not go back into operating revenues for the university, it should go towards student loans, student grants and student support services.

Mr. Speaker, to simply allow that funding to remain and go into operations would not have kept tuitions where they were. Tuitions were going to increase in any event.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the Premier has been very clear in saying that this is a time for all parties to come together, for all parties to work in a very conciliatory manner to work

towards solutions to identify how we can bring stability back to an institution that is very important to this province.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The minister's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

I'll repeat and reiterate what I said yesterday: We have one Premier. He's looking across the way at me there now. That's the person that people want to see. Unfortunately, they'll see a minister and they'll see an MHA. They want to see the Premier and they want to hear what the Premier has to say. The Premier should have been there.

To your note on tuition, the former president told me in a meeting she was advised on budget day of the tuition cuts. So whatever conversations had between that, they found out budget day and that's not good enough.

Speaker, international students now pay the highest tuition in Atlantic Canada. Again, under this government, we have lost our competitive advantage to attract students to our province.

Is the minister worried international students who can't find housing or a family doctor will turn away from Memorial?

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

T. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you emphatically and entirely honestly, which is the way I operate, that the president of Memorial University had several meetings, was well aware of what was happening. Why she said what she said, I can't account for that, but I can account for the truth. The

truth is she was well aware of what was happening.

Mr. Speaker, I can also say that there's a 16 per cent increase in international enrolment at the university this year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Speaker, a constituent has asked me for help, after being ignored by the Premier and his Liberal ministers. The gentleman was airlifted to Ontario for a heart transplant, a service unavailable in this province. However, the medical transportation program will only give him \$3,000 a month for accommodations but the cheapest he can find is \$5,700.

Why is the government forcing this family to fundraise to access a lifesaving procedure?

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There's been some changes, recently, to the MTAP in the department. In fairness to the new minister, Mr. Speaker, I'm probably better equipped to deal with this because I've been dealing with it for a number of months.

I asked the Member to bring this particular case. I don't know if there are any exceptions that can be made, Mr. Speaker. I know that the MTAP is under review. We are looking at the policies of the MTAP with the hope that it will provide the best possible service and reimbursement to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that we are able to provide.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: The Premier needed advice in Central and put a new office but we can't hear it.

Speaker, this individual is forced to go out of the province in order to save his life. Even worse, because the province does not have a transplant coordinator, the man is overwhelmed and have paperwork and forms with nowhere to turn for help.

Why are we abandoning transplant patients?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Labrador Affairs.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I thank the Member for the question, a very important topic. As most here in this Chamber would know, the MTAP was transferred under Labrador Affairs, effective April 1, as my colleague just referenced. We're currently undergoing a review. I don't know the details of the case and if I did I wouldn't discuss it here on the floor, but I encourage the Member to reach out. I've already heard from a number of folks from across the way.

We are digging deep into the medical transportation program, the Income Support medical transportation program and we're going to be making some changes to support the end-user in a timely manner. I encourage the Member to reach out to me and have further discussion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: Changeover shouldn't be affecting people's lives, Speaker.

Speaker, a transplant coordinator is essential for the success of these patients. This is a life-and-death situation.

When is the government going to fully staff a transplant coordination program?

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will take that under advisement. I know that this province has worked hard on not only looking for people to provide their permission under MCP to be transplant individuals and agree to that. We put a great deal of effort into the transplant program, Mr. Speaker, but I will take the question under advisement and see what, if any, improvements can be made to the program.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker, the Health Accord has made numerous recommendations for changes to our health care system. One of these recommendations was to "Design a **long-term evaluation plan** related to the implementation of the Health Accord ... to determine whether the actions undertaken are achieving the objectives of each strategy."

Will the minister table this plan?

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

T. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, we've accepted the Health Accord about a year ago. We have implemented a number of the recommendations in the Health Accord. A number of improvements such as Heart Force One, Mr. Speaker, the travelling orthopedic surgeons. We are looking at other specialties and other surgeons that we can bring to the people of the province in areas where the population doesn't support a full team. We have same-day joint

replacement, Mr. Speaker. We are looking at Carbonear as the next site for that. We've brought the four health authorities into one Health Authority. We have announced the integration of ambulance services, Mr. Speaker, in this province.

There's money in this year's budget – the list goes on and on in terms of what we've done. I think the record in terms of our response to the Health Accord is clear.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

To find out whether any of those are working, you need the evaluation plan. So I assume there's obviously no plan. Cart before the horse.

Speaker, another recommendation was to "Develop and implement provincial legislation, regulation, and policy required to provide appropriate, quality and accessible care and protection for older persons in Newfoundland and Labrador."

Will the minister provide an update and the timeline for this legislation?

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

T. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad he reminded me of that because we do have an expert panel put in place to look at long-term care and personal care, also coming out of the Health Accord, Mr. Speaker. We're not sitting on our hands. Once that work is done, Mr. Speaker, and we get the recommendations, we will better be able to look at what changes need to happen.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: I would beg to differ there. The minister already spoke to this being out for a year already. So someone sat on their hands for a year before they came in with this six-to-eight-month study.

Seniors are suffering while we're waiting. The Health Accord also recommended to "Develop and implement a formal **Provincial Frail Elderly Program** to address the critical need of our population."

Will the minister provide an update and timeline on this program?

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

T. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, I need to address the preamble. We have implemented a number of the recommendations of the Health Accord already. We've got it about a year; it's a 10-year plan. I'm not sure if the Member is expecting all of the recommendations and all of the 10-year plan to be done on one day or one month or even in the first year.

I think the record speaks for itself, Mr. Speaker. We have undertaken numerous improvements, a number of announcements and a number of initiatives dealing with the Health Accord and as a result of the recommendations of the Health Accord.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

P. DINN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's interesting because some of these actions call for immediate action and we're a year in. That's not the definition of immediate to me.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

P. DINN: So let me ask this question.

The Health Accord also asks for – which is critical – create a strategic recruitment plan. Can you table that plan?

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

T. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad he reminded me of that as well because we've put in a world-class recruitment office at the Provincial Health Authority. We've put an assistant deputy minister responsible for recruitment, Mr. Speaker, in the department. We've put staff in the department. The recruitment office, Mr. Speaker, which –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: You've got six minutes left to Question Period. I can stand here for six minutes, no problem.

The Minister of Health and Community Services, you've got another 30 seconds.

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So each of these items that the Member's raised, I'm glad he's reminding us of the good work that we are doing in these areas. The world-class recruitment office has been put in place at the Health Authority, Mr. Speaker, which I will say should be able to go head to head with any recruitment office of any firm or any health authority in this country.

SPEAKER: The Leader of the Third Party.

J. DINN: Speaker, thank you.

Today on *Labrador Morning*, the Minister of Education stated that shortfalls in teaching staff doesn't appear to be an issue in Labrador. Spoken by a minister who obviously has no idea of the challenges facing schools. Based on the message we received, teachers in Labrador West were angered by the comment and consider his remarks a slap in the face. Many were switched at the beginning of the year due to

shortages and have been covering off classes internally almost every day.

I ask the minister: Will he take his head out of the sand and admit there is a problem and address the teaching staffing shortage in Labrador West?

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

T. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I met with officials in the Department of Education today who have confirmed that the information and the details that were provided by the minister were in fact provided by the school district. Just to be absolutely certain, Mr. Speaker, because this issue is too important to the residents of the area.

The assistant deputy minister of Education is going to be travelling to Labrador to make an assessment of what's happening on the ground, Mr. Speaker, so that if there are deficiencies or if there are issues, we can deal with it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

Social and economic marginalization continues to contribute to the ongoing intergenerational trauma in my district. The loss of the freight boat from the Island to my Northern Labrador communities means that my people have to live with higher costs for everything such as healthy food and building materials. Worse, much is no longer available.

I ask the minister: Will he commit to reinstating the freight boat to the Northern Labrador communities and take real action towards ending and addressing the inequities faced by people in my district?

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

E. LOVELESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you for the question.

I tell the hon. Member that in my consultations with the stakeholders in Labrador and with the MHAs that represent it on this side, that great work has been done; strides have been made in terms of improving the system in Labrador. We get it from stakeholders who are in Labrador. The only one that I know that looks at it from the glass as half full is the Member opposite.

There are great strides. There's an increase in freight. There's an increase in passengers. It's a success story and we're continuing to build on that.

Always can do more and we will do more.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Speaker, I'd like to point out that the MHA for Torngat Mountains represents the six communities that are actually serviced by the *Kamutik W.* If I'm raising concerns based on the community, basically that means that the entire district is not satisfied. There are a lot of costs, high costs, for food and building materials and it's just not working. We need that freight boat back.

Elders in my district are unable to heat their homes because of the cost of stove oil and other fuels are way too high.

Will the minister commit today to removing the provincial tax on all forms of heating fuel? It would be a step towards addressing the cost-of-living crisis in the province.

Thank you.

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

S. COADY: Thank you, Speaker.

Our government has worked very hard to ensure that home heat is not impacted by carbon tax, for example. There is no provincial tax on home heating. I think the Member is referencing Harmonized Sales Tax, which is of course a harmonized tax across the country. We don't have controls of what it is imposed upon with using HST.

But that is why we implemented the home heat rebate program. I know a number of people in her district took advantage of it. I know we work very closely with the Member opposite to ensure that they could take advantage of the \$500 that this government is providing back to the people of the province to assist them with their home heating needs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Yes, Speaker, and I would like to acknowledge and thank the Finance Minister for helping to make that one-time payment of \$500 available to people in my district. But people pay between \$1,000 to \$2,000 a month just for stove oil and a one-time payment of \$500 really, really is not enough, Speaker.

Access to housing is yet another example of marginalization fueling intergenerational trauma in my district. The Canadian Housing Advocate visited my district and called the housing situation a human rights violation. She said the housing conditions were abominable and "in some cases, I still have nightmares."

Newfoundland and Labrador Housing has a 25 per cent vacancy in Torngat Mountains. Some units sat vacant for 10 years only

because they had not done repairs. I know the minister has been working on this.

But I ask the minister: Will he commit to making the seven homes in Nain and the three homes in Hopedale, that's only 10 houses, available by October, the end of the shipping season in my district?

SPEAKER: The Member's time has expired.

The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

J. ABBOTT: Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to respond.

Over the winter, the Minister of Labrador Affairs and Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs, myself and staff visited the communities of Nain and met with President Lampe and his executive to talk about many issues affecting social and economic life in Northern Labrador. One of the things we did talk about was housing. The minister and I did visit many of the housing units in the community.

I have been saying publicly and I am committed to making sure we address all the housing needs, along with the Housing Commission set-up by the Nunatsiavut Government, to make sure we work in tandem to address all the housing needs in Labrador, including the rental units that we own and operate.

We have committed money in the budget this year to address most of those units. I cannot commit to what the Member asked about by October because that's going to be an operational decision made on the ground when supplies are in this spring.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The time of Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

T. WAKEHAM: Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development spoke after I had spoken and asked me for –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Does the Member have leave to present a document?

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

Okay, go ahead.

T. WAKEHAM: This is a document that the minister asked for yesterday during my speech so I just wanted to table it here.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

Any other tabling of documents?

I do have one.

In accordance with section 23 of the *Auditor General Act, 2021*, I hereby table the *Monitoring Report on Outstanding Performance Audit Recommendations 2014 - 2020*.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move, in accordance with

Standing Order 11(1), that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, May 1, 2023.

SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

J. HOGAN: Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow move, in accordance with Standing Order 11(1), that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 4, 2023.

SPEAKER: Are there any further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for Which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Speaker.

The reasons for this petition:

Many residents of the District of Harbour Main are struggling with the constant increase in the cost of living. The working poor, who are living paycheque to paycheque, are experiencing turmoil with whether to heat their homes or buy food for their children. This is having a serious impact on the mental well-being of many families.

The supports that government have recently implemented are failing families who are working hard but yet fall within a lower income bracket and are unable to avail of government supports.

Therefore we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to immediately create an emergency plan for the working poor to ensure that no Newfoundlander and Labradorian is left behind.

Speaker, the petition today is mostly driven by the fact that my constituents in Harbour Main have been reaching out and they are struggling. They are struggling with the high cost of living and I fear that the high cost of living in Newfoundland and Labrador, and in particular in the District of Harbour Main, is pushing more and more people into poverty.

We're seeing grocery prices going up. I've been at many events, even in the last constituency week last week and that's all I seem to hear, in addition to health care, grocery prices and the cost of living and how they're not able to sustain the livelihood that they have been used to in the past.

There are concerns about the rental costs rising on affordable housing; gasoline is so expensive; home heating fuel bills. All of this, Speaker, is praying on the minds of the constituents of Harbour Main.

It was interesting to note, as well, when I spoke to many of the seniors who I was talking to, even though they're struggling, Speaker, they lamented, they were concerned and they spoke with such regret because of their fears for young families and the young parents and wondering how they're able to raise their families, their young children. How are they able to live under these circumstances?

I raised this today as well because we know that next week is Mental Health Week. Speaker, there is no doubt in my mind this is having a serious impact on the mental well-being of so many families, not only in the District of Harbour Main but throughout the province. So there needs to be more done to help low-income earners, to help the working poor. We urge the government to do that.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

L. EVANS: Thank you, Speaker.

I present this petition for fairer electricity rates for Northern Labrador communities. It's been a petition that I've been presenting now for a while.

We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador who urge our leaders to ensure that fairer electricity rates be provided to the residents in Northern Labrador communities.

The electricity rates charged to Northern Labrador are cost prohibitive to using electric heat and are a barrier to adequately heating their homes. The rationale for this petition is to bring electricity rates more in line with what our neighbouring residents of Lake Melville region pay.

The first 1,000 kilowatt hours, Torngat Mountains' residents are charged the same rate as neighbouring residents of Lake Melville region. However, above the ceiling of 1,000 kilowatt hours Torngat Mountains' residents pay six times the rate Lake Melville residents pay. Six times the rate, jumping up to 19 cents a kilowatt hour. This is the highest rate in the entire province, preventing most residents from being able to afford to heat their homes with electric heat. Low-income families and households that do not have the manpower to haul wood are the greatest impacted.

Poorly heated houses often results in damage, creating expensive repairs for frozen pipes, moisture damage and mould. Poorly heated houses also creates social and mental health issues that can be long lasting. We strongly believe that changes to the electricity rates need to be made for

Northern Labrador residents of Torngat Mountains.

Unfortunately, our reality hasn't changed and who's being impacted the greatest is our elders, the elders in the community. I talked about the price of stove oil in Question Period earlier today. What ends up happening is the seniors on Old Age Security, their entire cheque goes towards heating their house.

In 2019, when I was campaigning, one of the people stopped me on the road in Nain and said: We help our parents. But he said to me: Lela, I don't know what other people are doing. That was back in 2019, when the cost of stove oil and gasoline was much, much cheaper.

Now, what's happening is our elders, our seniors are struggling. So what ends up happening is they are hit with cold houses because they can't afford the stove oil. Also, a lot of the seniors are not able to haul wood. Even if they are physically able to do it, they actually don't have the means a lot of times because of the high price of gasoline and then, of course, the maintenance of a snowmobile.

For us, that's a serious issue, but in addition to that, I look at the women. There are a lot of women in my communities that are reliant on using stove oil or having to get somebody to haul the wood, because a lot of times there are physical barriers.

Yesterday, I talked about the –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Member's time has expired.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Speaker.

With the release of the Atlantic Seal Science Task Team and the significance of the commercial harvest to the fishers and

plant workers in the District of Bonavista, we feel that the seal population is far greater than the ecosystem can sustain. As a result, the large population of seals is certainly preventing the rebuilding of our valuable groundfish stock and negatively affecting the significant landed value of our commercial harvest.

We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to address the seal population by taking proactive measures on fulfilling our current provincial quota of seals and enhancing the markets of seal products within the province and other jurisdictions. Action is long overdue.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke at length to this yesterday and I wanted to raise it today in petition form, knowing that the minister was here this time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

C. PARDY: Oceana released a statement of release. In the release they stated about arresting and stopping the commercial capelin fishery. As I stated yesterday in 2J3KL, coming all down the East Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, seals consume one million metric tons of capelin. The commercial harvest consumes 1.2 per cent of that.

Oceana, in their news release, which I'm sure the minister will agree, never mentioned seals one time. They had mentioned that our species is being threatened by mismanagement and overfishing. Mismanagement, yes, and by predation. Never once did they mention seals.

I would say my hon. Member for Stephenville - Port au Port has said we've got an ecosystem crisis on our shores and we're silent. We weren't on October 19. On October 19 we stood united in this House to

make sure that we would rise on a PMR and make sure that we stand to support our fishery in research and making sure that the science was good.

I would say to you that we need action to make sure commercial overfishing is not depleting the capelin stock. News alert: It is the seals that's predating on the capelin.

I think we need action, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much for your time.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture.

D. BRAGG: Thank you very much.

I did have the opportunity yesterday to listen to the Member's petition. I think it's the very same petition that came forward today.

I remind the Member of the petition he put forward in this House here over on March 22, which is a letter from the Professional Fish Harvesters Board. Not only is the wording of this petition factually inaccurate and misleading, its spirit and intent represents a threat to the independent owners and operators of the fisheries in our province.

That was the last petition that Member puts forward, who got up and talked about all the great – I agree, we have trouble with seals. Our federal department are the ones who did the seal quota. Most of the hunt will be done in this province.

I come back to the former petition in which the Member stood up here, incited a riot just about, in this House, in which my life was threatened that day, Mr. Speaker, which I took great offence to. I have a letter here signed by the Professional Fish Harvesters Board saying the petition was not only wrong but not factual.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

Before I move on, I just want to remind Members they're not allowed to identify if Members are in or out of their seats. There are times they're on meetings or ministers may be out, so I'll just remind all Members, please.

