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*Speaker: Honourable Ross Wiseman, MHA*

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The House met at 2:00 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

Today I want to welcome to the galleries Mr. Walter Lawlor. Mr. Lawlor is a recent recipient of the Queen's Jubilee Medal. Welcome, Sir, to our gallery.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I also want to welcome Mayor Grant Burry of New-Wes-Valley, together with Councillor Winston Perry and Citizens Committee Chair Reverend George Kean.

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

#### Statements by Members

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today we will have members' statements from the Member for the District of Conception Bay South, by leave; the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi; the Member for the District of The Straits – White Bay North; the Member for the District of St. John's East; the Member for the District of St. John's South; and the Member for the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

The Member for the District of Conception Bay South, by leave.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Does the member have leave?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** By leave.

**MR. SPEAKER:** By leave.

**MR. FRENCH:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform my hon. colleagues about an exceptional individual from my district who was named Conception Bay South 2013 Citizen of the Year. Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of attending the Conception Bay South Lions Club

Charter Night where an award was presented to Ms Mary Holloway.

Mary has volunteered her services to a variety of social programs to assist her community. She is currently a member of the Special Olympics Newfoundland Board of Directors, a long-time volunteer coach with the Special Olympics since 1999, cancer volunteer driver, and a volunteer with the Retired Teachers Association.

She has also volunteered with the provincial summer games in Conception Bay South, as well as various church and community organizations. Mary is a well-known former teacher in CBS. Her methods of teaching and vibrant personality are fondly remembered by many of her former students. Mary has many valuable skills that continue to drive her desire to promote Special Olympics programming in our Province.

I congratulate Mary for her commitment and achievements and ask all hon. members to join with me in recognizing her contribution to her community and to her Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

I stand today to recognize a wonderful initiative at Virginia Park Elementary School.

Virginia Park, with their continued commitment to literacy development, has implemented a preschool literacy program that focuses on the academic and social development of the child. The eight-week Launch into Literacy Program, open to all the Kinderstart children in the Virginia Park community, has been a huge success. I congratulate Mr. Rodney Drover and his staff on this great initiative.

The focus on literacy at this school is reflected in another recent accomplishment at Virginia Park Elementary, a program named Storytime. Grade 3 student Kyle Budgell has written a delightful story called *Whoops and Wahoo*, which was initially shared with the school body. Kyle is now a published writer. His piece is an on-line digital story which can be checked out at the FlipSnack site.

This story is an example of the creativity and imagination that are alive in our students and what can happen when there is support for them in our school system.

I encourage the hon. members to search the Web site FlipSnack and take a few minutes to explore the imagination of one of our very creative Grade 3 students.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

Credit unions are flexible and recognize the wealth of creativity, ingenuity, and knowledge in our rural region to advance development in our economy.

On behalf of the District of The Straits – White Bay North, it is truly a pleasure to share in the success of the Eagle River Credit Union with a branch located in St. Anthony and many more throughout Labrador and the Great Northern Peninsula. Credit unions help communities advance in ways that are impossible with the limited policies of the big five financial institutions.

With the closure of the only commercial bank on the South Coast of Labrador, the people were left scrambling. It was through co-operation with the Labrador Fisherman's Union Shrimp

Company and commitment from the community members that Eagle River Credit Union was born.

The United Nations declared 2012 the International Year of the Co-operative. It is exciting to see this member organization which upon amalgamation will have over 7,500 members, fifty employees, and assets of \$115 million.

The Eagle River Credit Union is a model many other communities could replicate. I am proud to say, pending membership approval; I will be one of the newest owners.

To all those involved, Bravo!

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

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

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

I rise today to honour an outstanding volunteer.

Walter Lawlor was nominated for the Queen's Jubilee Medal by the Parkinson Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, and presented with that distinction at the society's 2012 Christmas social.

A noted amateur athlete, Walter used to run the Tely 10, and continues his training even in the face of Parkinson's disease. The owners of the gym he trains at saw the benefits of exercise for people with Parkinson's, and impressed with Walter's determination, instituted Train the Trainer, a fundraiser which this year brought in \$6,000 for the Parkinson society.

Walter is more than aware of the value of fundraising. In addition to his annual commitment to Train the Trainer, for several years he was the official Coin Box Collector, collecting all the money from dozens of coin boxes within the City of St. John's.

Walter writes *Surfing for a Cure*, a summary current research into Parkinson's. It is one of

the most popular features in *The Prattle*, the magazine of the Newfoundland and Labrador Parkinson's community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in saluting the irrepressible spirit of Mr. Walter Lawlor, Queen's Jubilee Medal recipient.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I would like to recognize the volunteers at The Eric St./McKay St. Community Centre which has been bringing the community together through the organization of many events and programs to area residents.

Brenda Denief and Myrtle Mitchell are amongst the volunteers. These two individuals were recognized by the City of St. John's in 2011 with the volunteer of the year award. Myrtle was again recognized by Vibrant Communities for her volunteer efforts in 2012.

Some of the events that the community centre and its volunteers have offered which create a greater community spirit and create a much better neighbourhood for residents are the annual events to celebrate Canada Day, Christmas, and Easter. They have also held annual neighbourhood cleanups in July, and they host a weekly drop-in for tea, amongst other events. They have an annual campaign to provide back-to-school supplies for area children.

The community centre has hosted healthy cooking classes and has exercise equipment available for residents to use. They also host regular bingo and card games. This is truly a community centre and is a fine example of how the work of volunteers can help build strong and healthy neighbourhoods.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I rise today to recognize and congratulate Ms Hayley Flynn of Forteau, Labrador. She was recently presented with the Rumbolt Inspiration & Education Award for perseverance at school despite many adverse events in her life.

Hayley is the daughter of Ms Norma Flynn and the late Todd Saulter. She lost her dad in a tragic accident as an infant and was diagnosed with leukemia as a toddler. She then lost the only father figure in her life, her grandfather. Through her battle with cancer and the extreme grief of losing those you love around you, Hayley completed her kindergarten year at home because of a weak immune system, and then after her last treatment went on to return to public school.

She is now a very active and happy teenager. She participates in fundraising work for children's charities and organizes events such as the Janeway Telethon, Children's Wish Foundation, and especially the Terry Fox Foundation. She is also active in her local church.

Hayley has always had a positive attitude and a great sense of humour. She studies hard and she is an inspiration to her classmates and her friends. She is also a role model, not only to her peers, but to her community.

I ask members to join me in paying tribute to a remarkable young woman, and congratulating her, Ms Hayley Flynn of Labrador Straits Academy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### Statements by Ministers

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Innovation, Business and Rural Development.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to highlight a \$6.3 million investment in Budget 2013 for rural broadband.

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

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** This investment, over two years, will further our work with partners to advance the Rural Broadband Initiative and improve the Province's telecommunications environment.

Including the funding in Budget 2013, the provincial government's investment in broadband infrastructure, mostly in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, is now over \$35 million since 2003 and has, to date, leveraged more than \$116 million from other sources for a total investment of \$151 million.

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

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Strategic investments of public funds and innovative partnerships with both wireless and wired providers have been the cornerstone to enhancing innovation and telecommunication in all regions of the Province. This includes a partnership with an exciting new local company, Great Northern Wireless, which will be delivering service to communities in the Province.

Through another partnership with Burgeo Broadcasting Systems and Ramea Communications, the provincial government has successfully delivered upgraded services to Ramea, Grey River, and François. Samuel Fiander, President of Ramea Broadcasting Company, has said: "Our combined efforts have established a high-speed Internet system and our subscribers are delighted with the outcome."

Success in rural broadband using a variety of technologies, such as fibre, wireless, and

satellite, has indeed been impressive. With the announcement earlier this month of a major investment in Phase II of the Rural Broadband Initiative, access to high-speed Internet will increase to more than 500 communities throughout the Province, up from just 114 communities in 2003. This will bring broadband access to 89 per cent of the Island and 95 per cent of Labrador.

We are also working with Nalcor to look at solutions for Labrador's South Coast and other areas of the Province, using fibre that will accompany the Muskrat Falls Transmission Line. Building our fibre network enables us to capitalize on other opportunities, in terms of the business community; for example, our work in building the trans-gulf fibre optic network led to TELE Greenland selecting Newfoundland and Labrador as its gateway connection to North America's communications industry.

Mr. Speaker, broadband access is a key component of the Province's innovation infrastructure, and we are committed to bringing that access to previously unserved rural communities and regions. Economic growth, diversification, and sustainability are tied directly to effective telecommunications. Our commitment remains strong as we drive rural economic development in our great Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, this really is a good-news story from the government.

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

**MR. BENNETT:** If it was anything but a good-news story, obviously I would say otherwise, but this is definitely a good-news story, having pressed government for a couple of years now to reach out further with the broadband initiative. This is a good-news story.

Part of the role of Opposition is, when the government gets something right, to push them even further and faster. That is what I would like to do here. I would like to, Mr. Speaker, let the minister know that there has been such uptake in these small companies that these small companies cannot handle the work. They have created an instant backlog of so many people who want to do business with these small companies, one of whom has a partner in my district.

I would really encourage the minister to press on with the initiative of the small companies and get it to go further and faster. Other than that I would say: good job, Minister.

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

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

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

I too would like to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

A century ago we were leaders in telecommunications with Marconi, but today we lag behind the technological times. The first RBI, with \$7 million of taxpayer money –

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

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** – provided just twenty communities with service. The recent round included wireless, more than double the communities at a fraction of the cost.

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

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Hundreds of cities and rural regions across North America are adapting wireless service to provide open access to use Wi-Fi in response to cellular dead zones and community broadband Internet. This

infrastructure is cost-effective and should be owned by communities as revenue generators when corporations claim no business case. Let us be more innovative.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the minister of Advanced Education and Skills and Acting Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to acknowledge the Inuit Women's Gathering, a successful event made possible by the inspiring efforts of Inuit women working to support their advancement. From February 24 to 27, approximately thirty-five Inuit women attended the Inuit Women's Gathering held in Nain, which included women from five Inuit communities within Nunatsiavut, as well as Upper Lake Melville and other parts of the Province.

The meeting provided an opportunity for Inuit women to discuss and learn about the importance of healthy relationships, physical and mental wellness, how to run for elected office, and how to access victim services. Attendees also identified priority areas important to advancing the status of Inuit women.

During the gathering, attendees heard from extraordinary Inuit women, including Frances Williams, the first female Inuit president of the Labrador Inuit Association; Patricia Kemuksigak, the current Minister of Health and Social Development and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women with Nunatsiavut Government; Charlotte Wolfrey, the AngajukKâk for Rigolet; and Aaju Peter, a lawyer and sealskin clothing designer. These female Inuit leaders shared personal experiences with the group as well as their expertise on balancing work and family responsibilities.

I would like to congratulate Inuit elder Andrea Flowers on winning the first Inuit Woman of the

Year Award, which was presented at the meeting by the Nunatsiavut Government's Status of Women office. Mrs. Flowers, also known as Aunt Joy, is a well-respected elder of Hopedale and has played a key role in the preservation of Inuit culture and tradition.

Through Budget 2013, our government will continue to support Inuit women through our Inuit Women's Capacity Building Project, which will also allow additional workshops for Inuit women to be developed and held in Nunatsiavut. In addition to this, a Facebook page called Knowledge is Empowerment provides information on programs and services, as well as tips on personal development skills and has proven to be an effective tool.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Inuit women of Nunatsiavut and the Nunatsiavut Government on a success conference.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I am certainly pleased today to stand and to share in the acknowledgment of the Inuit Women's Conference that was held in Nain in February and to know that it was indeed a success.