The Leader of the Third Party.

J. DINN: Thank you, Speaker.

I have a petition here, another 160. So we're approaching 700 now, regarding tuition at Memorial. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador ended Memorial University's historic tuition freeze, resulting in a tuition increase of 150 per cent for domestic students. The cost of the degree is over \$25,000 compared to the \$10,200 students paid during years when the province froze tuition.

The average undergraduate tuition for international students has increased by 97 per cent, meaning they will pay \$41,810 more for their Memorial University degree than they did before the cuts. This means that Memorial University will be the most expensive university in Atlantic Canada for international students.

Students are currently facing unprecedented threats to accessible and affordable education in Newfoundland and Labrador. Young people and families across this province and country are terrified for their futures as their ability to access even a marginally affordable post-secondary education is being ripped away. Low-income students and folks from marginalized backgrounds are watching as their opportunity to attend university disappears.

Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador believe that historic commitments to funding accessible and quality post-secondary education must be honoured and protected to ensure prosperity for future generations that wish to study in the province.

Investments in post-secondary education and affordable tuition have supported the growth and health of diverse communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador for over 22 years. Cuts to post-secondary education have jeopardized the growth of these communities.

Education is a public right that all students, both domestic and international, have the right to a quality and accessible education in the province.

Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to uphold the province's historic commitment to accessible education by committing to free education for all and eliminating all differential fees. Eliminate all student debt for existing and provincial student loans. Sustain the college and Memorial University with healthy funding levels that secure good jobs and uplifts the post-secondary sector.

Speaker, it's interesting that the calls for collaboration and a collegial approach to basically resolve this issue are being put forward now that we're in this chaotic and unstable situation for Memorial. Basically, created by the decisions of government when it comes to funding. Now that we have this problem, there is a call for this.

I will say here, if we're going to avoid such things, then it's prudent to bring in, to have that consultation, meaningful consultation with the students, with the university and with the post-secondary institutions beforehand and we wouldn't have this situation.

Thank-you.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Thank you, Speaker.

The background to this petition is as follows:

WHEREAS the residents from Cape Broyle to St. Shotts are lacking a full-time family doctor; and

WHEREAS Eastern Health is failing to accommodate a physician who is willing to practise full-time in the area; and

WHEREAS the Trepassey region is the furthest away from the primary care hospital on the Island portion of the province; and

WHEREAS the Trepassey region has only one ambulance, the Cape Broyle ambulance service has some major staffing concerns, the region can be under a red alert for multiple hours at a time;

THEREFORE we petition the House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to immediately address the doctor shortage in our province by accommodating those who wish to practise here, and to immediately address the physician shortage in the Trepassey and Ferryland area by accommodating physician to practise in that area.

Speaker, in regard to this, there was a doctor who was looking to go in the area to practise and for some reason Eastern Health didn't see it as the best interest to put her in the area to do it.

I spoke to a lady Tuesday who had blood work done on March 23. She got a call back two or three days later to say that they will attend to her or give her an appointment for May 4 to look at blood work. So now she has that concern, worried about that for a month's time, if there are any issues there or not.

We had a physician that was looking to go there and they haven't accommodated her. They sat down and then they just watched and every time I spoke to it, they've come up with a different reason why. There's some problem here that they haven't got to. I said it last year myself, that we can fix this

problem, we can get to address it, but they don't seem to want to do it. Eastern Health met with the mayors in the surrounding area; said there was no need for it. They didn't really need it.

One lady calls up, gets nine days for an appointment. Another lady calls up, gets 23 days for an appointment, and there's no need for a family doctor in the area. Well, they're wrong. The people in the area are calling me and letting me know it's wrong. It's not proper to not have a doctor who's willing to go in the area.

Now, they can figure that out. They had a meeting. We figured out the ambulance issue in Cape Broyle, to a point, but we sat down and met. They haven't sat down and met with her. They were going to arrange a meeting. They met with the town, said they didn't need a doctor, and then they didn't have a meeting with the doctor after. So it's their decision. So we have some problem internally with Eastern Health. Somehow the minister has to get that fixed.

Back to the petition, we stand by our petition that he got up and presented. Our Member did get a response back, but we still stand by him. You should sit down and try to fix the problem with the petition that he presented and then we'll be able to talk about it and see if we can fix the problem.

Thank you, Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

J. DWYER: Thank you, Speaker.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Dr. William H. Newhook Community Health Centre is located in Whitbourne and provides services to residents of the area, in addition to incidents that may happen on the province's largest highway.

The Dr. William H. Newhook Community Health Centre's emergency room has experienced frequent and numerous closures over the last year.

The emergency services offered by the health care centre are often not available for residents, leading to significant amount of concern and worry among residents, in addition to residents having to drive to another emergency room.

Therefore we petition the hon. House of Assembly as follows: We, the undersigned, call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to immediately enact a plan to ensure the Dr. William H. Newhook Community Health Centre is fully staffed, open and available to provide emergency health care services.

I have presented this several times, Speaker, on behalf of the people of Whitbourne because while Whitbourne is not physically in my district but it services the people of my district. I also have people, like nurses and support staff, that work at this Community Health Centre. Like I said, it was strategically placed for a reason many years ago.

We seem to have taken the initiative now to go and add, let's say, hip and knee replacement surgeries out in Carbonear, which is already a pretty-close-to-capacity hospital, when this could have been something that we could have done in Whitbourne. It would probably even be a closer distance for a lot of people where they're not having to leave the highway for too long.

The thing is that it might have given us a better incentive of keeping this hospital open and staffed. Like I said, I know the minister is making efforts to keep it up and hopefully we'll get an update soon here in the House as to what levels we're at. I know that we were at three days a couple of weeks ago; I just haven't heard yet that we've gotten to four days, five days, six

days, seven days, that's consequently what we want.

Like I said, to make my point even stronger, it is strategically placed and in the Health Accord they say that any hospital is supposed to be in a catchment area of 6,000. This health care centre already is in a catchment area of 6,500 and that's if nothing happens on the highway.

I would ask the minister to make sure this needs to be a priority and it needs to be done for, not only the people of Placentia - St. Mary's, but for the people of Placentia West - Bellevue.

Thank you, Speaker.

SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 1.

SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

B. PETTEN: Thank you, Speaker.

It is a pleasure and we all say it a lot of times, I know a lot of my colleagues say it. I don't know if they're copying, I think I copied off someone. When I started doing that, I think I copied off my former colleague for Cape St. Francis.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: That's right, a good man.

I'd leave out the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis; I would just say I'm always proud to speak for my District of Conception Bay South. I say it a lot more often these days than probably ever. It's the privilege of

representing my hometown in the House of Assembly. It's something that I take great pride in and I'll continue to take pride in it when I leave this House, Mr. Speaker. I think we all should do that.

On the main motion I spoke and on the amendment I spoke, so this is actually on the Budget Speech my third opportunity to speak and pass along my commentary. Sometimes my comments are appreciated and sometimes they're not appreciated. I appreciate that, I really do.

But it comes with the territory. Sometimes you ask the tough questions, sometimes you throw yourself out there and you throw yourself in the line of fire and that's also fine, too. I said it in Question Period and I've said it in this House many times, I love banter. I have no problem with arrows coming my way; it's no problem. As long as they don't land too hard, I can take ever so many. That's my personality. I'm easy going, but I love to have debate.

This is off the topic for a second. My Grade 5 teacher told me, I met him years later, he said he had 30 students in his class and I was vividly – I have a lot of respect for this man – he said I'll never forget you. I said why is that? I don't know if that's a good or bad thing. He said we were in science and I said you can't see in the dark. But he said, you said you could and I never convinced you why you couldn't see in the dark. He said you were one of 30 who left the classroom and never did agree with me.

It was years later, it was 20, 30 years later, he ran into me and that was the first question he asked me: Can you still see in the dark? I think that's a testament – sometimes it's my Achilles heel. Sometimes I'm – I call it – too principled, but maybe it could be called very stubborn as well.

But I make no apologies; I guess that's who I am. I've been accused of being a dog on a bone many times, too. Sometimes it's successful, sometimes it's not successful;

sometimes it gets you in trouble. At home it can be very dangerous sometimes, ask my wife. But so be it.

Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of things as we go. I talked during Question Period, I was at this town hall last night with MUNSU, and in Question Period yesterday as well, I know the Minister of Fisheries stood in his place and the Minister of Health last night was at this MUNSU town hall. I respect it and I said it yesterday in Question Period. I told the minister last night and I think I said it today, to go and stand up in the line of fire as a minister of the government is not an easy thing to do.

I know the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture last week – and I could be quoted, my colleagues could tell you – I commended him. Actually, I meant to send him a text and tell him good on him for going out and standing up in front of the protestors.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: Yeah, exactly.

AN HON. MEMBER: It takes guts.

B. PETTEN: That takes guts is right.

When we get in the House of Assembly, we'll have our banter. The Minister of Health, last night, it wasn't a comfortable situation at that MUNSU town hall. He did remarkably well, but again, you're government, you're in the line of fire. I get that and I commended him as well.

The story I'm trying to tell here – and I am going to make my curve to that now. When I stand here – and I've said this many, many times in the House of Assembly – on this side of the House is a challenging role. Some Members opposite have been over here. They've occupied these seats and they can understand what I'm saying. You're asking questions. Some of them are tough. Some of them are uncomfortable.

Some you don't really want to be asking, but they're necessary because of the role you play in government in Opposition, obviously; it's our role.

I go back to yesterday. I just commended two ministers for having the guts to stand up and go out. It's not easy. We have to stand up here in our place and ask those questions sometimes. That's not easy, collectively.

Yesterday, during Question Period I asked a tough question about MUN enrolment dropped, tuition costs increased. It's a back and forth; it was debated all last night who is responsible. Ultimately, it takes two, but regardless this is what happened. That's the reality.

So you're asking tough questions but the Premier decides, in his wisdom, to tell me, along with the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, I'm weaponizing MUN. I'm demonizing MUN. How dare you ask those things? Who are you to ask those questions? Shameful. It's quite shameful. *Hansard* will tell you – I think those were his exact words: I was shameful.

Can someone explain to me what was shameful about it? That I asked questions? Is that what I asked? Did I ask questions? I asked questions. Last time I checked, right now, on this side of the House and in most other legislatures we're on the other side, but we're backwards here. We're on the Opposition side; it's where government is everywhere else. This is Opposition. We're in Opposition. That's what we do. That's our role.

I have to ask those questions. Just imagine. The Minister of Education follows the Premier and he follows with the same words: that the Member opposite is whipping us and he's demonizing MUN. I never said MUN was a scud missile. Nowhere ever did I say that – weaponizing. You ask questions in this House. We're also

said to be fear mongering. You ask a question about a health issue, you're fear mongering. It's almost like you've got to hang your head in shame and walk away because you wanted to ask a question.

Just imagine if government went unchecked, because that's what it comes down to. We know that can't happen. It's a healthy democracy. But I think it's important – and I say this a lot in the House and it bears repeating. It's not that I'm planning on changing the world tomorrow, but again, to my original comment about seeing in the dark, I can't let certain things go. There will come a time, hopefully – I mean maybe I'll be around here, maybe I'll be around to sit on that side of the House. But I'll tell you this, Mr. Speaker – and if you happen to be here, if you happen to be watching if that does happen, I will show a hell of a lot more respect for this side of the House than that side shows us right now. Mark it down.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

B. PETTEN: That's what's missing in this Legislature. There are clear roles in this Legislature we all have to uphold. There are clear roles we all have to do. Right now, I don't think that happens in this House.

I put out a news release a week or two ago and I stand behind that release that I don't think we sit enough. I don't think the debate is meaningful. I don't think it's sincere. I think it's get it done, get in and get out. That's what we're doing here. As quick as we can get in here and the faster we can get in here, the faster we get out, we're all good. That's not the way this needs to be.

You bring a bill into the House and it's almost like they're disgusted because everyone wants to speak on it. How much longer is this going on for? When are we getting out of here? This is the Legislature. Do I like to come in here some days? No. If you want me to be brutally honest, no. Is that what we're elected to do? Yes. I'm no different than any other Member in this

House. There are things you'd rather be at? Sure, it would, but this is your responsibility. It's what we're supposed to do. You're supposed to sit in the House.

I worked behind the scenes and I worked with ministers opposite when we were in government. I tell you there were some days you almost had to push them out of the office. The last place they wanted to come was sit in their seats there and be on the receiving end of questions and grilling, tough questions and hard questions. It's not an easy role. I respect that. I get that. Trust me; I really get it. I'm principled but I'm also a traditionalist. Everything I do and say – but I respect what I do. I respect the roles. I respect the roles opposite.

I stand in the House today and I'll say it again here now, we have one Premier. That's everyone's Premier. We're not in the same party but it's one Premier. It's not mayors and towns, it's one Premier of the province. It carries a lot of weight. Highest office in the province.

But I have a right to ask the Premier questions and the Premier has a right and an obligation to answer those questions. He also should be more public on issues of importance. Instead of going to a public meeting, you want to do it privately. Say you had a phone call instead of meeting with someone. These are the questions I get asked. But then don't be lecturing and accusing me of weaponizing and demonizing people because I am out actually doing my job.

That's not cool, Mr. Speaker. That's not where we need to be but that is where we're to. When I say there's no respect in this House, the respect levels in this House, for what we stand as a Parliament, is not being adhered to.

I can give lots more examples but I am not going to because I got a few other things I could talk about. It's important to point out and I may have other opportunities to point

it out again because I think sometimes you need to be a dog on the bone. You need to get your point across in here because if you're not throwing it out there, if you're not throwing your issues out and hammering away at them, unfortunately, they fall on deaf ears and that's unfortunate.

My colleague, our leader, is asking serious questions about the *Terra Nova FPSO*. We gave \$200 million to save that, which we supported; we compliment the government. Currently, we're up to, we're not sure, probably \$300 million in equity royalties we're going to surrender to get that FPSO back out pumping oil, getting Newfoundlanders and Labradorians back working.

The answers from the minister opposite, stands up – these are good questions. That's what we're here for. We get a performance. We go down the road of the ferries and Romania, what happened in 2006, what happened in 2011 and what happened in 2016. Sweet Lord. Who are you helping? Who is that really helping in the province? If you're listening to someone speak here – if you're home and you're listening to people at home, our leader is asking legitimate questions. It's in the public domain; it's in the news, people care. You know what; maybe we'd like to get an answer from the minister. What do you get? A performance. That's all that is.

I know Members opposite say, oh, its theatrics, the House (inaudible) here. Sure, there is lots of theatrics, but remove the theatrics. Sometimes that's an overused word because that discredits this House. Remove all the theatrics. I've seen lots of theatrics from Members opposite – lots of it.

Ask the question. Pull back all the theatrics and listen to the question. You can go back and you flick on the webcast and you go listen to our leader ask questions about *Terra Nova*. You're going to hear me ask questions about MUN. You'll hear my

colleague for Harbour Main ask questions about pay equity. I can go on.

My colleague for Ferryland loves to talk about ambulances. They are legitimate questions. I don't care how the theatrics come out, how they sound, how they do it, how they deliver it. You can stand on your desk, if you lie the floor, they're questions and, as an Opposition, we have the responsibility to ask those questions. I will remind government again, it's their responsibility to provide answers. If they can't provide answers, if they're challenged to get answers and challenged to deal with the issues, well move aside, move aside, we'll go over and fix it up. We'll take over tomorrow. If you can't do the job, go on, but don't be offended by the question.

I know Members opposite don't appreciate some of this commentary and it bothers them. But I'm only speaking factual. This is recorded. What I'm saying here now is nothing – it might be theatrics but it's all recorded. These questions are there.

Sometimes when you're called out, and people do these things and they try to be a little bit cheeky, I call it, sometimes a bit cute. The saying up my way, sometimes they say: you're cute by half. Sometimes that happens in this House and it's not so cute when you're listening to it after.

A good friend of mine, a former premier of the province, and you will know who I'm talking about, obviously, he had a lot of training in communications. He told me one time, he said: When you speak, just go back and review, it's one of the tricks. You go back and look at the tape, listen to what you said, listen to your debate. You'll find things you may like. You find things you might not like. That's how you transform and you realize what you're saying, whether you believe it or not. Is there improvement to be made? Sometimes you go and look, my God, what was I saying, that was terrible.

But as long as you're confident in your message – I'll go out and I'll do interviews, I'll talk on the radio and you ask anyone around me or my colleagues or any of our staff what do I say? I'll say to them: Did I get my message out? Because that's what's important.

Whether I get up and I review my hand motions or I'm confident in whatever I do, all that means nothing as long as you get your message out. I learned that along the way from a lot of experienced people. I don't always get it out. I try my best to get my message out, but it don't always be that way. But I do everything in my power to get that message out.

That's what we do here in the House of Assembly. It's about getting your message out, because it's very important and it's a responsibility that I take very serious and I'll continue on. I'm sure I'll get other times to speak before the budget is all done. I'll go on to a couple things in my last few minutes.

Mr. Speaker, May 17, 2016, the current Minister of Finance said, "It took us 66 years to accumulate" – this is all from *Hansard* – "\$11 billion in debt, but if we followed the path that we were on under the former administration, in the next five years, we would have doubled the debt."

I looked at budget documents, in six, seven years we're up to \$18 billion. "If you took a look since 2004," – these are her words – "if you take into account our Crown corporations, the former government actually doubled our public sector debt to a record of \$15 billion." That's a heck of a lot of money. Do you know what it is today? Twenty-six billion dollars.

Those figures come from the budget documents. This here is *Hansard*. In 2016, I, along with six other colleagues, stood in this House of Assembly, sat in this House of Assembly and listened repeatedly to Members opposite: You're drunk on oil.