Any time that you can bring together volunteers in communities who are reaching out and supporting others in their community, any time you can bring them together to share their experiences, their successes and their challenges as women and as leaders in their community, it is very important.

Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago my colleague for Torngat Mountains did congratulate Andrea Flowers, or as she is commonly known by local people as Aunt Joy, on receiving the Inuit Woman of the Year Award from the Nunatsiavut Government's Status of Women.

I think it is worth acknowledging the fact that the Nunatsiavut Government has established this award. It certainly shows that they have created it not only to recognize the work of Inuit women in their communities, but also to recognize the challenges that many of these women face while they are delivering their services in their communities. It is not easy.

Oftentimes, in areas of this Province, where you have paid people who are answering suicide hotlines or on the front lines of dealing with domestic disputes and family violence in homes and throughout the community, people are being paid. In a lot of these small communities, these volunteers are doing that every single day and it is not easy; it is very challenging. It provides a great deal of stress in their own lives and in their own family's lives to be able to carry out those responsibilities.

Any time that they can come together, they can share their ideas, they can support each other, it makes their network stronger, it makes the services that they provide in these communities better, and therefore all people can benefit.

I do hope, Mr. Speaker, that the Inuit Women's Capacity Building Project that was announced in the Budget yesterday will go a long way to benefiting the Inuit women, the Inuit families, and the Inuit people in Northern Labrador. The success of that program will certainly mean the success for a lot of people in those communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I would like to thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. I would like to congratulate the Inuit women, President Sarah Leo, and the Nunatsiavut Government for organizing such an important and worthy event. Congratulations, too, to all the participants and

to Andrea Flowers on being the first recipient of the Inuit Woman of the Year Award.

Inuit women are taking leadership in designing how their communities develop. I would like to point out that the Nunatsiavut Government recently released their housing strategy, something this government could well learn from.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I would like us all to join in saying bravo to Aunt Joy.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

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

Yesterday, government brought down a terrible Budget with over 1,000 job cuts and over half a billion dollar deficit, a deficit that just forty-two days ago was just \$1.6 billion.

I ask the Premier: How could you miss \$1 billion in just a few days?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we are very pleased with the Budget that we delivered yesterday –

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

**PREMIER DUNDERDALE:** – a responsible Budget that is built on three pillars: efficient government and efficient management, protection of vital programs, and a pathway to a sustainable future. That is what good governance is all about and that is what this government is all about.

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

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

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

Well, it is clear this government has no idea how to accurately budget. They missed 8 million barrels of oil. Mr. Speaker, it can only be one of two things: it was either deliberate or it was poor management.

So I ask the Premier: What is it? How did you miss the 8 million barrels of oil?

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

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

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

We receive oil production projections from the C-NLOPB upon whom we have to rely for these numbers in January and June of each year. In January of this year, Mr. Speaker, numbers came in, and as a result of the way the numbers were framed, there appeared to be an anomaly there. Officials in the Department of Finance started digging into that. The C-NLOPB went back and looked at it. That is how we found the 8 million barrels of oil.

What it was, was due diligence, Mr. Speaker. It was in fact great work on the part of the officials in the Department of Finance. They deserve credit for finding 8 million barrels of oil, which contributed another \$265 million to our economy.

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

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

**MR. BALL:** The issue that I am talking about is the accuracy of the Budget. We should not have missed that in the beginning, I say, Mr. Speaker.



Mr. Speaker, as recently as this morning people were given notice that they no longer have a job and we know there are more to come, people with families, people with mortgages, and people with bills to pay.

I ask the Premier: Is this really the respectful way to treat people?

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

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

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

It is indeed unfortunate, the situation in which we find ourselves. Unfortunately, from our perspective and from the Province's perspective, our expenditures had outgrown our revenues, Mr. Speaker, so we had to make choices. We listened to the people of this Province in the pre-Budget consultations. Health care and education, Mr. Speaker, were priorities in which they would not, and did not want to tolerate any reduction in services.

So, we made those our priorities during the Budget. Unfortunately, that does result in layoffs, Mr. Speaker. Again, there will be 485 people laid off in the core public service and approximately 450 people in agencies, boards and commissions for a total of 935 people.

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

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

**MR. BALL:** Mr. Speaker, what I am talking about is the respectful way we treated people. There are people getting pink slips in their mailboxes. There are people this morning – their supervisors are being called in. They had no idea this was happening until they heard about it in the Budget yesterday. That is not a respectful and a professional way to treat people.

Mr. Speaker, government printed a glossy mail out here and it is called: Five Things You Need to Know about Budget 2013. Nowhere in this

mail out does it say 1,600 jobs have been cut, school boards are amalgamated, hiring freezes are continuing, services are reduced and the fees are going up.

I ask the Premier: Why are you presenting a very limited picture of what the Budget really is? Why did you deliberately leave out job cuts, service cuts, and looming deficits?

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

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

**MR. KENNEDY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I find it unfortunate that the Leader of the Official Opposition, whom I have respect for, would start misquoting numbers. He is talking about 1,600 layoffs. He knows better, or he should know better, Mr. Speaker.

I indicated there are 485 layoffs in the core public service, Mr. Speaker, 450 in agencies, boards and commissions. That is 935. It is not appropriate for the member opposite to be fear mongering and trying to incite fear in the people of this Province, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I am in no way fear mongering. When you add EAS employees who have been gone as a result of these Budget actions – as a matter of fact, many people in this Province are predicting it is much higher than that. Already today we are hearing about ABE workers, Adult Basic Education employees who may not even be included. I believe the numbers will be much higher than that.

Mr. Speaker, tucked away in the Budget under the Department of Finance is a \$90 million line item that last year was \$500,000 and nothing was spent.

I ask the Premier: Why have you increased the budget from \$500,000 to \$90 million? Where are you planning to spend this money?

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

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

**MR. KENNEDY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have no idea what the member opposite is talking about, but I will take the opportunity to talk about the previous question, Mr. Speaker. The deficits – we have been upfront with the people of this Province.

After becoming the Finance Minister on January 16, Mr. Speaker, I became aware that the deficit that was looming was much larger than we had earlier predicted. That is when we started doing all of the work, Mr. Speaker, in trying to identify what the real numbers were in relation to oil. We also, Mr. Speaker, started looking at other issues, such as mining taxes.

When you look at it all, what happened, Mr. Speaker, in a matter of a couple of months, through great work on the part of department officials, we managed to reduce the deficit by \$1 billion. Mr. Speaker, that is an enormous feat, and it is one which I would suggest they should be given credit for; however, the deficit is still \$560 million.

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

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

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

This is a government document, Newfoundland and Labrador is right on it. It is in the Department of Finance, page 3.7, and it is under Financial Assistance. It is very simple, last year \$500,000, page 3.7.

I ask the minister: This year it is \$90,500,000, clearly we must know where \$90 million is going to be spent in this Province?

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

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

**MR. KENNEDY:** Mr. Speaker, I am looking at the Estimates. I am assuming the member opposite is speaking about the Estimates. I do not see what he is talking about, so again I will take the opportunity to go back to his previous question, Mr. Speaker.

What has happened in this Budget process is during the pre-Budget consultation, which we carried on throughout the Province, we said to people you know there are going to be reductions. Where do you think or what should we do? What is most important to you, Mr. Speaker?

What is important to the people of this Province are health care and education, especially. I have been provided with the Loans, Advances and Investments and what I will say to the members opposite is that this is a good news story which will become clear in the upcoming weeks.

Thank you very much.

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

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

**MR. BENNETT:** Budget 2013 casts a dark shadow on education in this Province. The decision to collapse English language school boards into one centralized location will mean less of a voice for all communities.

I ask the minister: Was this cut based on a consultant's review, or was this another haphazard move by a desperate government?

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, there is a fact that we need to realize. There are 14,000 less

students in this Province now; 17 per cent less students than was there in 2004. Mr. Speaker, look at our commitment to education in this Budget: no cuts to class sizes.

The Premier was very adamant: no change to class caps; no change to special education. Inclusive education supports continue. Itinerant education supports continue, Mr. Speaker. No cuts – our commitment is strong and firm to the education system in this Province, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, unlike the minister, no one sees the destruction of school boards as a great step forward. Most see it as a backwards step.

The January 2013 Memorial University report on school governance across Canada concluded school boards are essential to maintaining a meaningful and sustainable public school system. That is why most jurisdictions have school boards.

I ask the minister: Why is he compromising our education just because his government has been so wasteful?

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, it came to a point where we took a look at it and said: we have a management structure here that has a number of CEOs and assistant directors; we felt it is better to use those monies in education. It is as simple as that. We want a very strong regional presence, Mr. Speaker, that will speak directly to education. The component of dealing with the HR and the corporate side of it is here in our regional offices, Mr. Speaker, clearly focused on what is most important in education, that being the performance of our students.

I would ask him to take a look at the list of commitments that we have made in his district, Mr. Speaker, to construction of new schools; across this Province, nine, and ten more in the planning –

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

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, Budget 2013 cut the College of the North Atlantic's role in delivering Adult Basic Education.

I ask the minister: How many college employees will lose their jobs as a result of this cut?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, any job losses in the college as a result of the removal of ABE have been captured in the numbers already put forward by the Minister of Finance. That analysis has been done.

Mr. Speaker, this is all about investing in the people of this Province and the fact that people have the skills that they need as they move forward to attach to the labour market. Mr. Speaker, we feel that ABE, along with some other programs, is necessary; this government is committed to making sure that the delivery of these programs is done in the most efficient and effective way possible.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday's Budget Speech assured cutting the ABE program at the college would be a smooth a

transition as possible and that job cuts would be done with respect.

I ask the minister: Do you consider it respectful that ABE staff at the college had to find out their jobs were gone by watching the Minister of Finance read the Budget on television?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills.

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, there are approximately 2,000 students in Newfoundland and Labrador in the ABE program, and more than half take their programming outside the College of the North Atlantic.

Mr. Speaker, in Newfoundland and Labrador, we are spending three times more per student in ABE than our Atlantic counterparts. We looked at that information; we know it is important to be able to provide ABE to the students of Newfoundland, and as I said, Mr. Speaker, we are committed to doing that in the most effective and efficient way possible.

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

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Mr. Speaker, Budget 2013 addresses a shortage of skilled workers in demand for the Muskrat Falls Project. The agreement between the Muskrat Falls Employers' Association and the Resource Development Trade Council clearly outlines hiring priorities given to Innu Aboriginal Labradorians. There are over 500 skilled workers in Labrador trained and ready for work, but they are being denied jobs in Muskrat Falls.

I ask the Premier: What are you doing to enforce the guidelines of the binding agreement to ensure that jobs are given to qualified Labradorians?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the Muskrat Falls Project was sanctioned in December. There were, in January, 369 workers on the site; 101 of those were Labradorians. Of those, fifty-four were from Aboriginal groups, 222 people were from the Island, and forty-six were people from outside of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, this project is going to ramp up. More and more people are going to be hired. There are going to be 3,100 people employed there at peak, and Nalcor and the government will monitor to make sure that the Impacts and Benefits Agreement – which gives priority to the Innu, and then secondly to other Labradorians, and then to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians – will be followed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Eight per cent, Mr. Speaker, and they are still not getting hired.

Mr. Speaker, I watched every member across this way stand up and promise jobs to Labradorians – including the Member for Labrador West, including the Member for Lake Melville – but it is not happening. Labradorians and trying to get work, but they are being refused.

I ask the Premier: Why are you ignoring the promises you made to Labrador?