You're crazy on oil. You're spending like drunken sailors.

Now, if you look at a few announcements we've seen over the last few months, the government have cut a couple of loads, too: St. Clare's, think about it, all that infrastructure announced, every day we're getting new announcements.

Money's good, we're in the oil business. They were very critical of that. This is where the hypocrisy kicks in. When it's them, it's fine. When the Minister of Education wants to take the child care operators around by the nose, that's fine. But when it's something that doesn't fit, they're private operators, how dare you, how can I get involved with them.

MUN is over there, it's chaotic – it's chaotic. But when government are pressured, maybe government should have an input, maybe government should have something to say. We have to respect MUN's autonomy. How dare we question MUN's autonomy; MUN is an institution, we have to respect that. How can we get involved in that? Hands off. It's only good if it suits you.

We hear it; we heard it in Question Period today: Only when it suits you. That's the only time it works, when it suits you. Is that for the betterment of anyone? Is that for the betterment of the people of the province? I don't think it is.

We get up sometimes and I get up sometimes, I know sometimes it irritates government. We've been accused along the way of what we spent money on. But we invested in education, reduced classroom size; we hired teachers, actually, we actually hired teachers back then. Now we have a crisis in teaching. A freeze on tuition fees, plus student grants to educate our youth; no, that's gone. Improved access to health care, retained health professionals, rural dialysis; now look at the health care crisis. We were covering medications.

Poverty reduction: we went from the worst to the best in Canada in child poverty in a decade. But when 2015 came, government heralded one of the best poverty-reduction strategies in North America, in the world really. What did the government do? The first point they had to do was scrap our poverty reduction strategy. Why? I've heard from a lot of people in the know who said that was one of the biggest mistakes government made, because the Tories brought it in. That's the only reason. We're not letting them out. Why would we let the Tories take credit for that? We're not going doing that. Cancel that.

We hear from Crown Lands. We often hear of nightmares in Crown Lands. There was a review done in 2015. There are lawyers out there that supported this review. They thought it was a wonderful idea. It deals with a lot of the same issues we're dealing with. Eight years later and everyone thought this was the real end to it. It was the head of the legal association, at the time, who told me in person that they can't believe it's still not implemented.

Why wasn't that implemented, Mr. Speaker? I'll tell you why. The Tories brought it in. There's nothing wrong with that report. Just take the dust off it and implement it and we'll be all right. But no, no, no, the Tories did that. We're not going to follow that. We'll let everything spiral away and eight years later we're trying to figure it out.

Go back and get the report. I'd say it over in the minister's office somewhere under a box or down in a corner. I don't know.

Go and dust off some of the reports. No problem. I mean, they've got a way of hiding reports. We've got the Rothschild's report. We don't know where that's to. There are a lot of reports we don't get to see; millions of dollars of reports we don't get to see. But this was an actual report that actually made a lot of sensible recommendations. What did the government do? No, squash it because the Tories brought it in.

Speaker, thank you for your time. I'm sure I'll have more opportunity. I appreciate it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, it's a privilege to stand in this House and talk to the financial woes of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, but, particularly, how we can frame up – and I say we, collectively, those in the House of Assembly, all of us – a budget that addresses the needs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and gives a brighter future for Newfoundland and Labrador and encourages former Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to come back to Newfoundland and Labrador, invest in Newfoundland and Labrador and acknowledge the potential this great province of ours has.

Myself and the Minister of Finance over the last couple of weeks as we debated back and forth around the budget processes, it came to a difference of opinion of what her version was what we weren't supporting. I want to clarify that.

It isn't that we're not supporting the good things in this budget, and there are a number of good things there that we've advocated for on this side of the House, that we've outlined in our Blue Book, that we've acknowledged in petitions, that we've heard from our constituents and from constituents from, you know, other Liberal Members' districts, also, about things that needed to be done. We were very happy to see that a number of those had been enacted and had been put in as financial supports within the budget process. So we welcome that. There are a number of those that we see that are a positive step forward.

Our debate, and why we've made motions here so that there could be an open and

transparent debate, and that there'd be more time spent on educating, informing and having open dialogue by the general population in this province, about what's really going to impact them from a financial point of view. If we're going to spend nearly \$10 billion of the taxpayers' money, we would hope it's going to be used to benefit them to the nth degree, to whatever can be done to ensure that they benefit immensely from the monies that are invested.

No doubt, \$10 billion is a major investment, but there's much more needed to be able to address all the issues people face. So the immediate priorities have to be what we debate in this House, should and have been in the past, I know from our administration, the priorities in our budgets and I would think and hope it would be the same. I have no doubt that the minister, when she sat with her officials and looked at what they had heard were the priorities and what were necessary, that they tried to frame some of that up. I would think and hope that their Cabinet, when they sat down and had a discussion around what the priorities would be and how they could improve people's lives, that they outlined what their processes would be. I would have hoped that when their caucus met and said here's what we're hearing from our constituents, that it would have reflected what came out in the budget. In some cases, not as many as we would like and definitely not as many as the people of this province need, reflected some of the changes and some of the proper investments.

What we're talking about now are some of the things that we haven't seen. That's the concern we have on this side of the House. It's not about bashing the minister or her department or the Cabinet or the Premier or the Liberal administration about what's going on in that budget. It's about outlining issues that were not addressed and maybe there's a rational reason. If it's a financial one, well tell us because we're spending \$10 billion, the most we've ever spent of the

taxpayers' money to address issues that are facing Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

So if there is a rational reason for why something isn't funded or why it isn't a priority, I do hope and I do expect that Members on the government side will stand up and outline exactly what's happening. This is not about defend or criticize. That's not what the House of Assembly should be about in a budget process. It should be about open debate. It should be about clarifying information and discussing potential alternatives, if there are identified gaps in services or gaps in the priorities that have been identified in a budget process.

I've said it a multitude of times, I've been fortunate that I've been through 40-plus budgets in my lifetime and got to see some that were very detrimental to the people of this province and some that were bewildering as to how an administration thought that would be beneficial to the people of the province; that it would not in any way, shape or form enhance developing the economy here or encourage Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to stay or former Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to come back and invest in our great province.

I've seen ones where it was hard to criticize a lot of things. There's always room for improvement, no matter what you do, but there were a lot of good things added and identified. A lot of increased spending in programs and services that have been identified over the last number of decades that have been beneficial. A lot of developed partnerships with the not-for-profit sector and the private sector to develop our economy, and an acknowledgement that there was a plan of action.

Unfortunately, what I see here is a number of gaps that don't identify major priorities that have been outlined by the people of this province. They're simple. My colleagues have talked about it, the Third Party has

talked about it, the independents have talked about it, it's consistently about how we're addressing health care needs, how we're addressing the cost of living, how we're addressing stimulating the economy and how we're addressing the reality of Newfoundland and Labrador getting its fair share in this Confederation.

There are four key things that we have some major challenges with. Built in those are all the others things that affect people. If it's about Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, if it's about Crown lands, if it's about infrastructure, all of the key components there fit under one of those debates or headings that should be identified and addressed. No doubt, in some of those four main headings that I just identified, there are some investments or there are some particular programs that will be beneficial to the people in this province. But there are a number of things here that are not clarified. They're not clarified because it's either not clear on what's happening or there hasn't been a determined plan of action.

That's the biggest criticism that you've heard from this side of the House. It's not about what you want to do; it's the lack of a plan of how you're going to do what would be in the best interests of the people of this province. That's what we've been talking about.

I just left a scrum early so I could come in here and take the opportunity to speak to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and speak to my colleagues in the House of Assembly about how we have to find ways to improve the financial situation in Newfoundland and Labrador. But more importantly, the financial situation of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

The way we'd do that, the way I say we, as the House of Assembly, should set the tone, we should set the philosophical approach, we should set the policies that stimulate Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to feel

comfortable that this is the place to stay, live and flourish and that we encourage businesses outside to come to Newfoundland and Labrador and invest. We need to do that by using the assets that we have and the resources that we have to benefit the people of this province.

I talked about an issue just now outside, about the increase in Marine Atlantic. Now, again, if you're not going to be proactive and you're going to try to be reactive after the fact, after it's too late, you're only doing more damage to our economic situation. Keep in mind what's happening now. There's going to be a 4 per cent increase in Marine Atlantic costing across the board. The impact of two major issues here. The big issue is the cost of living. Everything is going to have to increase. Everybody has to pass it on because they have a certain costing that's relevant to them or they have a profit margin that they must make to sustain their overhead.

The second is going to be, we've got a billion-plus-dollar industry in tourism. You think this is not going to have an impact on that? People are trying to find the most economical, beneficial return on their investment when they go out for their vacations. Well, if they're not saying there's another 4 per cent added, when I already have to come to Newfoundland and Labrador, where the cost of everything from fuel is much more costly than some of the other jurisdictions, some of the other costing of food and that because of the cost of freight already when we get here, then that's going to have an impact.

We're only into the budget debate, now, most of these programs and services will not be implemented until mid summer, some later in the fall. Let's add what's coming again July 1, a 17 cent increase per litre of home heat fuel. Now, this is Newfoundland and Labrador, traditionally we perhaps have the highest percentage per capita of those people, particularly in rural, remoted areas who heat their homes

with home heat fuel. Look at the cost that's going to be incurred by them.

Fair enough, it's being brought in in July, people might not notice as much, but you just watch what's going to happen to the people in this province when, come mid-November, the cost is going to skyrocket again. We'll see it on the Island; we'll see it in Labrador. It's going to have a detrimental effect.

So now we're adding 4 per cent because that's what's going to happen. People have to pass on that expense that they're going to incur if they get freight coming here. So we have instability from a tourism point of view because of the additional cost. We already have the fact that we're not being treated properly by the airlines when it comes to providing proper flights, ensuring it's a timely fashion, that it's reliable going here. I mean, we, I say we, collectively, the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador, the taxpayers of Canada, have spent hundreds of millions of dollars to upgrade an airport, particularly in St. John's. We've done it in other areas out in Deer Lake and Gander now there are some investments there and there are some discussions of what can happen also in Stephenville. There have been improvements in Goose Bay and in Wabush.

So we're trying to do this to make it more accessible for people to come here. We spend hundreds of millions of dollars, but then nobody went and advocated with the airlines and that to ensure that they come here. So if 4 per cent goes on Marine Atlantic, you think the airlines are not going to be too far behind, because if we allow that to happen, the general population, who are the corporate world in the airlines, are going to say well, Newfoundland and Labrador have let that – if the government, because it's a government entity, it's a Crown agency owned and operated by the federal government. And if you know your history, the Terms of Union with Newfoundland and Labrador was supposed

to be free, accessible, provided, quality access for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians for freight and transportation to the Island itself.

So if we falter and not be proactive and stand up for what's right, then obviously other entities who are the private sector, who have all kinds of extra freedom and flexibility, can obviously then say we're going to impose an extra 4 or 5 or 6 per cent because they're also going to say whatever happens to Marine Atlantic has an impact on them.

Look at the impact it is going to have on our tourism industry. Look at the impact that will have on the freight industry too because not everything comes by road. There are certain things here that come by air that will also have an impact on the cost of living for other additional individuals from Newfoundland and Labrador.

There are just some immediate things that are happening right now. They're happening in real time. So let's look at the bigger things that are happening that we are not even debating right now, that we're not quite sure how it's going to be impacted by the budget itself. What impact it is going to have; what other jurisdictions are doing that would impact us here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I have to give kudos to the Liberal MPs in PEI, the Liberal caucus in PEI and, particularly, the PC government in PEI who are being very proactive to ensure that the additional cost that would have been incurred by the people of PEI, the residents of PEI, when it came to them being able to get their freight across the Confederation Bridge has been stopped. The federal government stepped in.

They didn't do it out of the goodness of their heart because that was already being put there as part of that. It was the lobbying by their federal MPs, which are four Liberal MPs, I suspect by the handful of Liberal

MLAs they have, but, particularly, by the Progressive Conservative government in PEI who said this is not right and put a business plan that makes sense. Do you know what the federal government did? Finally, they saw that if they invest in the right way, it will be a benefit to everybody, not only the people of PEI but also the people of this great country of ours. In this case, they did it.

We didn't see that in this province. What we have seen now is people are upset, and they should be upset; they don't agree with it. We wrote a letter; we made a phone call. But you saw this coming. You knew what was happening in PEI. You saw this coming for the last number of months. Where are the six Liberal MPs? How come they're not talking to their caucus members? Where are the two federal ministers?

There was a tout here that the prime minister had appointed two federal ministers out of Newfoundland and Labrador, out of six elected officials. That's a good rationale so you would have thought that would have meant more influence, more discussions around the topics and issues that are affecting Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and more return on the fact that there were two people at the Cabinet table.

Also add in, where are the other four Members of the Liberal federal caucus lobbying for what's right for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians? They seem to become very silent again when it's something that's happening in Newfoundland and Labrador, but when there's an opportunity, when a federal minister is coming down or the prime minister is coming down to acknowledge something or re-announce something from the last four or five years, they're all huddled around. They're all ready to say what a great opportunity this is. They're all ready to get on *Open Line* to say what a wonderful thing; the photo ops are everywhere. That, then, to me, questions the real validity here

of picking exactly what is beneficial to the people of the province or, as mentioned by my colleague here today, cherry-picking what are things that you can get the most exposure.

Politics is not always about exposure. It's about, at the end of the day, doing what's right. Sometimes you even have to go against your own party, your own colleagues; maybe even sometimes your own philosophy. As long as you know, at the end of the day, what's being proposed is right for people. It may not be what you agree with but it's right. That's what I thought we did here in the House of Assembly.

We've all debated, and I thought that's what debate was about. Debate would have been about: I'll outline my views, you have your views but if my views outline facts and figures that you weren't aware of or a different perspective that you can look at it from a different angle, then that might then change your approach to it. It may not necessarily say that you totally agree with it, but it might change, particularly if you're in government, the way that you implement the program or certain things. There may be still gaps left in that provided service.

So that's what's disappointing in what's happening in this House of Assembly right now. We've seen that today, we seen it on what happened with some of the other investments that we talked about today. Myself and the minister had an open discussion, debate about what's happening with the Terra Nova and the impact that may or may not have as part of it. I would have preferred not to go back seven elections, but that's fine, if that's how we're going to debate in the House of Assembly, well that's a different thing.

We, on this side, try to live in the here and now and talk about what it is we can do collectively that will be beneficial to the people of the province? What can we suggest to the minister on a nearly \$10-

billion investment of people's taxes that would be beneficial to the people of this province and open us up for better investments? That's what I would have hoped we would be debating in the House of Assembly.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible) here now.

D. BRAZIL: That's right. Here and now is how we deal with the people of this province. Here and now is how we address the province. Here and now is how we're going to develop a brighter future for the people of this province. We do that here in the House of Assembly.

So I want to look at that and some of the things that we've been critical of, the fact of some of the gaps here, some of the real gaps in addressing the cost of living for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Now, have there been some identified things? Sure there have been. There are going to be some seniors' rebates that will be beneficial to a sector of our society, but there are a number of unknowns that are related to that, the impact it's going to have as part of that.

There's been some supports for agencies and other programs that will benefit certain sectors of our society and that's welcome and, no doubt, needed by certain individuals. What we're missing here is the bigger picture, the vision, the long-term plan that specifically outlines spending this money, what's going to happen and how we're going to benefit the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

They talk about the Future Fund. I'm not adverse to it. I think I might have spoken to it a year ago or two years ago when it was first proposed. Liked the concept, I think we all should have been thinking about it for years and years. Unfortunately, this province, right now, as we face on a day-to-day basis things we are not having control over because we're not advocating and don't have a plan in advance about the cost

of living, potential health care crisis, education crisis, all of these things, we should be looking at how do we take the moneys we have and invest them to solve the immediate problems of today? Plan for the future, but you can't plan for the future by putting money in a pot that's needed now to put people in a better position so they can have a brighter future. If you have a brighter future, what do you have? A better opportunity to put more money in that pot to make it sustainable down the road.

So from an economic point of view to borrow \$160 million or so, but to put \$147 million in a pot to hold there, pay your interest and still not use this money to address the particular issues we have in Newfoundland and Labrador, I can't balance that out from a financial point of view. I can't balance it out from a social, moral, investment point of view, how it benefits anybody at the end of the day. But particularly when there are still a number of issues at a crisis level that people in Newfoundland and Labrador are facing and we're not addressing them by using the equity and the finances, the tax revenue we have to be beneficial to the people of this province.

Let's just talk about one thing the Liberal administration has been noted for which is getting outside entities to do reports and hearings, consultations on issues and that. That's not necessarily a bad thing. My only argument to a lot of that is: Do you know what? I've be around 40-plus years as a civil servant, we've done it all. Not a lot of things have changed dramatically over the last number of years. There are a lot of reports, phenomenal reports that have been done that hit on things that were futuristic, that looked at what would happen five, 10, 15, 20, 30, 50 years down the road that we should be pulling out now, dusting off and having a look at.

One of them is Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment done by Dr. House and his team three decades ago,

four decades ago now. I remember being involved as part of that process. Phenomenal amount of work done. Phenomenal amount of recommendations around what could be done in particular industries. A lot of them I go back and read now and I am going: if we had started doing that 10, 15, 20, 25 years ago, we would have been not only trend leaders, but world leaders when it came to certain industries as part of that process.

Again, we spent a lot of time – or the Liberal administration spent a lot of time putting together reports. We, unfortunately, have spent a lot of time over here having to debate those reports when there are other things that we could have been doing, from setting some visionary processes to identifying the issues for people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

But with that being said, I'll just note the Mackenzie report came out and said let's focus on ocean technology, aviation, international education, et cetera: stuff we all agreed to. Unfortunately, 30 years ago we were hearing the same things and we did very little – no matter what administration, very little – to be proactive and visionary when it went to move things forward. We didn't need to spend time and delay another year or so; this should have been acted upon. If there was debate in this House about how we move ocean technology in the right direction, 100 per cent.

What we would be asking here would be for clarification, hopefully that the ministers or the government responsible would have the professionals who we'd give the data so that we can share that with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and say, you know what, here's how. There's a plan of action for a bright future when it comes to ocean technology.

Aviation: fortunately enough, I get to talk to some people who are in that industry and get some great visionary pieces of advice

about what they'd like to do. But for them to do what they want to do – and I know it's private sector. I'll keep saying any government should be setting the atmosphere for the private sector to flourish. That doesn't mean giveaways. That doesn't mean spending \$40-million more on a mental health hospital than you should have to. That's not what I'm saying when I say setting the tone here.

What I'm saying is we need to be setting the atmosphere, the philosophy, the checks and balances, and sending the message that we're open for business in Newfoundland and Labrador as long as we all benefit from it: the businesses that are engaged, the people of this province and then local businesses who helped build this great province of ours. Sustainability at the end of the day, that there's not a burden on the taxpayers after a certain industry falters or its life expectancy is done. So there are things like that.

International education: we're at a lull now. I'm hoping we can fix it with what's gone on over the last number of months with our university here, particularly around our reputation from an international point of view. I said it a number of months ago, my shadow minister said it a number of months ago: one of the key concerns we had was the issue around what was happening within the university and all the other challenges that are in there, and the rights of the students and the rates of tuition freezes and the cost affordability.

One of the particular ones was around our reputation from an international point of view. A multitude of people, so many students, so many professors, so many administrators, even past presidents, so many ministers, had done a wonderful job to get our reputation as an international post-secondary institution to come to study many disciplines that we were second to none.

When I travelled around people would come to me and say: I understand there's a

university in Newfoundland; we're hearing good things about it. I'm hearing sons and daughters of people internationally, or even domestically, who would never think of Newfoundland and Labrador as a place of higher education that would be equal or surpass any other province are now at that level. They'd come and see the disciplines we have here, the engagement by the students, the whole process we have as part of that process. Unfortunately, because it hasn't been managed properly the last number of years, there have been a couple of issues that are now putting us in a negative light internationally.

We need to rectify that. We need to move beyond this and we need to do that. There are things there when we talk about international education. There has to be a plan of action. When you do a plan of action you've already got to anticipate what may happen. It's not all going to be rosy, never ever going to be rosy and everything going well. Ten things will happen; eight or nine may go well. You have to anticipate what's going to happen that's going to be negative on the tenth thing and you got to have a plan of action to address that. Minimize the impact that it has on that program, that institution, the people of this province or our reputation as part of that process.

Let's talk about tourism. I just mentioned it, unfortunately, from a fare point of view that the costing increase on Marine Atlantic may have an impact on that. We need to have a plan of action. How do we dispel that? How do we change that? How do we still encourage people to come here?

Last year, the Come Home Year, even though it was put together in a very quick (inaudible), I think the people of this province took control of that. The not-for-profit agencies and all those small businesses that rely on the tourism industry took the leadership and had the foresight to be able to see at the end of the day we make this a great Come Home Year. They did that. I know it was a bit more successful

than people would've thought, partly because people were looking forward to coming back; they hadn't been back in a couple of years.

They came back and said we'd like to do this every year. Let's build on this, let's make this an annual event. Because if a million people came home, there are 10-more million out there that would love to come to this connected to Newfoundland and Labrador in some way, shape or form. Expats or connected to expats or just people who are world travellers who'd love to see this beautiful province of ours, because they've heard so much about it from *Come From Away* and all the other things that are happening here.

We just saw what Disney are doing here with Peter Pan. You think that doesn't go through the industries there? Tens of thousands of people are all in these industries. They read articles, they see, they talk to people who've worked. The next people who produce this will probably be working on another film and they'll say: If you're looking for a location, if you want to go somewhere for a vacation, let me tell you about the place I was.

But to do that, we need to have a plan of action so that we don't get caught up on the negativities of some of the things that are happening here. So we need to plan for the future in our tourism industry while we work at it immediately, right now.

Our mineral prospects: we've talked about that before. It's ironic that the rest of the world talks more about what we have here, from a mineral development point of view, than we do in Newfoundland and Labrador. It's alarming. You know I listen to the open-line shows and hoping every day I'm going to hear this is what's happening, here's the great potential and that. I don't hear it. I'm hoping more we'll have Members on the Liberal side phone in about what's happening.

My colleagues here phone in and talk about the great potential in Central Newfoundland and Labrador. I know my colleagues in Central Newfoundland on a daily basis are in contact with those who are developing that. I know what's happening there. I know what the potential in Labrador is and what's happening up there. I know the potential in other parts of this province that people didn't even think would be resource-based geographic locations. It's phenomenal what can happen here.

We need to heighten the discussion here. Not the rhetoric, the discussion – the positive discussion about what's happening. Too often, we get caught up in the rhetoric than we do on what's more important; the valued assets that we have and how do we make them work. Collectively, how do we do it?

The social development here, the personal development that we have as part of these things. The financial development we have in these. The communities themselves working together. Regionalization that people talk about can be done in a multitude of different ways. Economic regionalization can be done just in picking eight, 10, 12, 15 communities have a commonality of promoting a particular asset that's in the area. Our natural resources that we have from a mining perspective. There are a number of mining expos that are happening now, a number of mining conferences that will happen. That speaks volumes.

When I go to one of these functions and I talk to people who are from Asia who are coming here looking at it, people from Australia, from New Zealand, from Norway, that speaks volumes. From the United States that are coming to Newfoundland and Labrador and we would say coming – one time you'd always hear coming over to little Newfoundland and Labrador. It's not about little Newfoundland and Labrador because the respect level and the potential that the world sees out here is second to none. We need to find a way to tap that, get

it out there even broader than it is, so that there are a multitude of companies coming here who are going to bid on what we get.

It took us 20 years to do that, maybe 25 with the offshore, but we managed to do that. I'll give credit. It was under our administration. I'll give credit when something happens under the Liberals. Under our administration, by standing our ground, ensuring that we knew what the value of the parcel of development would be because of doing the seismic, that was a very important key component.

I know myself and the minister bantered last year and the year before about the seismic issue, particularly when it was taken out of the budget. Didn't see the rationale for it. Still can't see the rationale but, you know what; don't care about what the rationale was then. Happy, glad to see. It's well received that it's in the budget now, because it's an asset for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and it shows that we have the ability to have control over what feel is the value of that industry.

Not a multinational who doesn't care, after five years, if we're making money or not and they can go. Or if they don't like something we're doing, they can go on and say here's what we'll give you for that. No, no, they now know the value because not only do they know the value, we've managed to do some of the work for some of these companies so even another company who is not familiar with Newfoundland and Labrador can assess those reports and say I wouldn't mind investing in that province. I wouldn't mind sitting down with their officials to find out what's happening. I wouldn't mind talking to other companies that have done business there to figure out what the atmosphere is there and what the resource development is.

We all know there have been hundreds of billions of dollars over the last three or four decades in our oil industry generated by a multitude of companies and generated for

the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador and the taxpayers of Canada. So there has been a lot of people benefit from us being proactive in looking at how we develop our resources. The oil industry was one of the small, key components. I say small only because there is a multitude of other ones that can be done. The leasing of a seismic ship and ensuring that data was ours and we shared it with companies when they bid on parcels of land, so that is a very important component as we look at that.

Let's look at – as the world evolves here – the new nickel development, cobalt and lithium. Now when we're talking about getting into a green environment, we're getting into electric cars and the impact that has right now is dramatic. But we're one of the key areas that could be developed, if developed properly, that addresses the environmental impact and the footprint but also addresses the financial benefit to the people of this province from a development point of view. So there is a proactive approach that needs to happen here as we move that further.

As we know, there is a multitude of other rare earth elements that are only now coming to light, that people would have never known Newfoundland and Labrador would be a place to get it. We're blessed with a geographic set-up sometimes that we feel curses us because of the physical layout and the terrain itself and the environment from a climate point of view. But if we weigh that and put that aside, the benefits, because of the geographic make up, what we have here is a blessing. We just have to maximize that blessing so that it becomes something financially beneficial to the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

What we're talking about and what I spent the last 30 minutes talking about and I would hope the message has been sent over there is about having a plan of action. That is all we're asking for: a plan of action that addresses the particular needs that we

have in Newfoundland and Labrador. But a plan of action that also addresses the resources, the assets we have that can be developed so that we have immediate, sustainable financial security, but we have long-term security and we have an ability to take revenues when the time is right and put it into our Future Fund so that when there is a dark day, when there's a slip in the economy, when the world does something that we can't control but it has an impact on us, we have a safe haven to be able to ensure people can consider and have the quality of life that they're getting accustomed to.

So they are things that we've been talking about. I mean, we've talked about some of the things that are happening recently and I'll say we've been critical of the Liberal administration for the last number of years – particularly the last eight years that I've been here on the Opposition side – about the declining population and the impact it was having, that so many people were leaving, that people weren't comfortable here, that they couldn't afford to have more than two children. There were all kinds of challenges here, but we're pleased to see that there's population growth. We're pleased to see that. You've never seen us criticize the minister when he gets up and touts, you know what, our population has increased.

We're spending more money. It's the first time in decades that our education system now needs to flourish because we've got more kids going in than leaving the system. That's a positive. Yeah, we get there are some challenges with it and we get the fact a lot of it has to do with a number of Ukrainian refugees, but they're welcomed. We want them here, for all kinds of reasons. One, obviously to protect them, be safe, give them a safe haven. But just as equally, it's because we need for them to be productive, viable citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador. Equal citizens engaged in our society, bringing their culture, being part and parcel of our culture and becoming a

better melting pot for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and all in this country. So we welcome all of that, but there has to be a strategy.

What happens when the war in the Ukraine ends? What impact does that have? Are we basing our immigration strategy or growth strategy or population strategy just on that? What happens as part of that process here? What happens, as my colleague had brought here in the House, the fact that maybe some of these newcomers here, these new visitors or new landers to our province realize I can't stay in a hotel all my life? That's not how I want to raise my children. That's not how I want to be engaged in the community. That's not what I thought would be happening when I was displaced from my home. I thought I'd come here and find a way to be engaged in the community, be part of a society and be productive in that society.

So what happens when they say, you know what, it's better if I was in Alberta or Toronto or Montreal or Calgary or BC or somewhere like this? What does that do for our population growth then? Again, it becomes about having a strategy, having a plan of action and having a vision to identify the positive things that you can do immediately and put in place, but also identify some of the challenges you're going to have and cut them off before they happen, address them in advance, have a plan of action. There becomes our criticism of this administration in the budget process. It's been in the program process. It's in their negotiating process.

Let's talk about – even I've got to go back to health care. The incentives, again, for certain health professionals, we're all hearing it now and we all knew it was going to come. I know we did on this side. You had to have a plan of action on how you were going to address the inadequacies in the health care system because we needed to have more people providing the service, or we have to change the model where it

worked more efficiently and still was affordable for the people of this province and still accessible at the end of the day.

Just throwing money at it, obviously, isn't the answer and we've seen it hasn't been the answer. Throwing tens of millions of dollars, maybe up to \$100 million now, and the recruit process is not coming here. We had suggested six, seven years ago in our Blue Book, start increasing the number of students in our post-secondary education institutes that are related to the health care programs and services. Get more engaged.

Start offering incentives – not cash incentives directly after the fact, trying to bid one community against another. Start offering them to say we know you have to borrow to go to school, if it's a one-year, a three-year, a five-year, a 10-year program, you sign on, you show a gesture of good faith that you want to take the skill set that you've learned in Newfoundland and Labrador, or wherever, but particularly in our own facilities here, and take that and transfer that to some rural, remote or urban community, facility, institution, neighbourhood, we will reward you by offsetting student aid costs. It could be other incentives if you're starting a particular practice of some sort in a health discipline that we could offset some of those things.

It could be deferred tax regime there that would have helped you over a period of time. There are all kinds of things that could have been and should have been put in play. One, the most ultimate one, the most disappointing that I found out on a constant basis from most of the health disciplines, there was nobody setting out from day one to recruit those graduates when they were ready to graduate to stay in Newfoundland and Labrador and work within the field in Newfoundland and Labrador. It's disappointing that there was wasn't a proactive approach there.

I know from other jurisdictions – I talked to some of my colleagues in other provinces

who are telling me, they're boasting that they have a recruitment process. They have people in Newfoundland and Labrador. They're constantly on the phones, through emails, through ads recruiting Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, through incentives or through selling on them on a quality of life. It's not just always about money, a quality of life of what's offered in a particular community – what the community will do to engage not only the individual but the family, as part of that, or they'll pick a select interest area that a person has. I had one group tell me they've gone on people's Facebooks to find out what they're interested in and when they reach out to start recruiting them, they'd already be able to tell them, here are the amenities we have. Here are things that would fit well. If you're into sports, here's what you have. If you're into hiking, here's what we have. If you need child care, here's what we have. If you want to upgrade your disciplines, here are the institutions that can do it. Here are the supports we can give you as part of that.

These are some of the disappointing things that we didn't do in Newfoundland and Labrador that we should have been, could have been. So what we're saying now: let's get a plan of action. It may take three to five years to get to where we need to go, but start doing it. Let's not be here three, four, five years down the road and we challenging the same thing.

I would hope three years down the road we'll be on that side of the House. We would have taken what we've heard from the people of this province for the last eight years and implemented that, particularly in how we support the budgetary processes as part of that process there.

I want to talk a little bit more about identifying in health care the scope of work and the credentials of international health professionals who come to Newfoundland and Labrador. I mean, I'm glad we welcome them. I did it in a scrum and said it was

welcome a few weeks ago. The scope of work changes, minor scope of work changes. I don't think any of it went far enough for pharmacists, nurse practitioners and a number of other disciplines here.

I would think, if you look at all of the health disciplines we have in Newfoundland and Labrador, all could be given an opportunity to change their scope of work, their professionalism, the fact that they've been upgrading continuously over the last number of years. We're basing on what we've been doing from a 20-year policy. The world has changed. Their access to, you know, things, from just technology to direct training. Doing a Zoom thing now where 10,000 people can be on that training facility, where one time it would be 500 could go to a conference and get the same upgraded acknowledgement of what's beneficial.

So there has to be a better approach to what we're doing. It doesn't mean we have to reinvent the wheel; it's already out there. It's not only about other jurisdictions. It's about making it work in Newfoundland and Labrador, a made-in-Newfoundland-and-Labrador process. Now, I'm not talking about the carbon tax made in Newfoundland and Labrador because that's not something that's going to benefit people, but one that's made here, based on what the needs of the people of this province have already identified.

Do you want to find a solution in Newfoundland and Labrador? Ask a Newfoundlander and Labradorian who is affected by it. They'll give you a multitude because, I can guarantee you, they spent much more time analyzing it, talking about it, looking at other processes and maybe even trying things that didn't work so they'll know exactly what to tell us that should work as part of that.

We have a multitude of other things on a day-to-day basis. So the best way to find that out, ask those who are directly affected

by it and that can be worked very much better for the people of this province.

Let's look at our energy levels here. I get people talk about the environment and know more than we do on this side. We are 100 per cent supportive of the green environment, being cognizant of what we're doing as part of that. But why we don't accept the fact that we should not let one barrel of oil in this province not be produced when we're allowing oil to be produced in areas that is one-tenth as clean, it's not produced one-tenth as morally as you should be, the safety and the environment and what's put back in to the betterment of workers and put back in to investments in transitioning, when the time is right and when it's viable to do that.

Why we beat ourselves up in Canada, in Newfoundland and Labrador, about what we're not doing, yet what we're not doing has no impact on what the people are doing negatively. What we could be doing is encouraging the world to produce our cleaner energy that we have here, our cleaner oil, as we're still developing our hydro net energy, as our hydroelectric energy and, no doubt, Surge Energy and natural gas, all the other things that we'll be developing over the next number of decades.

So why we would not allow that, and we get caught up in fighting ourselves here when we're saying, do you know what? We have cleaner energy, cleaner oil than anybody else. The world is going to be using oil, let's find a way to push the rest of the world to buy our oil so we're doing our part there for the environment. While we take some of our revenues from that and we train our workers to be ready for the transition as we start moving.

I don't know any other jurisdiction in the world – I know Norway plays around with a number of things. They're fortunate enough, from a financial point of view, because they're a country versus us being a

province. But I find no other province anywhere, or jurisdiction I should say, that does more than look at developing green energy in every way, shape or form.

Our policies here, just around the oil and gas industry, is very robust about being environmentally friendly, safety for workers, ensuring that there's a trained process there, ensuring that the training is transferable to another industry. That's just in the one industry that the world is beating up now: the oil and gas industry. So we're doing all these things to keep it as clean and green as possible. We already know that the carbon emissions from oil from Newfoundland and Labrador is much less than anywhere else. So we're doing that part.

Let's look at what we're doing in hydroelectric power. Let's look at what's developed in Labrador, what's being developed here in Bay d'Espoir. There are a multitude of things that's being done here. We're looking at wind energy. Look at the discussion we've had and the potential here. Dozens of applicants here; a multitude of communities being engaged in it; millions, potentially into billions, that are going to be invested to get into hydro net power.

You have the German government. The most powerful, lucrative entity in Europe, obviously one of the top five in the world, wanting to come to Newfoundland and Labrador because they see the value in clean energy. They see the value in the workforce we have here and the skill set. They see the value in a stable environment when it comes to political and they see the value in the fact of being able to develop partnerships with Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in other sectors as part of that as they had in the past. Unfortunately, the history of some of the ones in the past are not the ones that we want to go to. But there was a working relationship where they saw the value of the asset here, the value of the natural resource, but particularly the value of the workers here.