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

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

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

**MR. MARSHALL:** Mr. Speaker, the Muskrat Falls Project is going to offer numerous advantages to the people of this Province over the next number of years, not the least of which is the fact that 3,100 people at peak are going to be employed there. That is going to be of benefit to many thousands of people in the Province, it is going to be of benefit to the labour unions in Newfoundland and Labrador, and I fail to see why anyone would be critical of that aspect.

We will ensure, Mr. Speaker, that the Impact and Benefits Agreement, which gives priority to the Innu and which gives priority to Aboriginals and priority to Labradorians, will be followed.

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

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

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

Talk is cheap and it does not pay the bills for Labrador families or Aboriginal families, I say to the minister.

There are 100 per cent Aboriginal-owned, local Labrador companies today that are trying to get work in Muskrat Falls, Mr. Speaker, and they are in the Lake Melville area. They are being overlooked by the major contractors at Muskrat Falls. Instead of subcontracting to these local companies, they are bringing the work in from outside.

I ask the government today: What is a commitment to Labradorian first and Aboriginal first hiring policies worth if you are not going to follow it when it comes to the major contractors at Muskrat Falls?

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

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

**MR. MARSHALL:** Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member and I can assure the people of the Province that it is being followed and that

the Innu themselves are monitoring that agreement. They are certainly going to ensure it is honoured by anybody, whether it is a direct contractor or whether it is a subcontractor. Nalcor will monitor it as well, as will this government. The commitment to the Aboriginal of Labrador will be kept, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

In an e-mail from Nalcor, they said: While we ensure that businesses have full and fair opportunity to participate in work for the project, decisions to undertake work internally or to subcontract are ultimately contractor decisions. These contractors are choosing to subcontract outside of the local area, outside of Aboriginal-based business, outside of Labradorian business, and bring people in to do the work.

Is that a fair commitment to the people of Labrador, I ask the government?

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

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

**MR. MARSHALL:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, the good news is because of the commitment of this government and because of the vision of this Premier, we have a project (inaudible) –

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

**MR. MARSHALL:** It is not only going to provide jobs, but is it going to give us energy security, it is going to enable us to export our surplus energy down to other markets, and it is going to provide us with a redundancy in the event of emergencies. Mr. Speaker, this is a wonderful project. Again, Nalcor, the Innu, and the Government of Newfoundland will monitor this agreement.

It is early days. The project was only sanctioned in December. There are going to be 3,100 people hired at peak and we are going to make sure, as I said and I have said numerous times in this House, that everyone involved will have to follow and honour this agreement. That is why it was made, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I want to challenge the government to put their words into action on the ground in Muskrat Falls. If you are going to commit to jobs, hiring, and subcontracting for Aboriginal-based companies and Labrador people, we are asking that you do it.

As of the end of January, over 80 per cent of the workforce was from outside of the Labrador and Aboriginal criteria of hiring. Today, we have companies that are out there that are not getting contracts and they are qualified to do them.

I ask you minister: Isn't it time to step in and ensure that your commitment to the people of Labrador is being met as a part of this Muskrat Falls Project?

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

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

**MR. MARSHALL:** Mr. Speaker, let us make one thing very clear. It was this Premier and it was this government that made the commitment to this project and has this project that is providing employment to the people of Labrador, that is protecting the interests of the Innu and protecting the people of Labrador. More money has been spent in Labrador by this government than any other government in the history of this Province.

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

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

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

Yesterday government delivered a devastating blow to workers, their families, and communities across this Province, especially in rural communities. Government is saying 985 jobs are gone, while the unions are tabulating approximately 2,000 jobs lost.

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

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

**MS MICHAEL:** Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: Does she have an analysis done on what the impact these job cuts will have on the Province's economy?

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

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

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

**MR. KENNEDY:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would not want the truth to get in the way of a good story from the NDP.

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

**MR. KENNEDY:** As we have indicated, Mr. Speaker, there are 485 layoffs in core government, 450 in agencies, boards and commissions, for a total of 935 job layoffs. Mr. Speaker, Dr. Locke was working with us closely as we went through this process. Dr. Locke suggested that the plan we put in place had to be such that it takes place over a period of time, that we not cause a significant shock to the economy.

We have reviewed this every step of the way. The way the layoffs were structured, Mr. Speaker, are ones that Dr. Locke, in his advice to us, felt could be sustained by our economy,

especially with a private sector that can offer jobs to a lot of these people.

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

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

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

Then I ask the minister: Since they have Dr. Locke on their payroll, will they please get him to do an economic analysis and make it public in this House?

Mr. Speaker, these government jobs are well-paying stable jobs that enhance the communities where the workers lived and worked. These communities are losing the services those jobs provided. They are also being hit with new and higher fees in a variety of areas.

I ask the Premier: Have they analyzed what this will mean for rural communities?

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

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

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

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

Contrary to what the member opposite states, it is unfortunate but most of the job layoffs are in the St. John's area. Out of the 485 jobs in core government, 300 of them are from the St. John's or Avalon region, Mr. Speaker. The rural areas of the Province have not been hit as hard.

The member opposite also raises a good point of the salaries and the good pay that is received in the public service. There is no question, Mr. Speaker, that is the case. In fact, I did the numbers at one point and it would surprise people, Mr. Speaker –

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

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

**MR. KENNEDY:** - that approximately 27 per cent of the public service makes more than \$70,000 a year. So there is no question that there will be an economic impact if people are laid off in those circumstances, but there is a private sector out there, Mr. Speaker, that are looking for workers. That does not take away from the devastating impact on people's lives.

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

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

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

This government is making thousands of its employees pay for its own ineptitude, and I am using the union's figures here. This fiscal crisis was caused by their own bad decisions.