I was fortunate enough to have a very frank and open conversation with the ambassador for Germany who sees the great potential in this province. Why wouldn't we continue to develop that? Why wouldn't we continue in this province to boast? I think we're up there with any jurisdiction anywhere in the world for doing our part for the environment, while we try to find ways to do it.

We may differ in this House about where the environmental impact starts or ends or when there should be a particular time when you transition. From our perspective, there is a transition time. We're continuously working towards that. That's why we continue to produce and support hydro net energy, natural gas industry, wind industry, the hydroelectric power, all the things that are beneficial as to that. But we also are still promoting the cleanest oil that can be produced, as we're training our people to be ready.

I mean, there are discussions now around facilities. I had a discussion with an education facility about some of the programs and services that they're now going to be offering around skilled trades that would be beneficial and transferable to greener energy projects. What a wonderful thing. The trades unions, Trades NL are having those discussions now and have a plan of action. People have been doing that.

We beat ourselves up, I think we spend too much time arguing or debating with ourselves about what we're not doing. We're doing wonderful. Do we need a plan of action to continue that in the right direction? I think so. I think 2041, if we get the right deal, the potential we have then, to not only ensure a fiscally responsible future for Newfoundland and Labrador, but to also set the tone for how we develop other green energies. We'll have the financial resources; we should have a developed partnership that's lucrative for all involved.

What an opportunity to do that. What an opportunity when we look at the assets we

have in deepwater ports, ice-free ports for LNG. What that means for the European market. What it will mean for the North American market. What it would mean for Newfoundland and Labrador when we develop and have money to invest in an infrastructure that would be beneficial to people so we're not dealing solely then with more environmentally dangerous fossil fuels when it comes to people heating their homes as part of this process.

As we transition to more use for electric cars, we're saying that. So how do we not use some of our investment money, as we're doing it now? I see it in a number of new buildings being built where you've got charging stations. I talked to a garage owner whose now putting that in as part of it because he's going to start repairing electric cars.

So we have been doing our part and I think sometimes we get caught up because we start thinking that we're not doing it and the rah-rah and the screaming and the bawling. Let's start reflecting on what we are doing. We may not be an A plus yet because we're still relatively new at this but I guarantee you, we've moved a long way from what we would have done from an environmental perspective or what our understanding would be to where we are now and what we support, what we would invest in, what we would allow in Newfoundland and Labrador as part of that process. So we should be patting ourselves in Newfoundland and Labrador and I say everybody: industries, the not-for-profit sectors, us here in the House of Assembly, government officials, municipalities, what's been happening here in this province. So there are a lot of good things.

Sometimes it gets disheartening in here when we're continuously fighting, but we're doing good things. If somebody nationally wants to beat us up, or internationally, saying we're not doing this, you know what? I feel fairly comfortable when I look around and say, at the end of the day, I'm

environmentally cognizant of what's happening. I protect the environment as much as I can and I would hope the bit of influence that we have here in the House, we make sure we do that through policy and through programs to do it. We make sure that we send a message to national and international companies that this is our expectation when you come here.

I would hope we find a mechanism to educate the general public about what's acceptable and what's not and, more importantly, prepare them for what's coming in the future. Prepare them to be part of that. Not to be cognizant of being against it, embrace it. But you can't embrace something if you're not informed about it. So we have a responsibility to inform people here. Don't segregate people by saying they're bad because they didn't do this; educate us as to why this needs to be done and how they can transition in to do it.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, I'll tell you, are very resilient but we're also very supportive. We need to know exactly what it is we're doing and, more importantly, what will be the outcome and show us that there's a benefit to it. Too often you've seen what happened in Newfoundland and Labrador. We've been hoodwinked, convinced to do a certain thing because it was beneficial to somebody else but not to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Then we had to acknowledge the brunt of the negativity after the fact and incur costs or incur a negative reputation.

I mean, we've seen all this. We've seen it with the seal hunt, all the things, the misinformation that's put out there. Here we are a humane process going on as part of a culling process that enhances food security and is beneficial, but somebody else decided they would stop that. The potential we would have just in that industry to sustain our own fishing industry but also help with the food security for more disadvantaged countries, what we can do from that perspective.

But, again, sometimes we get no, we better not speak about it because it's a taboo. We need to stand up for what's right in Newfoundland and Labrador and that's in everything we do here. It's time we stopped hiding behind, oh, there's a small group that don't like that but they're going to protest. They're against it.

Do you know what? If it's morally justifiable and you know it's right and you know it's going to be beneficial at the end of the day, and if you know that the majority of the people of this province – and I don't say a majority of 51. I'm not talking about a referendum. I'm talking about if the majority of people in Newfoundland and Labrador see this as the right thing to do, then we shouldn't hide behind because we're afraid of protesting. We should stand up for what's right.

I think that's one of the things, one of the messages in the House of Assembly. There are times when we can come together unified to challenge things and there are a number of them. I would like for us all to come together unified to challenge the federal government on a number of things. It's not just because it's the Liberal government there. If it was the Conservatives there – and at the time we said the same thing in this House of Assembly about the Conservatives time. Joint management of our fisheries – we saw last week the protests that are happening. This is not about taking a side; this is about taking the side of the fishing industry, all involved. From harvesters, to processors, to the plant workers, to the mom-and-pop stores, to the municipalities, to the truck drivers, to everybody who benefits from that, to the suppliers, benefits from that industry, taking a stance for what is right and just in Newfoundland and, more importantly, what is ours.

Don't forget 500-plus years ago, the fish in this area was claimed to be Newfoundland's and now Labrador's. That was claimed to be. How we lost that 75 years ago, I don't

know. How we didn't get to maintain control of something that we were extremely good at. Now, did we have to change the process? Did we have to change how the merchants dealt with the harvesters? Did they had to change the processing process? Sure, we did. We did that.

Did we have to change the respect for plant workers? Of course we had to do that. We're getting to that point, but you cannot move it in the right direction. A billion-dollar-plus industry that should be \$5 billion to \$10 billion with the resources we have and the potential, the multispecies we have and just the geographic location for shipping that we could have here.

We know what happened with overfishing by foreign trawlers over the years. We know the (inaudible) by a multitude of federal governments there by giving stuff. I had a conversation one time – I won't tell you the name because it will probably blow your mind – back in the '80s sitting with this individual, an extremely known Canadian, revered, respected, adored totally and to this day still is. He telling me that Newfoundland and Labrador will never flourish in its fishing industry because of the foreign overfishing. That was in 1986 I sat in his house, spent four days in his house that myself and him worked on a specific project.

I was only young then. I asked: Why is that? He said: Because at the end of the day the federal government sees the value of negotiating with somebody like Spain or Portugal to sell a CANDU reactor that 97 per cent of it was produced either in Quebec or in Ontario and make \$2 billion, which was an exorbitant of money then, and give away \$150 million worth of our industry, in the fishing industry because it would benefit all of Canada. Well, do you know what? The principle that sounded as an argument but it didn't benefit the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, because we didn't see any of that \$2 billion that the people in Quebec or Ontario gained from that, as part of that.

So there was a lot of trade-offs at the expense of the fishing industry in Newfoundland and Labrador that nobody will talk about, the taboos. The federal government won't acknowledge it, and I'm not attacking any one administration. I've known it. My research has dictated over the last five or six decades. So that's five or six different administrations that went through, who didn't do they due justice for Newfoundland and Labrador and I do blame a number of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who were elected to represent us in Ottawa who didn't do their due justice.

I do know John Crosbie did his due justice up there, fighting for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador on a constant basis. I know that. I know Jim McGrath did when he was minister of Fisheries. I know he had a major falling-out because I worked on his campaign. I know he has a major falling-out with the prime minister of the day about what he wanted to do for the fishing industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I know there are other ones. I know other people who spoke up and fought for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I know that. But there were a number who haven't, just gave in or drank the Kool-Aid that what was being said about our fishing industry was acceptable and it was the least we could expect. Do you know what? We've got major developing entities here that have proven that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians at every level – the harvesting level, the processing level and the plant operation level – can be beneficial and can be trained to show the rest of the world. We've known it

I remember in the '80s, having members from the Marine Institute, and I tagged along with them for a month down in Central America, training people how to fish in Central America. That's how advanced we were in the '80s, that globally people saw that. We had fisherpersons. We had administrators. We had people going down. I went down, for another perspective, to use

what experience I had to help flourish that along but we saw that we were taking our skill set here and using it there.

But somewhere along the way, the skill set that we were passing on to other jurisdictions, we forgot to pass on to our own. We were down there promoting getting younger people involved in the fishing industry and teaching them how to do it and putting in incentives. We did a wonderful job. You go down places like Belize and Guatemala, Nicaragua, any of those around the coastal areas and the coastal areas of Mexico, some of their fishing entities, do you know where the advice came from and the partnerships came from and the training? People were brought up here to be trained. It came from Newfoundland and Labrador, our own Marine Institute at the time – the Trades and Technology was what it was called then – the people they sent down, and a couple of government entities of one of which I was involved in.

So it tells you that we have the expertise. For some reason, every now and then, we start doubting ourselves or because somebody outside said it's not right, we stop. How often have we seen that? I have seen it with this administration too often. There is a report saying we need to do this, we need to review this. Then, all of sudden, there is a report comes down from Ottawa or somebody else beats the drum from some other jurisdiction and says, no, no, no, can't do that. Then it is scrapped. We sit here wondering, do you know what? Some of that has some validity to it. Some of that was warranted; the fact that we could do something that could benefit people.

Maybe it all didn't, but, listen, it's your report, so when it is your report you can look at it and say do you know what? This is what I think will benefit the people of this province. This is what I think would be a good return on our investment. This is what I think, based on the information that we have, would be a long-term strategy to address a particular issue. Too often we

second-guess ourselves in this province and we have to get over it. I have seen it so much in the past; it's sickening.

But do you know where I see the positive? I talk on a daily basis to the great workers who built Newfoundland and Labrador, built all these great projects from Hibernia to the ones that's going to happen now with Terra Nova and with the platform there. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are going to have to fix the mess of the Europeans. I know it.

I had a young fellow in my business that I operate one night telling me, a young electrician, who was out working for Suncor in Alberta but is a Newfoundlander and Labradorian who was home. He told me they went over there, he spent 2½ months there and he told me, at the time, that stuff is going to have to be done because they were not following the regulatory process and it would never pass in Newfoundland and Labrador. It wasn't done right. They tried to explain, you know, based on our jurisdiction here, our policies, our regulations and it wouldn't be done. So that tells me we're fixing it. Do you know what that tells me? That speaks volumes of the skill set we have in Newfoundland and Labrador.

So the days of questioning that somebody else needs to tell us how to do stuff, we need to listen to how somebody else does it, we need to send our people somewhere else to do it, shouldn't be listened to, shouldn't be talked about. We have the skill set here.

I saw it first-hand, medically, the interventions that you can get so I know first-hand what happens in our medical field. I know we have the best professionals around; I know we have it. Do we need to resource it better? Of course we do. Do we need to support it better? Of course we do. Do we need to sing from the mountains that we have it? Sure we do. Do we need to find a better approach to making it work so that

everybody has access to it? Of course we do. Do we have to be cognizant of our geography and our health environment? Sure we have to.

But we need to be talking about the positive things that we have here and build upon those. We need to be taking advice from Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, the business community, the not-for-profit community, the average citizen out there who does this, the people who listen and who, on a day-to-day basis, live the challenges but live the successes. Let's start building with them.

We saw Verafin. Twenty years ago if somebody had mentioned we would have a tech company that would be so advanced that Nasdaq would be the people reaching out to purchase it and wanting to keep it here and pool the resources that are here and make that globally. You would have said you're crazy. Because do you know what? Sometimes we don't think we're as good as other people or our skill set and we need to get over that. That's the part and parcel here.

But in the House of Assembly we need to do the same thing here. We have very talented, skilled people in this House of Assembly. We have very skilled and talented civil servants who feed information to us. So we need to start taking that information and using it for non-political reasons. The way to use it for non-political reasons, come to an agreement through openness and transparency on what's the best way to do things. If the government feels this is where they want to go, explain that to the people; explain it to us.

If you sell us on it, we'll sell our constituents also. If we sell our constituents, no doubt our constituents then will also talk to your constituents and say, we like this idea. So why wouldn't we go down that road? Why wouldn't we find a better way to do it? We're trying to find a better way. We talk about let's find a better way to do health care, let's

find a better way to do education, let's find a better way to do infrastructure, let's find a better way to do communications. Well, why don't we find a better way to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in the House of Assembly?

The way to do that is openness and transparency and be frank with people. Sometimes we need to tell people, do you know what? That's important but unfortunately it's not the most important thing that we have to deal with right now. It's not the priority. If we start doing that, we'll get more respect from the people. We'll get more knowledge. We may have some pushback from certain groups, and I get that, but when we stand our ground collectively, we'll have our banter and we'll have our debate and we'll have our disagreement, but at the end of the day, collectively, it's much easier if we're open and transparent, to be on the same page of what needs to be done and do what's right for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time and I'll get an opportunity to speak again in the near future.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology.

A. PARSONS: Thank you, Speaker.

Happy to stand up and speak here today and follow my colleague across the way there in that riveting speech. I appreciate it. He speaks from the heart. There are times I disagree with what he says, but I appreciate the fact that he puts it out there. Certainly we've known each other a long time.

Now that doesn't mean I'm not going to take some shots at him along the way.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

A. PARSONS: We're not going that far.

But I do want to talk a little about – and I was listening actually to the Opposition House Leader when he spoke. We talk about the House and how it works and the respect and the questions and all that. I did want to provide – I think it's important to provide some context as well. Again, as the Member mentioned, some of us have sat on both sides. Some of us have been there. I feel like I have to sort of put out some context to this because the Member said, as a government, we're not giving any respect. I want to provide just a little bit of a taste of what I dealt with when I was in Opposition. Not to say anything about any of the Members opposite. Well, the leader was there. He wasn't the House Leader. But we talk about how things have changed. I think that's important because you want to talk about how things were and how they have changed and they have evolved.

I can point out that actually when I sat on that side – again, I know what the Members have to do, I know what that job is. You have to ask the questions. You have to ask the tough questions. But I can tell you this, at no point has there ever been a revocation of their parliamentary rights because of a tough question. I'll give you an example.

I don't know how many days I was in the Opposition where, if we upset the House Leader of the day, that we didn't actually get to put in a petition that day. We didn't get to put in a petition. That's true. The House Leader of the day, we'd get there – and I will point out the decorum of the House was actually far more animated than it is now. It was a lot different. I will tell you it was a lot louder, it was a lot more intense and it was certainly a heck of a lot more insulting, to the point where, it wasn't unusual to have government Members come to your office after and apologize for what they said to you. That went on.

We need to keep that in mind when we talk about the lack of respect. We have to point out that, do you know what? Things have evolved. I'll give a lot of credit, actually, to the Minister of Health who, when he was the Speaker, a lot of this did start under his watch. I'll point out, though again, we would stand up and have a particularly animated back and forth: no petitions today. None. You're not getting one. That happened.

I can tell you, we've had lots of animated back and forth. But there's nobody on that side that can say that because they upset somebody they lost their right to speak in this House.

Just talk about the tone in this House. Number one, I don't know if we've had a real filibuster since we've been here because we actually took that away. But I can tell you times when I was sat on that side, six Members, small kids at home, and I'd have a government Member telling me, because we wouldn't agree on Muskrat or we wouldn't agree on Bill 29, I had a government Member call out I hope you enjoy Christmas in here away from your kids. I hope you enjoy your Christmas away from your kids because you're not going to support Muskrat Falls. I had that said to me.

Again, I say this as sort of a cautionary tale to all Members that, you know what, things have changed and I do think they've gotten better. Does that mean that we listen to what the Members say sometimes when they – you know what? I do think we do listen. Does that mean we adopt or agree? No, but I can tell you sometimes it's not on this floor, but there are Members on that side of the House, I can guarantee you – and they know who they are – they have come to me and they have said what about X, what about Y. I could tell you I've taken that and used that in a conversation I might have had with somebody in the industry. That is where it works. I can tell you I didn't always have that approach. That was not always there.

I'm going to move to the next point and it is going to tie in to a topic today that came up in Terra Nova. The House Leader was talking about the dramatics here. Now, I will say the Member calling out dramatics is very much pot calling kettle black. He knows that and we're allowed to say that. I get it; there was some back and forth today. That's not a bad thing. But I will point out that while an Opposition's job is to question the government's direction, an Opposition also – as the Member said, if you guys don't want to do it, get out of the way; we're going to come over. So it is our job to remind individuals out there, the public, about the decisions that were made by the Members opposite who want to be here again and put in a decision-making capacity.

So, yes, I'm allowed to remind. When the Member says what are you doing with Terra Nova and you should have built it all here, now the facts are that was never done by any administration ever, Liberal or PC. In 2006, the former administration, there were no facilities, sent it to Rotterdam. We pointed that out, but it's like you're going back in history.

At the same time, when decisions were made by the Member – I got to point this out. The Member opposite, when the Member was the minister of Transportation, built boats in Romania. So if you're going to ask a government why you didn't do all that work here, then I have to ask the Member you did the exact same thing when you were there. You did the same thing. So I had to point it out because that is relevant. Again, why is that important? Because someone who wants to be in this chair or this chair or this chair, people need to know the decisions that they would make if they were here.

I come back to Terra Nova. I also have to correct while I have a chance, one media story said it was very heavily publicly funded. I'll tell everybody in this House, the amount of public funding in Terra Nova right now to get it where it is, less than 30 per

cent. But to say that it's almost entirely publicly funded is false. That's not the Opposition. That is a certain media outlet said that and got it wrong.

Again, we come back to the facts of the matter with Terra Nova: Offline December 2019, COVID hits. I can tell you that project was life or death. That project came very, very close to not happening. Members on the other side at the time said we need you to make this happen because it's important. We agreed. I never stood up and said you were wrong. There's one party that didn't want it to happen. That's fine. There was no disagreement in here about we want to support the industry, and I don't think anybody can say that they wouldn't support the industry or that we wouldn't support the industry; it's about how would you support the industry.

So what we did was we invested. There was the royalty relief which, again, right now it's not affected. We weren't losing royalties then, we're not losing royalties now and hopefully, when this gets going, it pumps oil. Like I said, I think that was a fair trade-off. I still absolutely 100 per cent agree with what we did. But that FPSO was going to Spain regardless because that was the crowd that bid on it because it couldn't be accommodated.

Now, sometimes there's a silver lining. People need to know that – and again, this is an argument that's actually very helpful to me in my dealings now. Because sometimes people say, oh, what about the labour force in Newfoundland and Labrador? Are they skilled enough or are they going to get it done on time? Well, I say look on over to Spain and look on over to Asia and you've got delays happening left and right and we're seeing it here now.

So this has been almost good for me to see because I can use that and say you're wrong when you make that assertion. That's why we continue to fight for Newfoundland and Labrador workers. In fact, we had 150

people flown over there to do the skilled labour because they couldn't get some of that labour over in Europe. They had to get our people over there. But right now, the result of this is yes, would I like to see it out there, back in production? Absolutely. But I'm confident that it will be there at some point.

But in the meantime, she's out in Bull Arm and the place is busy and people are working. People are working. One of the questions that I've heard all the time: What do you say to the worker who's not able to work now with everything shut down? I say you're back to work. Then I look to the next person – and again, I will remind everybody of a bit of history here. I was asked every day, all that federal funding, you should have put it in Terra Nova. You should invest the entirety in Terra Nova and in equity.

Do you know that if we had took the equity stake, what we would be paying for the overruns right now? This mistake, if that happened then, if we had that equity, we would be on the hook for tens and tens and tens of millions or farther than that. We are not on the hook for any of it. Right now, what we have is Newfoundlanders and Labradorians working at Bull Arm because they couldn't get it done in Spain, but Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are getting it done.

Still, I digress. I come back to the fact that, yes, I'd like to see it operational. These are things that are out of our control, not a government decision. We can question about doing all the work here. We've now disputed and shown that that's not the case. If every single Member on the other side was over here, they probably could have done the same thing but they wouldn't do anything different. They wouldn't have been able to change that. That would not have changed. It didn't change before because that just couldn't happen. So it's one thing to say it, but it's another thing when we put out the actual reality.

Now, I come back, you should have put all that federal money in Terra Nova, but we didn't. We didn't put it all there. Do you know what else? We put it in multiple other projects. I think one we actually put it in was Exxon. Do you know what Exxon is doing this summer? They're drilling. They are drilling and creating work for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians out there. There was a time here when we didn't know if there was going to be more drilling, more exploration, more anything going on. Right now, we see that there are multiple drilling projects that are going to happen and, again, because of decisions that we made. One of them being of the Offshore Exploration Initiative. We did that; we helped get them back on the ground. We helped to spur exploration.

I'll point out that even drilling a dry well creates an economic spinoff and impact for you even if it doesn't turn up oil. But we're going to continue to invest in that because we think it's the right thing to do.

I look at Come By Chance; we're told put all the money in that. Now again, I said this once before. If we had spent all the money we're told to spend, it would have been over a billion, but we didn't have that. Come By Chance, we invested in a debtor-in-possession loan, helped to get to the warm idle, hundreds of people out of work. The Member for Terra Nova knows; he felt it. And, right now, when we go out there, it is booming.

Now, I got asked the question today: What's going on at Braya in terms of the timelines? Yes, it is delayed. Absolutely it's delayed, but sadly it's because we dealt with a tragedy. We dealt with a tragedy out there. One person hurt, one person lost is too many. So the same thing, I think we're going to get there. I appreciate the union was supportive and amazing. The company itself, everybody wanted to get this plan back in the right track and we are going to get there. Right now, just last week, \$300 million equity investment in that company

from outside investment in the States. People don't invest \$300 million if they don't think something is worth it and going to show a return. We supported that.

I look out at West White Rose. Again, we stood there; we supported it. The pour that's going on out there, the sheer size of it, the thousands of people working, they weren't people who were working three years ago. So I point out all these facts, because Member opposite, the House Leader, was talking about all the rhetoric and the dramatics and everything else. Well, I'm just pointing out facts now. Sometimes people don't like the answer but this is the answer. People can dispute if what I'm saying is wrong, but I don't think they're going to win that argument.

Another thing I got to point out, when we talk about Marine Atlantic, Members opposite – good, I'm glad they're asking questions on Marine Atlantic. They should. I sat here for years when I was in Opposition and couldn't get the government of the day to say a word about it. Asked them what their priorities were. Certain premiers, Tom Marshall, wouldn't even say the words "Marine Atlantic."

So, yes, this is an issue right now with our federal government, but I will point out that Marine Atlantic – not Marine Atlantic but Transport Canada has been an age-old issue in Ottawa. It was a former Conservative government that started cost recovery and then increased it, and this current government has not done what we think they should do. We can talk all we want about our relationship with the feds. Everybody is talking about cousins. Sure, the Leader of the Opposition was only there after Christmas talking about this is the cousin that he wanted to get closer with and have a drink with, but they've been there. The current leader of the federal Conservatives has been there for 20 years. He's had a career at this. He didn't do anything when he was there and I don't know what he's going to do.

What I would say is I agree with the premise that the Members say: we have to find a way to get the decision-making in the right direction, which is to reduce cost recovery. But when we say Liberal cousins, again, you've got to look at it wasn't that long ago that we were having these conversations about we're at the point now where it's not the cousin you invite to the wedding, it's not the cousin you go out for a drink with when they come to town, but it's a cousin you have a lot of commonalities with and you'd like to be able to get closer. That's not my words. That's the Leader of the Opposition.

AN HON. MEMBER: Table it.

A. PARSONS: I'd be more than happy to table or you can go to cbc.ca/nl.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. PARSONS: Available on the World Wide Web. Everybody looking at the Opposition Leader who wants to be closer with his cousins in Ottawa.

So, again, I point out we are going to have no choice. You can call it theatrics. That is absolutely fine. You can call it theatrics all you want, but sometimes we have to point out that things are not always as the Opposition makes them out to be.

It's not like the government is big and bad. In fact, it's not even that way. As I said, things were a lot different just a few years back. I don't tie that to the current Members, but I'm saying that the value of having some history here is that things aren't as bad as they like to make it out to be. Things aren't always as bad as they'd like to make it out to be, which I'll tie it back to the budget, which is the reason we're still here today. We got a budget. Put it out there.

I got to tell you, I've been a part of, I think, eight budgets. Yeah, we've had some difficult, difficult, bad budgets. The first one primarily. The current Member for Stephenville, he was a deputy minister

there. He was sort of internally a part of putting forward some decisions. He was putting forward –

AN HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

T. WAKEHAM: (Inaudible.)

A. PARSONS: I'm only putting it out. I think I've got him going. I think I got him going.

But what I would say is that if you notice a lot of the questions on the budget this year, they're not actually about the budget itself. They're not. I've heard more about previous decisions than the current budget and, generally, I would say that's a good sign.

Another thing that matters, when we talk about this, yes, I have had budgets where I went home and I've got to tell you I felt it. I felt it and I had people express to me how disappointed they were in the decisions that we've made. I've had that.

I can honestly tell you, Speaker, and anybody that's listening; I have not had that with this budget. I have not had that. Do we have people that probably didn't get what they want? Yes, you show me a budget that didn't have that, of any stripe, and I'll say thank you. But what I'll say is that looking at the department here in terms of the energy investments, in terms of the road investments, in terms of the investments that we're making in health care, which is – I've got to tell you in the UK – and just again, we've talked about how there is a crisis everything. Yes.

The Minister of Health has a challenge. This government has a challenge when it comes to the health care issues we face, but I can tell you when you go over for a technology conference, over in the UK, and five of six newspapers have on their front page: health care crisis, it goes to show that this truly is a worldwide global issue right now when it comes to health care that we're facing and it talks about the need to transition; the need to do things differently; the need for

investment. While I commend the Premier and I commend the Minister of Health, I think we made that investment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. PARSONS: Now, is that going to fix the issues that some of the Members mentioned or some of us mentioned as well about the individual with this particular issue or the person that's going through that? No, but what I will say is that we'll continue to go, hopefully, in the right direction. That is the plan.

On that note, I will take my seat. I look forward to seeing who is going to get up and lay it on me.

Sorry, I've got a minute.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SPEAKER: Order, please!

A. PARSONS: It's funny, because when the Leader of the Opposition was speaking, I didn't hear anybody say keep going.

I've got a few other things here, I do and I think I touched on a lot. What I will point out though is that there is a lot of positive things going on; a lot of challenges, don't get me wrong. But I have to tell you that I appreciate we're trying to make efforts to get in the right direction.

I know the Members opposite say that they don't feel respected or appreciated, but, as I pointed out, that's not the case. That's not the case and that's not to mean that questions asked aren't internalized and debated, but sometimes the Members opposite have to realize – and I come back and I end off on the point of theatrics – there is a bit of Shakespeare going on over there, too, and there are times that there are questions asked, but they're not asked for the purpose –

AN HON. MEMBER: Brutus.

A. PARSONS: Et tu, Brute.

But what I will say is this, to those that are watching, this House, I can tell you, has elevated itself a long way from previous years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A. PARSONS: I do think it is a respectful House. I do think we have made steps on all sides in the right direction and I look forward to the rest of this debate, which I am sure will be lively and entertaining.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER: Seeing no speakers, we will now vote on the subamendment.

All those in favour of the subamendment?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against the subamendment?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

AN HON. MEMBER: Division.

SPEAKER: Division has been called.

Call in the Members.

Division

SPEAKER: Are all Members present?

House Leaders, are we ready for the vote?

Order, please!

All those in favour of the subamendment, please rise.

CLERK (Barnes): David Brazil, Barry Petten, Helen Conway Ottenheimer, Paul Dinn, Lloyd Parrott, Tony Wakeham, Jeff

Dwyer, Pleaman Forsey, Loyola O'Driscoll, Craig Pardy, Joedy Wall, Chris Tibbs, James Dinn, Lela Evans, Eddie Joyce, Paul Lane.

SPEAKER: All those against the subamendment, please rise.

CLERK: Andrew Furey, John Hogan, Lisa Dempster, Gerry Byrne, Bernard Davis, Tom Osborne, Siobhan Coady, Pam Parsons, Elvis Loveless, Krista Lynn Howell, Andrew Parsons, Steve Crocker, Sarah Stoodley, Derrick Bragg, John Abbott, Brian Warr, Paul Pike, Sherry Gambin-Walsh, Scott Reid, Lucy Stoyles.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

CLERK: Mr. Speaker, the ayes: 16; the nays: 20.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I do declare that the subamendment has been defeated.

On motion, subamendment defeated.

SPEAKER: We will move into debate on the amendment now.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

P. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Despite some of the cackling from across the way, I will say just for the record that what we just voted on was a subamendment and that subamendment had to do with faulting the government for not holding Ottawa accountable for its responsibilities to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. So I know you can position that as a confidence motion, whatever. You can do all that. We all know that the government have a majority so it won't matter. But at the end of the day for me, and I'm speaking for myself, my vote this time around –

SPEAKER: Order, please!

I can't hear the Member speak at all there. Can we keep the level of chatter down a little bit, please?

The Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

P. LANE: Just to clarify for the public record, my vote this time around was about supporting a subamendment, which basically said that we need to hold Ottawa accountable, that Ottawa –

S. COADY: (Inaudible.)

P. LANE: Well, the minister can heckle all she wants. Maybe I'll vote against the budget. It doesn't matter anyway; I'll do what I want to do. But, at the end of the day, I'll make my decision on each and every stage of the budget. I have been quite clear that there are a lot of good things in this budget. I think I've made it quite clear that, from a general perspective, I'm satisfied with the budget.

I agree with the Member who just spoke that I haven't really heard anything from my constituents, very little about this budget in terms of people having big issues with the budget. People have issues with this government, no doubt about that. They have issues with this government. They have issues with child care. They have issues with health care and so on. But that's not necessarily tied to this budget.

I may very well, in the end, vote for this budget, but in terms of this amendment that I just voted in favour of, this amendment talked about the fact that the government is not holding the feds responsible for their end of the bargain. In many ways we are subsidizing services, I would argue, that the federal government should be paying for.

As I spoke about yesterday, the big one, one of the biggest ones for me, are senior citizens in this province. The federal government is falling short on the OAS,

CPP, and here we are arguing over increases to Seniors' Benefits and supplements and so on when really Ottawa should be paying the bill, not the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. That is what I supported in the subamendment.

Now we're to the amendment. The amendment is the non-confidence. This is basically the non-confidence where we're saying we do not have confidence in this government; we do not have confidence in this budget. For me when I'm looking at this, I'm trying to look at it from the – you could look at it, I suppose, from the perspective of well, I can vote against it for the sake of voting against it or because I have an issue with this or that, knowing that the government has a majority and it's going to pass anyway. But I kind of try to look at it from the lens of if this was a confidence vote, if the government never had the majority, if this meant bringing down the government and everything else, is the budget really that bad? Is it that offensive? Is it really that lacking that it would cause me to vote against it? As I've said, I just don't see it.

I don't see any major issues with the budget. Now, when my colleagues from the Official Opposition talk about health care and so on and they say we don't see a plan, there seems to be a hodgepodge of spending, throw money at this, throw money at that and so on, without an actual plan. They say that they see that in a number of areas. I would tend to agree with them, and that's not to say that there isn't some plan but if there is a plan, you haven't shared it with us. That's the issue, as I would see it. Because I find it difficult to buy in to a narrative that would say that, as a government, you're over there, you're all educated, intelligent people – I find it hard to believe, to buy into the narrative that there is no plan. That you're just willy-nilly throwing money at everything. I find it hard to swallow that.

So I think there probably is a plan, but the issue is that the plan is not shared with Members of this side of the House. That's why one would say over here, there's no plan, or some of us would say there's no plan.

I think you would be doing yourself a service and I think that we would perhaps be in a position where we could even work together more if you shared some of those plans so that Members over here had a true understanding of exactly what it is you're trying to do. I think that a lot of people over here would feel better about where we're heading, maybe feel better about the budget if we sort of had that background to understand where this fits into a plan. Let us see that plan.

With that said, I think most people, that I've spoken to at least, if you were to ask them what is the big issue – there are really two. There are cost-of-living concerns, of course, and health care. In fairness to the government – because it's very easy to stand up here and beat up on the government and so on. But in fairness, a lot of the economic pressures that people are feeling are driven by things that have happened outside of our jurisdiction, globally and so on.

This government didn't drive up the price of food. Now, I would argue that the federal government has helped to drive up the price of food with their carbon tax. No doubt about that in my mind. The feds have played a role in that one for sure. But a lot of the inflationary issues and things that have happened as a result of the war in Russia and all the fallout from that, and all the fallout from COVID and supply chain issues and so on, you can't pin this on this government or any other government. I mean, that's just not realistic. We can try to do it politically, but the reality of it is those are things that are outside of government's control.

Likewise, I think there's nobody can deny, if we're being totally honest, that when we look at the issues with health care – I was speaking with my nephew last night. He lives in Manitoba. He told me that health care is a total mess in Manitoba where he is. Family doctors – all the same issues we're having here they're having there. I have other family in other parts of the country tell me it's happening there as well.

So again, in fairness, we know if we're being honest we can't pin all that on government. We really can't. Now, are there some things that we can pin on government perhaps? When I think about health care and I think about the issues with family doctors, when I think about backlogged surgeries and so on, I know for a fact that I and other colleagues over here raised those issues with the then minister of Health over and over and over and over again: issues around long-term care, issues around primary care and issues about access to family physicians and so on. He basically dismissed it, said there was no problem; everything was fine. We talked about recruitment issues and so on. Everything is fine.

Later, we come to find out only in the last year or so on, you're hearing from medical students, as an example, who contacted me and contacted others saying: hey, listen, here I am, last year of medical school. From Newfoundland, wanted to work in Newfoundland. Had recruiters from Quebec, PEI, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick begging us to open up and to come and move to that province, offering us incentives and so on. They said how many people do you think reached out from Eastern Health or Western Health or Central Health or Labrador-Grenfell Health or the Department of Health? Nobody, zero, zip.

Now, that happened. Thankfully, I will say to the new Minister of Health and Community Services: I really, truly believe he is doing his best to try to remedy that. But the fact of the matter is for the last number of years we

were raising those issues. Those issues were ignored, dismissed, told there is no issue and, obviously, there was an issue.

I'm not saying that this is not an issue Canada-wide, globally probably. I'm not suggesting that and that is playing a role, but there's also no doubt in my mind that things perhaps would not be as bad as they are, had the kind of action that's being taken now – and I'm glad it's being taken now – been taken last year, the year before that and the year before that. Would we still have issues? Yes. Would they be as bad as they are now? No, they wouldn't.

So there has to be some responsibility that has to fall to government for that. That's a fact. There has to be some responsibility. As I said, as we move forward, now that we're in a major crisis – and there's no doubt we're in a major crisis when it comes to our health care – I am glad to see significant investments in health care that's in this budget.