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

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

**MS MICHAEL:** A fact that they refuse to admit, though they fool no one, Mr. Speaker.

Less than two months ago government was projecting a \$1.6 billion deficit. Yesterday, the minister says the deficit is now only \$563 million, a 70 per cent reduction from the previous month's projection.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: Is this wide discrepancy due to deliberate fear mongering by her government, or is government simply inept?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely incredible, the Leader of the NDP is absolutely devastated by the fact that the government is in a much better

position, that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are better off than was anticipated two months ago, Mr. Speaker. Shameful, shameful, Mr. Speaker!

I have only seen the same kind of devastation in this House recently, Mr. Speaker, where we announced a half-billion dollar hospital for Corner Brook. Mr. Speaker, I thought the Member for Bay of Islands was going to weep because it was news he did not want to hear.

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

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

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

I wish, Mr. Speaker, that –

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

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

The Leader of the Third Party.

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

I wish the Premier had been in our office today to see people walking in who received their pink slips and they got all of the phone calls that we have had from people in the ABE program, Mr. Speaker. The phones have not stopped in our office today.

Mr. Speaker, I find it astounding that a minister of this government can stand in the House and basically say he does not know why there is an extra \$90 million given to his department in a time of austerity. Look at line item 2105 of the Finance Estimates to be precise, which he has done.

I ask the Minister of Finance: Tell us now how they plan to spend that \$90 million? It is \$90 million, Mr. Speaker, and he should be accountable to this House for it.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we know exactly what the \$90 million is for and we will be making that announcement very shortly.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about ineptitude. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the NDP has introduced a concept and we have heard about ineptitude from the NDP before when we have talked about, like the replacement of Holyrood by burning shrimp shells or biomass without doing the research to learn that biomass would destroy the forests in Newfoundland and Labrador within two generations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the news yesterday we heard the Leader of the NDP talk about the 78 per cent taxes that are charged to oil companies in Norway. Mr. Speaker, you cannot formulate a tax regime based on Google. Go back, get the facts right, Mr. Speaker, before you poison the (inaudible).

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

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

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

**MR. KIRBY:** Mr. Speaker, today the Eastern School District advised autism itinerate teachers, educational psychologists, and speech language pathologists that they would be losing their jobs. The Minister of Education has also approved a plan to change the teacher allocation formula so that he can cut even more positions in schools. Rural education and special education are already under strain across the Province.

Why is the minister intent on making matters even worse?

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



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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, I am not aware, and I asked before I came to the House if – because I had heard this through a Tweet that the member had put out. The CEOs are not aware and have not made contact, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member cannot handle the fact as what came out in this Budget. No changes to class caps, Mr. Speaker, one of the best funded educational systems in this country.

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** The best student-teacher ratio, Mr. Speaker, in this country. We stand to our commitment to education in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

**MR. KIRBY:** Now, Mr. Speaker, we already know that the Minister of Education does not understand the difference between teaching on Fogo and teaching in downtown St. John's, but he should understand that a cut is a cut.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the 2013 Budget proposes to cut tens of millions of dollars in funding from an already strained education system.

How can the Minister of Education say he is improving the quality of education when he is cutting school boards, he is cutting services to students with special education needs, he is cutting teachers, and he is cutting back on learning resources? How can he say that?

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

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Let us get some facts right, Mr. Speaker. I taught. I taught in Cartwright, Labrador. I taught in Boat Harbour on the Burin Peninsula. I taught in Jacques Fontaine on the Burin Peninsula. So I do know a little bit of the difference about teaching in rural and urban, Mr. Speaker.

Let me give the member some facts, Mr. Speaker: no cuts to class caps. Despite his going through the Estimates book yesterday and tweeting something that was wrong, there is no cut to special education services, there is no cut to guidance services, and there are no cuts to itinerant teachers – Mr. Speaker, commitment to education in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

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

Still no reports from three regional health authority health care management reviews; the Eastern Health review alone targeted the elimination of 450 FTEs. Yesterday's Budget stated 192 additional layoffs in the regional health authorities with up to 150 of them managers. Does this minister not understand the impact that these cuts will have on patient care?

I ask the minister: Will there be clinical management positions cut, and where are these cuts going to be made?

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to get this right. I believe what I am hearing from the other side is that she does not want management cuts, she wants cuts on the front line. Well, this government, Mr. Speaker, does not want that. We have committed to no cuts on the front line. We have put in \$2.9 billion in health care.

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

**MS SULLIVAN:** Mr. Speaker, I hear the Member for the Bay of Islands over there, the same member who does not want the half-billion dollar hospital over there, obviously still upset by the half-billion hospital over there, but we are committed to putting a hospital in Corner Brook, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MS ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, the Family Violence Intervention Court is a crucial program for both victims of family violence and the legal system dealing with these issues. This morning I heard of layoffs from the court, including the court liaison officer, and with more to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Is it efficient to dismantle a successful and worthwhile program? Why is he dismantling the Family Violence Intervention Court?

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

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

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

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

As the minister and Premier have been very clear upon here, this Budget is about investing in the future of the Province. Unfortunately, we are in times where we have to take a look at how we deliver our services and our programs. In the Department of Justice we have core mandates, Mr. Speaker, to focus on policing and providing

safe communities, to prosecuting criminals who are breaking the law, and providing correctional services to house those criminals. That is the core mandate we are focused on.

Outside of that, we have other ancillary services that we provide to support people of the Province. From time to time, we reflect upon whether those services are meeting the objectives or whether we want to adjust the course. Right now we are adjusting the course in Justice.

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

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

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

#### Tabling of Documents

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

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

In accordance with paragraph 15(5)(b) of the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act, I give notice of the tabling of the draft amendments to the Members' Resources and Allowances Rules before the Management Commission of the House of Assembly on March 20, 2013.

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

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

The Speaker is on his feet.

I am also tabling those proposed rules and amendments. I wish to inform members that those rules and amendments are now posted on the House of Assembly's Web site.

I just want to read into the record some of the comments or some of the changes being made in the document that is being tabled today.