I do question to some degree and I understand – I was just saying to my colleague I think that government has opened up a can of worms, to some degree a little bit. We started off with we need incentives for doctors to go to some of the remote areas, so we offered them I think it was \$200,000. Then the doctors who were already in existence said: well, what about retention? You got to give us \$100,000. Then the nurses, they wanted their retention; then Allied Health, they wanted their retention; and now we've got the Member here for St. John's Centre who is presenting petitions for everybody else in the health care system, they all want retention. So now we're going to have two sets of negotiations. We're going to have contract negotiations and then over here we're going to have another set of negotiations for retention bonuses for everybody.

And now the teachers are saying what about our retention? Pretty soon everyone

in the Confederation Building are going to say: What about our retention? So it has created a bit of an issue, I think, for government. I'm not saying that people don't deserve retention and to be paid well; that's why we have contract negotiations. But it does seem that what might have started off as a good idea for doctors that we needed in hard areas to recruit, has now snowballed into everybody in the public service now wanting retention.

So I can see how that might be a challenge for government. I suggest they're probably going to end up getting more and more groups coming saying: What about me, what about me, what about me? That's going to be a challenge financially for the government, there's no doubt about it in my mind. That's not to say they don't deserve it, but that's the Pandora's box that has been opened. It'll be interesting to see how government will deal with that as time goes on.

Health care is obviously an important one and, as I've talked about, I think government has made some good investments in health care, some necessary investments in health care. It should have been done before now, but at least it's being done now so I can get behind that. I think the program for the insulin pumps was a good idea. I think that was another good idea to help diabetics and to save the government money in the long run through prevention. That was a good initiative and I support that.

Obviously, anything we can do to help our seniors out, although again I will say Ottawa is definitely getting off the hook and we are basically subsidizing the federal government. No doubt, there was some help. Arguably not enough help, not as much as seniors might need; I think it should come from Ottawa, not here. But, anyway, there's some help and I would certainly support that.

Early childhood education: I'm glad to see some investments there in terms of the

ECEs. We, obviously, need to recruit a whole lot more ECEs. The new wage grid is going to help, I think, new people get into it. Although I will say that I have had a couple of ECEs who, I guess they'd been ECEs for a longer time. I think there are different levels: ECE I, II, III, whatever the case might be. So I think if you're maybe a II or a III, people have told me that this new wage grid, when you do the math, it's about \$600 a year. That's all they got out of it.

So for that group – and I'm not sure how many would be in that group – the words I think they said to me was that it was a slap in the face. But, no doubt, new people trying to get in to be an ECE, I think there's a pretty good incentive and hopefully we're going to get more and more ECEs. I would say, at least for me in my district, the health care obviously is a big one for us all but, behind that, I think the biggest issue that I get people calling me, messaging me, emailing me or whatever is child care.

Child care is probably the second biggest one for me. I get a lot of people from the Southlands area because they're all young families. As I've said in this House of Assembly before, many of these are professional people, health care professionals. I have two doctors who've reached out to me and nurses who've reached out to me saying I cannot go back. Here we are, looking for health care professionals, I'm not able to go back to work as a doctor, as a nurse, whatever the case might be, as a lab tech. I can't go back to work because I have nobody to care for my child.

Ten dollars a day is a great initiative. I'm not going to argue with that – a great initiative. I will say I was very – I don't want to get into too much now with federal politics, but I will say I did see the comments by Mr. Poilievre as it related to the child care and I was absolutely shocked. It sounded to me like he was going to scrap that great initiative. I hope to God that doesn't happen. I think that is a good initiative, but the problem is,

of course, that access is the issue. The initiative itself was great, but there was people who would say you can make it \$1 a day if you want to but if I can't get my child in there, it's of no value to me; zero value to me.

So you've kind of got some groups, some people who have no one to care for their child so they can't work and then – and I've had a few of these as well and I think I've mentioned this in the past as well – I've had a few other people who were being absolutely gouged, beyond gouged, by individuals offering to care for the children but taking advantage of the situation where there's no child care available, and charging much, much higher than the norm and then expecting all these other additional benefits and everything else in addition to that.

I had one individual tell me they wanted, I think, \$60 or \$65 a day. Then on top of that, I'm taking two weeks vacation. On top of that, I'm taking a week sick leave. On top of that, I'm getting all the statutory holidays that the provincial government gets and on top of that if something comes up, like a wedding in the family or something like that, I'm taking that and you still got to pay me. If you don't like the terms, see you later.

To my mind, that's totally taking advantage and gouging people. So you got people being gouged or you got people with no child care at all. As I said, some of these are very professional people: nurses, doctors and so on that we need at work. We really need to solve this problem, not just from a social point of view, but from an economic development point of view. It is huge. I know Members know that.

I've only got a couple of seconds left. I'm just going to end off by saying I listened to the Minister of Industry over there and I have to concur with him. As someone who was in this House of Assembly during those times he spoke to, the decorum, how we interact and so on is a thousand times better than it was years ago. I have to say

that. He is right; some of the stuff that went on was pretty brutal, so I would just confirm that.

Anyway, with that said, Mr. Speaker, I'll take my seat.

Thank you.

SPEAKER (Warr): Thank you.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

D. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's an honour again to stand in this House of Assembly and speak to the good people of Newfoundland and Labrador. To my colleagues across here, about the pending budget and the pending debate that we're having now, we'll get to a point where we will have a final debate and a vote on the budget itself.

I do want to clarify there are a number of things – and I've said this because from the five times I spoke on it – that I do like in this budget. There are a number of things. Is it perfect? By no stretch. Are there some gaps? Yes, we've outlined some of those and I'll continue to do that. We'll probably even make some further amendments about some of the things that we think should be done.

Or tomorrow I'll spend anywhere from three to five hours with the minister talking about Estimates. I'm hoping to be educated tomorrow, for clarification purposes, on what's there. Because I've said it from the first time I spoke, when I spoke for three hours a number of weeks ago, about the devil is in the detail.

I'm hopeful that things that I was weary of or wasn't clear on will be clarified tomorrow, and then I'll make a more informed observation of whether or not I think this is going to be beneficial. If it is, I'll acknowledge that and I'll speak to that in

the future again when I get to speak. If it isn't, I'll clarify: Minister, I think we could have done this. Or have you given consideration to this, or is there a plan to address this as we go further down the road? So I have an opportunity to do that, also, as we move forward in the coming months.

I also want to identify and address some issues here, just for clarification purposes, because I've been touting for a number of years here, this has to be about openness and transparency and clarifying. Everything is about proper representation on the facts of the situation. I'd prefer if everybody in this House of Assembly made a decision based on the facts they have. How we interpret those or how we prioritize those are totally different for each other. I accept that and respect that very much so, as part of that.

I want to get back to what the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology noted earlier about – and it's a very timely discussion to have right now about the two newest ferries that we have in our fleet in Newfoundland and Labrador. The two very valuable, properly named *Veteran* and *Legionnaire*.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: First, I'll just educate people on the naming then, as part of it. As we know in our fleet, for a number of years, the fleet was named around historic military battles or military situations as part of that process. A number of years ago, we changed that approach to identify some very influential and distinguished Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and we did that when we named the *Grace Sparkes* and the *Hazel McIsaac* – two very influential, important, historic females in Newfoundland and Labrador, political leaders and community leaders who were significant. We did that and it was, I think, a very significant change to what we were doing here to acknowledge two very important individuals and keep

their legacy alive so people would ask: Well, who were these individuals?

We've done that as part of that but when we wanted to look at the next two new ferries that were going to be put in the fleet, we wanted to look at exactly what it is we wanted to identify. The discussion at the time – we were getting very close to the 100th anniversary of Beaumont-Hamel, and the unfortunate situation there with Newfoundlanders and Labradorians but, as many would say, was a battle that defined us as a nation at the time, but as a people. Historically, we needed to acknowledge that.

So there as a discussion around what should be the new names of the vessels and *Beaumont Hamel* has already been identified; *Flanders* is already out there. I mean, there are a number of ones that we already have that are significant around that.

During that time the Legions in Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly, were taking a leadership role to educate young people about the importance of the Newfoundland Regiment and the significant impact that they had on keeping freedom within the world, as part of that.

So we looked at that whole process there and looked at the significance of those people who served. And what are people who served? They're veterans and how important that would be. What are Legions? They're people who respect, support legionnaires. We see what legionnaires and Legion members do now, the multitude of things they do within their communities, not only for those veterans or former veterans or the families of veterans, but for the community itself.

So when the two new vessels were being christened, I'm happy to say, there was great dialogue between the leaders of the Legion movement then and a number of veterans' organizations about what would

happen. At one point, I even had a letter from a national organization acknowledging, not particularly those names, but that we needed to get back to acknowledging the significance, mainly so that young people of all ages, people who come from away that would conjure up a discussion around why is something named a particular name.

When I sat with my officials and came up with a recommendation that had to come to Cabinet, the two that came forward, based on what people had said and what they felt were important, were the *Veteran* and the *Legionnaire*. What more appropriate names to acknowledge Newfoundland and Labrador and the significance that we've done, part of the organizations to support our veterans?

Keeping in mind, per capita, Newfoundland and Labrador has more people in the military now and have had since our inception into this Confederation. So that speaks volumes of our support for our nation, our support for fighting for freedom, our support for supporting communities because we've seen what they've done. We've seen what our military did in the plight that we had with Hurricane Fiona only recently. The military moved in to help out in those communities. That's a very important thing.

So I want to acknowledge that, first and foremost, the naming of two very valuable assets for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and they serve a multitude of communities. The *Veteran* in Fogo Island - Change Islands, the two communities there. They're serving around 3,700 to 3,800 people. The *Legionnaire* on Bell Island serving nearly 3,000 people.

When you talk about serving, that's just based on community. What people don't realize is the *Legionnaire* or the *Veteran*, whichever vessel may be in Bell Island or a combination of other vessels that are on Bell Island, they do more traffic, car traffic and passenger traffic than the Marine

Atlantic does in the course of a year. It might seem impossible to believe when you have one vessel doing it, but that is a reality. Data is collected. It's been there for years. It's been decades they've been doing that. That speaks volumes of the necessity to have that transportation link.

We just talked about and debated the transportation link between North Sydney and Port aux Basques, how important that is with three massive vessels and the impact it has, financially, on this province. Well, no different than the communities that we service, particularly those islands and what that means for people.

So, you know, I was privileged and honoured to be part and parcel of the call for proposals for the two new vessels. I've got to correct the minister because the minister may not be aware of this so I'm not going to, in any way shape or form, say he was not sharing all the information because he may not have been informed about what was happening at the time.

We did an international call for proposals; but before that, we did a national call for proposals; but before that, we did a provincial call for proposal. Only one shipyard could have been able to handle that, that we were hopeful, and that would have been Kiewit in Marystown. We understood that they would have had to modify a lot of things. Myself and the premier of the day had discussions about what could be done. How do we keep the monies that we're going to invest in this in Newfoundland and Labrador and employ Newfoundlanders and Labradorians? We already knew they had the skill set because they had built the two previous ferries, the *Hazel McIsaac* and the sister ships down in Marystown and we were quite pleased with them.

They were one-fifth, one-quarter of the size of the ones we were doing, but we wanted to say they already have the expertise. The difference is the vast size of these. What we

wanted to make in Newfoundland and Labrador now, we wanted to ensure that Fogo Island, as a booming community, as investments that we've seen from a tourism point of view, the fishing industry out there, we wanted to have an adequate vessel that could handle the transportation needs but also could handle the challenges that we have with our climate here because these are ice-based bays and ports, so we wanted something that was ice class.

To do that and for Kiewit to be able to do that, they had to have modifications. We even discussed and talked about investing, maybe we would have become an equity investor with Kiewit in Marystown, particularly. We were talking millions and millions of dollars we wanted to invest because we saw the value then, being proactive, about how, if we increased a Syncrolift down there, that would be beneficial to being able to build this and did other modifications to the port area, that we would create hundreds of jobs. That we would now make that a port so that it could also bid on other vessels maintenance or particularly the building of larger vessels as part of the process. It was an ice-free port; chance to do it.

We had discussions; we made offers. Unfortunately, the owners of the shipyard at the time were doing very well with supplying and doing maintenance for the offshore, rigs and that would come in and do that, that they didn't feel the timing was right to modify their shipyard, to change that, maybe shut it down for a period of time, to go into business with us to build those two ships, which would have been fairly lucrative. We're talking a \$100-million contract there. But then to see if they wanted to go to the market to see if they could generate some extra work at the time.

Now, I will tell you this, there were rumors – big rumours – that would have, had it worked out, came to fruition, that there was a multi-billion dollar frigate deal the federal government were putting out and that the

Irving company had been contracted to do a substantial amount of that, of which they could not complete all of it in their shipyard in Nova Scotia and in New Brunswick and wanted to move somewhere else.

My understanding is that they would have welcomed bringing a fair bit of work to the shipyard once it was modified and once the ships for us were built, so that the expertise had been modified or proven again at a larger scale. We still know the frigate deal is not complete; they're still being worked on. I think it's a \$10-billion or \$12-billion deal that's still being modified. Imagine what that could've meant for the jobs and for Marystown and the Burin Peninsula and surrounding area had that gone through.

So we did everything possible that we could do to make that happen. Unfortunately, you can't force the private sector to do something, particularly if it's only one that would have the potential to do it. But we still needed these vessels. So then we went on a national level and on a national level, again, we had nobody interested. Do you know why? They were all built to the end result that they had so much work going on with this new frigate deal that they couldn't take on anymore deals and stuff that had to be done in a, certainly, timely fashion. So they didn't really show any interest, nobody did. Absolutely none.

Now, we're getting vessels that we have that are outdated. We've taken some out of commission. We've got two massive ferry service areas, perhaps the most influential ones when it comes to tourism: Bell Island on the Northeast Avalon and Fogo Island in Central Newfoundland and Labrador. They were flourishing communities when it came to promoting our tourism industry and big investments being made, particularly in Fogo but investments on Bell Island. Bell Island being the only commuter system that we have in Newfoundland and Labrador, 450 people a day are coming to St. John's and surrounding area, CBS. They're going to Holyrood. They work everywhere around

to provide services for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. They work in education. They work in health care. They work in industries, a very important part of it, what we were trying to do. So we need to supply that.

So then we went internationally. Internationally, we had a company approach us, came and said we would like to bid on it, but before we want to bid on it, we've never built for North American markets. We've built all over the world and we checked them out and one of the largest shipbuilding contractors in the world, Damen Shipyards.

Arnout Damen, himself a former captain, former marine, architect, a former military person in his late 70s came to Newfoundland, flew to Newfoundland, unbeknownst to anybody, got on the Bell Island ferry and went back and forth six times to get an understanding. He then asked his officials to get all the weather charts for the last 30 years, all the ice flow charts for the last 30 years and the amount of traffic for the last 30 years, to do it.

He then went back to Denmark. This is a Danish company. Contrary to the misconception about Romania, but I'll clarify all that, or trying to paint a picture that it's inferior when it came to the quality, this was a Danish company that owned shipyards all through Europe, were partners with Rolls-Royce, partners with Techsol out of Montreal, who are the top electronic company that supplies all the electronic equipment that goes in these ferries all over the world. They do \$5 billion or \$6 billion worth of building ships a year. Nineteen shipyards across the world. I think they have 26,000 or 27,000 employees – massive. Built up by one individual who was a marine architect and a captain with the Danish government at one point.

So, part of that, they bid on it. A couple of other international companies bid on it. I think it was five or six. As matter of fact, to be fair and open and transparent, we hired

a fairness evaluator. (Inaudible) was hired, Newfoundland and Labrador. It cost us \$50,000, but their job was to make sure that these companies had the five components we wanted: financial security, stability from an environmental and political point of view, the expertise to be able to do it, the proven track record, and be able to live by the timelines.

We looked at it. There were some Polish companies that bid on it who got screened out because they didn't have the financial ability to do it. There was a Chilean company that bid on it. Keep it in mind, we're looking for ice-class vessels, so you wanted to have jurisdictions that were at least familiar with it and built on it.

Anyway at the end of it, there were four companies that finally bid on it. There was an evaluation and it was done on all the things: their financial ability, their knowledge, their expertise, their timelines, their political stability and where they're going to build it and these type of things. When it went through the evaluation, I will tell you now that Damen were not the cheapest, nor were they most expensive, but in every other category they were the leaders. They had a proven track record. They wanted to go out of their way to try to get this contract by offering all the expertise, everything we wanted because they wanted for the first time to break into the North American market.

When they came and when we had discussions, I sent our officials over to meet with them. They travelled around their five or six European shipyards to find out where certain components would be done. I mean the thrusters are built by Rolls-Royce and the engines by other companies there, Porsche and all these. What was found is Romania had 5,200 employees in their plant and their plant was solely welding. They would build the hulls. They were the experts of the hulls. They had built everything. Every ship, every submarine, every plane, everything that the Russian military had had

for three decades was built in Romania in this shipyard, the largest around because it could weld. They were the experts in the world. That's what their expertise was and that's what they did.

When the hulls were built, in would come other components of Damen from England, Rolls-Royce, in would come somebody from Denmark, somebody from Norway. Techsol would come from Quebec and go over and do all the things. These were reputable. They were done, screened, assessed, done, contracts done. As a matter of fact so much so, that we negotiated that Newfoundland and Labrador would become the centre of excellence for Damen to start in North America. They wanted to go on and develop billion-dollar contracts in North America and it would be done here. They would put an influx of over \$3 million automatic to get it done, a training centre here, get it established – this would be their base. This would be their base here in Newfoundland and Labrador, what a great opportunity.

We're taking in a billion-dollar company, still owned by the original individual who had been to Newfoundland and Labrador, sent his top manager over here, then sent five of his managers over here that spent months here working and looking at it. At the end of it, we weighed it up said, \$100 million, when they're costing that, not quite sure if it was actually going to be beneficial financially to them, but they saw the value of breaking into the North American market.

If you can build for Newfoundland and Labrador, ice-class ports – you also have hurricanes. You have sea surges. You have all kinds of challenges. You're trying to park a boat or dock a boat in a small, confined area. You have passengers, you have freight, all the things that they wanted to show their expertise in, so they came and that was the plan. Great, I signed off on it. My predecessor signed off on it.

I got to accept the *Veteran* when it first came here. We did the sign-off, the contracts. They lived up to it. Just think of it, when was the last time, I say, anybody in Newfoundland and Labrador, at any level, private sector or public sector, but the public sector got a ferry on time, on budget, built to the exact spec that was outlined by our engineers – don't forget all the engineering, all the things that were done here were done by Newfoundland and Labrador companies, the design. This is what we wanted. We went to them and said this is what we want built.

They came back and said, okay, to build this, this is what we propose. You want an ice-class vessel, here's what the size of the engines you would need. Perfect, I got the privilege to go to Romania, to see – because again, maybe I'm skeptical of everybody else, if you're not informed and you're not knowledgeable about what's over there. But when I got in Romania I was flabbergasted when I got to see the advancement in technology, the advancement just in the hotels. I said this is not a backward country.

Then when I found out the history that they built everything that the Russians had had in a lot of cases, I said, we signed with the right company who then used their shipyard to do exactly what needed to be done, the welding and that. The preciseness and the timelines, we were getting weekly updates, videos and that, as they progressed.

When I got over to see the pride they take in it – let's think about it. When they launched a ship, what they do in Galati, Romania – it's a big ship port thing, like I said, over 5,000 people work in the shipyard. The schools close down. They shut the schools down. High schools, junior high, elementary, they all come to the shipyard. This is a major event. This tells you the pride that these people take in it.

No different than what Newfoundlanders and Labradorians used to do with the seal

hunt. The pride we took, we'd be down to the harbour, you know, the blessing of the fleet, people waiting for people to come in. I saw the same thing there and it reminded me as a young Newfoundlander and Labradorian going down with my grandfather to the harbour in the '60s to see this.

So I said I've got faith in these people. The professionalism, even the traditional stuff – it was ironic because I didn't know the tradition of seafaring that only a female can christen a ship. So fortunately enough for me, my deputy minister was a female, so she accompanied me over there because we were signing contracts. Plus we were meeting with the Ambassador of Canada for Romania over there and we met with Boeing and we met with a number of other companies over there that worked some operational deals with Newfoundland and Labrador on other things other than shipping or the purchasing of ships or building of ships.

What I saw was amazing. I came back with so much pride that we were going to do state of the art. They were on time. There was no deviating from the budget. There were no change orders that we see so often with companies that bid on stuff in Newfoundland and Labrador and take advantage of us. Sure enough, so then then when we came back, our engineers – like I say, our engineers – the companies in Newfoundland and Labrador and the officials in the department had to determine that with the size of these vessels that we have to do modifications to the docking. Fair enough.

Fogo and Change Islands were going to be the first to get the *Veteran*, was going to be the first to come here. So we went and looked at what had to be done, engineering spec, contracted local Newfoundland and Labrador companies to build it. Do you know what? Built on time. A little over our budget but that's probably the cultural issue here of, at the end of the day, we're

probably underbidding on certain things or not realizing the type or armor stone you have to put in play have to be a certain size. Whatever the case, built on time, ready.

I took possession of the *Veteran*; big ceremony down at the harbour front; mayors from all communities were there. There were bands there, 200 veterans were there, legionnaires, all this stuff. We signed off with Damen and myself and the premier took possession. After training, because there had to be at least a six to eight week training. Don't forget, these vessels were more advanced in anything than any Newfoundland and Labrador government employee who worked on our ferries had ever seen in their life.

So we sent engineers and captains over the Europe to be trained. We contracted the Marine Institute. They actually built the simulator based on that principle. I even had the privilege of getting up and operating the simulator to a point where we were navigating through icebergs and we're in 90-kilometre winds to see the technology and what this vessel could do just based on that and was amazed with it. So that's what happened there. The *Veteran* went into service. Best kind; no issue; done. Training had happened, but prior to that, government changed. Let's talk now. This government change. Let's back up again. July 1, 2015, I'm minister of Transportation and Works; July 1, Canada Day, we had awarded a company to do the wharf on Bell Island and one in Portugal Cove. Done.

The one on Bell Island had already been started by an East Coast company – two separate companies because here's where I thought we were a little bit smarter than the average bear. We said, if you get the same company, they've got to do two. They've only got so much resources, it's not going to happen. The timing won't work in time. So we hired one company to do the Bell Island wharf, which was the smaller version than the Portugal Cove-St. Philip's one. That's part of that. Two separate companies.

The company on Bell Island had started their part already. July 1, I went down to meet with the owner of the company. They were now mobilizing equipment. I had the mayor of Portugal Cove-St. Philip's, who is himself an engineer, I had my assistant deputy minister, who is an engineer of marine services, and we went through the whole process. We even made some changes to where they would locate equipment because we still needed parking while we were trying to facilitate the ferry service for the next period of time.

July 1: a seven-month contract is signed. Not a problem. It would be done in seven months. The ferry was due to come in March; eight weeks training, so late May would be when the *Legionnaire* would go into service. That was the plan. That was the process that would all work accordingly.

July 1 goes on; we're making progress. We're right on into October 29: election is called. Things still progress. Obviously, I'm like everybody else, we're into election mode. November 30: government changes. December 3: no progress. The company is no longer on the wharf doing work. I don't know.

The ministers were announced. The new minister was announced. I can't understand it. I'm trying to contact the owner saying: What's going on? Well, we're waiting on some direction. Direction?

The same company had a contract in Central Newfoundland to build a bridge, very important, because I contracted that very valuable bridge, the Bond Bridge, beautiful bridge out there now. I know my two colleagues who've been elected since then see the value for the thousands of people who travel that on a daily basis.

We contracted millions of dollars, but that wasn't an emergency necessity because the other bridge was still very viable. We just needed to replace it, make it bigger and make it safer for pedestrians, for all kinds of

other bigger pieces of equipment. We had a new site set out because I remember going out with my colleague from Exploits and his brother, at the time, was the Member there, we were doing the announcement, meeting with all the mayors and that, everybody was very pleased and ready to go.

So what happens then? The contract that was guaranteed seven months, it wasn't that big of a job, but to make a job work, if you've got 20 people hired to do it, you need 20 people on site to make it work. It went on for weeks and then it got into a month. I would go down on a daily basis. I would phone the contractor who was telling me, no, they've been now told to prioritize the project in Central, as part of it.

So, now, workers are moving to Central Newfoundland, nothing is happening on Bell Island. Then there was a dispute with the government – don't forget now, this is a Liberal administration now and the minister is from Central Newfoundland and Labrador, who no longer is a minister or a Member of the House of Assembly, but he was from Central Newfoundland and Labrador.

So all of sudden there's no movement. Now we're into two months. Now we're into five months. Now we're into a dispute over something else that wanted to happen, that nobody in the department would deal with. I talked to some civil servants who, again, not that they were loyal to me but respected me enough to tell me what was really happening – this was before we could go heavy into ATIPP information and all this at the time – and was told again, this is being delayed. The priority is to do that out there, to get that done. I said, well, that's not a priority from a transportation link, it's a necessity and a valued asset, but that doesn't stop what's travelling out there now. It's not a safety issue.

It went on. The end result: 23 months it took them to build a seven-month contract that was ready to go, as part of this process,

plus \$4.2 million more. They couldn't even – I had to intercede with a contractor to get this person to bring a barge there to do something.

Let's just talk about the quality of the leadership at the time. Let's just talk about wasting taxpayers' money. Let's talk about frustration for our communities, as part of this process that went on through there. Let's just talk about the Auditor General's report, who will talk about, and rightfully so, some checks and balances during the construction process should have been followed better. You're right. One of my predecessors and probably even myself, at the time, should have made sure that all the i's were dotted and all the t's were crossed in short.

But, again, we were working on a process in another country because we could not get anybody in this country or in this province to be able to do it, so there were going to be some challenges. But the end result, and the Auditor General said it, do you know what we got? On budget, on time, exactly what we paid for and spec'd out. One of the few times Newfoundland and Labrador didn't get taken advantage of by a contractor outside of this great province of ours – one of the few times. So what a wonderful coo. I give credit totally to my staff, at the time, and the bureaucrats here from the Department of Finance, Environment, everybody.

Then all of a sudden in 2015, early 2016, I gets this magazine sent to me, it's called international *MarineLog*. Do you know what it notes? If you ever want to go in and say what were the top 10 passenger vessels built in the world out of the 197 that were built – top 10 in the world were built and they went through. The 10th one was an American one built for Maine ferry services. Another one was a German one and there was an Italian one. There was a Korean one.

Do you know what the best passenger ferry built in the world in 2015 was? *MV Veteran*, the best –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: – environmentally, cost-effectiveness, ice class, the best. You can look that up. If you want to pick up an article and present it to the House, that is one you can do as part of the process. So talk about us doing something that was beneficial to the taxpayers and provided.

Now, has there been some issues here in Newfoundland and Labrador, has the media and that played up some of the negativity? Yes, because all they're playing up is the information they've been given. They've been given it by that administration about bad ferries and breakdowns. Oh, they've been down, but you have to clarify what breakdown means to not being operational and why.

Three things: first, I was adamant when I left – when the new minister took over, and I give credit, he came to me and he said, would you be adverse to giving me some advice and for me to pick your brain. I said: my friend, to help the taxpayers, but particularly I has a selfish interest here, to help my community that was getting one of the vessels, I will give you the best advice in the world that I can give you to make sure that vessel gets up and running.

He did ask me a few questions and I gave him certain things. But I was adamant, one of the recommendations when I left – I left 11 recommendations on the day I walked out of there as minister, the day that the minister of the time, then, first new minister for the Liberal administration got sworn in, I left a number of recommendations. One of them was: Do not put either one of these vessels in the water, operational, for at least six to eight weeks of training. That means training every one of the professionals on that from the guy who ties up the rope, to the chief engineer, to the mate, to the

communications director, to the purser. All of them have to be trained; this is a different vessel.

The electronics on this and sensors were second to none. This was space age when it came to what we were doing. In Newfoundland, we were dealing with wheels and pulleys and ropes. In this, it was about hydraulics, about electronics, about sensors; totally, totally advanced, which was great. Newfoundland and Labrador should equally have access to advanced technology and the use of it from a safety point of view, from an aesthetic point of view and from an engagement point of view, so much so that on both of those ferries we had a play area for kids with little pretend punts, boat, that they could get in, hear it and on both parts of the wall were murals of the specific communities that they were in. Fogo Island - Change Islands had theirs on the ferry; Bell Island had its perspective there from a tourism point of view. What an engaging vessel.

The Bell Island one didn't get to run for over two years, which cost millions of dollars extra, havoc on the people travelling back and forth, issues with crewing and that. The problem was government said, no, no, no, six to eight weeks, we can't do that, too long. Let's give two weeks of training with no accountability, no checks and balance to make sure that the people who were being trained were actually knowledgeable.

I'll tell a story, one better. Finally, when it came to a head, Damen, who have, don't forget – this is how good this company is – a two-year guarantee warranty; if anything went wrong, a lightbulb burnt out, in two years they were fixing it. They were flying people over here. They wanted to set up the centre of excellence, so they were trying to train. They had partnered with a company here to get this going and all this stuff. They were willing to do it.

At one point, there were so many confusing issues that they were getting nailed – that

the boat wasn't efficient and they weren't good – they sent over their chief engineer for a year. He lived at the Delta for a year. Every day he would get on the *Legionnaire* and different trained officers and engineers and go through everything. Explain, teach and teach and teach. He was a monster of a man. About 6'8, about 310 pounds – he was a monster.

At the end of it, after a year, I had asked him: What do you think? He said the problem that's here is the government hasn't instilled that training has to be a priority. Some of these people still do not know how to operate this vessel and know what it means, so you're going to have challenges. We had a challenge only a few weeks after in Fogo. One of the chief engineers, for whatever reason, inadvertently put, I think, 15 or 20 gallons of diesel fuel in something that's supposed to be hydraulic fuel. Do you know what that meant? A \$650,000 engine blown.

Then government chastised Damen saying, well, they wouldn't honour their warranty. He said how could we honour a warranty if, at the end of the day, you didn't take the training you had? The individual argument was: well, the identifying valves weren't big enough to be able to read. Well, they were because the same person had changed it 23 times prior to that.

So it was pass the buck, blame the big bad Romanians, which were the Danish, who had done an exceptionally good job in building something for us who had then, at this point, signed what was it? A \$600-million deal with who? Oh, let me think: BC Ferries to build all their new ferries. Who else have they built ferries for? St. Pierre, the French government. The St. Pierre vessel is a Damen vessel. Oh, let me think. Irving. The two offshore vessels, Eastern Marine there, what are they? The two that go out to take Newfoundlanders and Labradorians out to Hibernia and out to all the other rigs here, who built them? Oh,

Damen. Who else? A \$6.4-billion contract with who? The military in the United States.

Do you know where all this could have been fashioned from? Newfoundland and Labrador. We could have been that. Do you know what was in it – and the Auditor General picked up on this and so did the Public Accounts – the centre of excellence got dismissed. I attended the hearings here when they were asked. I wasn't asked as a witness. Do you know why? Because at the end of the day, apparently, I had done what I was supposed to do.

Somebody dismissed doing this centre of excellence. That could have meant hundreds of jobs here, millions of dollars in tax revenues for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. This is what we were. This is the blame that we got from the administration. Don't get me wrong, there were a lot of mistakes made in my 40 years watching all the administrations up. But one of the few times that we took a risk in going with a company, because there was nobody else interested in it, that, to me, worked out better than anything else in the world.

I'll tell a story now. Anything can break. You can't control it. The *Veteran* was leaving to come over; it got to the Azores. All of a sudden we're tracking it and it turns around. I'm in Corner Brook at the time. At 3 in the morning I get a phone call from no other than the owner, Arnout Damen. He said: Mr. Brazil, I'll explain to you. We have a problem with the *Veteran*. I said: What? There are three engines in it. One of the engines are faulty. He said: We could bring it to St. John's. No, my engineers had then come back and said – my ADM – we bring it to St. John's; we'll fly over another engine and put it in there. He said: No, Sir, that's not how I operate. You bought a factory still-wrapped vessel. I'm bringing it back to there. Don't forget, these engines didn't come from them; they were built in England by Rolls-Royce. I will get a new engine; put

that in yours and have that back. Within three weeks you'll be back sailing it.

Now, it didn't make any difference to us because our timelines were still perfect. That's what they did. So this is the credibility of a company to say at the end of the day you bought a clean, out of the factory, ready to go. If it's not ready to go, we're going to rectify that. And then came back and said: Tell you what we're going to do. Any delay in anything, we're going to extend the warranty. And they extended the warranty.

So let's go back to what the Auditor General found. No due diligence, other than – I give credit. If I had been still around I would have chastised some of my Members for not making sure all the forms were dotted and that about the contract. The good, positive thing here, maybe Damen could have taken advantage of us because there wasn't a certain paper trail there or duty to document. That's where a lot of this came from. Duty to document wasn't being done in the manner that it should have been. Not that there was anything askew but there was – either rushed it, people didn't have the resources at the time. One of the identifying things that was said by one of the assistant deputy ministers was – after my time, but I was still responsible for part of it – had we had the resources of another individual that we could have sent over there to solely do that, we could have taken care of that. It would have been a great thing.

We have since learned that, as you know in this House of Assembly, we've supported legislation that would be duty to document, if it's done right on the manner and you have the resources. That was one of the issues that we had challenged this administration about. If you're going to put that policy in place you need to have the resources to do it, so no less. We did that as part of the process.

So at the end of the day we got vessels that were on time, on budget and built. The

delays were solely due to mismanagement by that administration and a former minister who prioritized something else that were a detriment to the people of this province and cost the taxpayers millions of dollars. Then you wonder why people don't give credit.

Do you think the contractors don't talk to each other and understand how incompetent certain things are? It starts with leadership. What happened there was a lack of leadership at the time from a minister and the premier of the day directing what was happening. But then to try to deflect and blame some other process? No, no, we've got great vessels still operating to this day. You don't hear a peep about what's happening now with the *Veteran* or *Legionnaire*, who are putting hundreds of thousands of people a year, coming and going, back and forth, as part of this process. So that's one thing I wanted to clarify on that, as part of that.

One last point before I probably move to adjourn in a little bit. I want to clarify also what the minister said about my comments about the federal leader of the Conservatives. Oh yes, I said, we're cousins. We're very distant cousins. I would like for us to be better cousins, but under our auspices, under something that benefits – now let me read the article he's quoting.

AN HON. MEMBER: CBC.ca

D. BRAZIL: Yes, CBC. Did anyone see that: "Brazil reiterated his intention to forge a stronger relationship between the provincial PC party and the federal Conservative" party if it benefits the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: "... he'll be meeting with federal Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre in the coming weeks."

Quote: "What I'm going to reflect is the policies that we feel are beneficial to

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians,' he said. 'I would hope that the federal Conservative Party develop policies that are indeed a benefactor to the people here. If they're not, well then, we're going to have a disagreement on how that should play out.'"

I drew the line in the sand.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: That's leadership.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: That speaks volumes. That's how you deal with Ottawa.

I will tell you, I've had some frank personal discussions with Pierre Poilievre, and what he's saying to me will be reflective of what benefits the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It includes the offshore.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: It includes joint management and includes the economic viability here. It includes transfer payments that are viable here and equalization to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. So I just want to clarify that here, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

D. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, on that note, with the leave of the Government House Leader, I move that the House recess for this evening.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Order, please!

This House now stands in recess until 6:25 p.m.