In accordance with the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act, I am pleased to table amendments to the Members' Resources and Allowance Rules, subordinate legislation to the act. The rule amendments arise from recommendations made by the 2012 Members' Compensation Review Committee, which were approved by the House of Assembly Management Commission on March 20, 2013, and from Budget decisions made by the Management Commission during the pre-Budget process of the House of Assembly.

The amendments include: a 20 per cent reduction in the inter-constituency allowance provided to each district to enable members to carry out his or her responsibility to the constituents in the district; a 20 per cent reduction from \$15,000 annually to \$12,000 annually in the office operation and supply allocation provided to each member; the removal of the \$7,000 cap for constituency offices located outside the Confederation Building.

This amendment has the effect of allowing the House to budget for a lesser overall amount for those expenditures, because the number of each constituency offices is relatively small; however, under the existing regime, the budget amount was required to be \$7,000 times forty-eight members, despite the fact that most members did not use the total allocation.

The \$750 short-term accommodation rental previously available for members for meetings from within their constituency has been eliminated. Members will be able to claim amounts for short-term accommodations within their districts under the \$3,000 constituency allowance allocation.

Members from seven districts outside the capital region can now choose to return home each night that the House is sitting rather than be required to spend a night in a hotel. This would allow a claim for transportation rather than for daily per diems and hotel costs for those members.

An adjustment in the helicopter allocation for the Districts of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune, Torngat Mountains, as well the District of Burgeo – La Poile is now being provided with a helicopter allocation. Members from the four districts can access the funds only with the prior approval of the Speaker.

Finally, individual adjustments are being made in the intra-constituency allowances for the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune, and St. Barbe. Those amendments will be debated upon our return after Easter.

Notices of Motion.

### Notices of Motion

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

**MR. KENNEDY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Pursuant to section 26.(5)(a) of the Financial Administration Act, I am tabling one Order-in-Council relating to a funding pre-commitment for the 2013-2014 to 2014-2015 fiscal years, Mr. Speaker. The commitment relates to the awarding of a contract for the Corner Brook junior high school redevelopment project.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Notices of motion.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. KING:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to move the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Assembly as follows:

WHEREAS subsection 20.(7) of the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity And Administration Act provides that a change to the level of amounts of allowances and resources provided to members not be made except in accordance with a rule that has been first laid

before the House of Assembly and adopted by resolution of this House; and

WHEREAS amendments to the Members' Resources and Allowances Rules, which, in part, would change the level of amounts of allowances and resources have been laid before the House by the Speaker;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House of Assembly adopt the amendments of the Members' Resources and Allowance Rules, as tabled by the Speaker of this House on March 27, 2013.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for Which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition. To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS Newfoundland and Labrador currently has the highest unemployment rate in Canada; and

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador anticipate a labour shortage of 70,000 people by 2020; and

WHEREAS eliminating the career practitioner knowledge base is contrary to attaching people to the labour market; and

WHEREAS EAS agencies are grassroots hubs in communities providing services like skills development, resume development, interview skills, facilitating attachment to the labour market and the community; and

WHEREAS EAS agencies help individuals with complex needs find and maintain employment in communities throughout the Province; and

WHEREAS EAS agencies have been serving thousands of people for years, building expertise and rapport; and

WHEREAS loading the workload of 226 employees onto 139 Advanced Education and Skills employees would be an overwhelming expectation, increasing staff turnover and thus decreasing rapport with clients; and

WHEREAS EAS funding comes from the EI fund, built by workers, to help them when and where they need it most; and

WHEREAS moving services away from people who lack the means to travel long distances is not in line with the Labour Market Development Agreement's principle of citizen-centred service;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to reverse this decision to cut funding to EAS agencies.

Again, there are a number of opportunities I have had to present this petition, but today is especially striking in that I am presenting this petition one day after the Budget. Now, most of these cuts were made and, apparently, they had nothing to do with that Budget that came down yesterday. It is funny also, the day after the Budget, we finally get access to Mr. Noseworthy's report which we paid \$150,000 for. Mr. Noseworthy's report, I am assuming, is going to take EAS under it.

I just want to go back to the timeline, because this is what the EAS people who e-mail me every single day are asking. They are saying: How did we create this department which was cobbled together, with no thought put into it whatsoever? How do we then hire Mr. Noseworthy to come up with a report, which we get and we do not look at and have no consideration put into the Budget about it, and

then we cut the EAS workers but apparently that had nothing to do with the Budget?

The question I have is – I am hoping at some point that the minister will stand and explain this to me how we paid \$150,000 for a report. We do not actually use the report. We get the report the day after the Budget. Again, we have already seen her department gutted, and I have only seen the executive summary. We did get 472 pages to look at; I am looking forward to reading that and getting into exactly how poor this department was constructed, because that is just what I am seeing on the first page.

I thank you for the opportunity. I will have more petitions and hopefully more questions on this report.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS it is incumbent upon the provincial government to ensure that our natural

environment is protected from harmful industrial processes –

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

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

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

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

The Speaker has recognized the Member for St. John's East, presenting a petition.

**MR. MURPHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that.

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed again by a lot of people from the West Coast. It looks like anywhere from Lourdes, Stephenville, Port au Port, Aguathuna is also here, Fox Island River – a bunch of communities – West Bay Centre, Piccadilly. These are all areas, Mr. Speaker, that are going to be affected by any of these projects that are going to be happening, which are going to be occurring over on the West Coast.

It is a pleasure again to bring this to the attention of the House of Assembly today, knowing that there is a private member's motion that is going to be going ahead talking about fracking today. It is going to be a real pleasure to bring back some of these points on behalf of these petitioners and bringing ahead, of course, their points of view when it comes to the issues surrounding fracking. We know that we need comprehensive regulations. We know that the

businesses, for example, will need an even playing area. We know, for example, that we also need the protections ensured for the safety and integrity of our water supplies.

So, Mr. Speaker, again, it brings me great pleasure to bring this forward, about twenty pages here to submit to the House.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Orders of the Day

#### Private Members' Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** This being Wednesday, Private Members' Day, I now call on the Member for St. Barbe to introduce the motion that stands on the Order Paper in his name.

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker,

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

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

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

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House of Assembly call upon the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, in consultation with industry and communities, to develop and implement a regulatory framework under which hydraulic fracturing could proceed safely while protecting the natural environment and associated necessary local water resources.

Mr. Speaker, in support of this motion today, I would like to speak of two towns in my district and the critical importance of meaningful economic development to these towns and others in our Province, and why government should move now to regulate fracking in our Province. I said regulate fracking, not ban it.

We need to use fracking to unlock a wealth buried in the earth, but we must do so in an environmentally safe and responsible manner. This new wealth can rebuild these towns and other towns in our Province. This new wealth can employ our people. This new wealth can permit our people to return and rebuild our Province.

The towns that I speak of are St. Paul's Inlet and Hawke's Bay. They could be any one of hundreds of similarly situated towns in Newfoundland and Labrador. Their stories are echoed by many other towns well known by us all.

St. Paul's is a town of 300 souls on the Northern part of the Gros Morne National Park. I share a common ancestor with many of the residents of St. Paul's, my great-great grandfather, John Benoit, who was one-quarter native. Historically, St. Paul's was a fishing community famed for large schools of herring that swam through the narrow inlet. Many kinds of fish were abundant in the nearby landlocked bay.

In the mid-1970s, the entire region, except for a small handful of small enclaves, was transferred to the federal government, and Gros Morne National Park was created. While few people will dispute that the national park has been good for the Province, the park has not been kind to St. Paul's. The park promised to build a large campground in St. Paul's that would employ many residents. To accommodate this expansion, the park proposed a large modern water and sewage treatment plant. With funds from the federal Department of Regional Economic Expansion and our Province, the park authority undertook to build.

Even though the project appeared to proceed as planned, on time and on budget, because the

park authority experienced a cost overrun in another enclave community, water and sewer project funds were diverted from the St. Paul's water and sewer project.

What did the national park eliminate from the St. Pauls project? They eliminated the sewage treatment plant. That is right. Gros Morne National Park, in developing a pristine, world-renowned wilderness park, took public money to build a sewage treatment plant in a small park community and did not build it. Worse yet, the park installed the outlet for untreated sewage in the middle of the narrow tidal inlet, discharging sewage in the channel used by herring and other migrating fish.

At the time, people were alarmed. They objected. Their objections fell on deaf ears. The park ignored their town council. The park ignored the regional development association. The park ignored their Member of the House of Assembly, Trevor Bennett, who is my father. The park ignored their Member of Parliament, Fonce Faour, who is now Mr. Justice Faour. All of this is documented.

Within the past two years, I have communicated all of this information to the provincial Department of Fisheries, to the federal Department of Fisheries, to the federal Department of Environment, to the provincial Department of Environment, and to Parks Canada. Their response: If the water is contaminated in the Town of St. Pauls, then the town should put up a sign.

Predictably, the herring stopped coming and the fishery was lost. The park failed to build the promised campground and the promised jobs failed to materialize. Yes, while the park has been good for the Province, St. Pauls' legacy includes a lost fishery, an overbuilt water and sewage system that is very expensive to operate, and a pervasive smell of raw sewage for the residents.

With few job opportunities, most of the young people have moved away, but home is home. As I came home every summer for twenty years until I finally returned home eleven years ago,

many of them return home every summer. Last summer, I attended the St. Pauls Invitational Slo-Pitch Tournament. As I watched these young men play ball under the watchful eyes of their wives, their children, and their elderly parents, I thought: without local development, this is our Province's future. We are building Fort McMurray. We are building Grand Prairie. We are building Swan Hills and Devon, but we are not building St. Pauls or Hawke's Bay, or hundreds of towns like them.

Speaking of Hawke's Bay, just 110 kilometres north of St. Pauls is the Town of Hawke's Bay. Historically, this town has suffered heavy economic and population losses. Home to approximately 350 souls and eleven businesses, Hawke's Bay started out as a centre for the woods industry around the time of Confederation. The town suffered the vagaries of being a forestry outpost for a generation, with overcutting eventually causing its decline and the eventual unemployment.

Things began to look up in the mid-1970s when Newfoundland Zinc mine opened in Daniel's Harbour. Hawke's Bay was established as a shipping port for large stockpiles of zinc concentrate. However, this mine, like all mines, played out, throwing many people out of work.

Alternatives for economic development were examined, including mussel aquaculture in a sheltered bay. However, fifteen years of loading zinc concentrate without adequate safeguards against spillage resulted in large volumes of concentrate being deposited in the bay rendering it unfit for mussels. There still remains a large layer of concentrate over the bottom. The town has been told that removal is impossible, as stirring up the bottom would cause the zinc to disburse polluting an even larger area.

Next, a local entrepreneur set up a hardwood flooring business. Initially, things went well as there was a large supply of birch trees left behind by the softwoods industry. Disaster struck when the business was lost by fire and the operator decided it more feasible to set up elsewhere.

What does this have to do with hydraulic fracturing? Hawke's Bay is eighty kilometres north of Gros Morne Park and is the logical place to set up oil storage tanks and a port for tankers to operate. This development would revitalize Hawke's Bay and all towns in the region. I can tell you that local people, local businesses and the regional council are all holding their breath hoping that development will proceed.

Over the years, so many of our families have moved to Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, Devon, and Swan Hills. The place names, such as these, are very familiar in towns like Hawke's Bay, St. Pauls, and others around our Province. Today, working people, old people and business people in my district are alive with the anticipation of the benefits that would come with oil exploration, but also the environmental risks associated with it. That is why they want both. They want regulated exploration and development so their families will return and their towns will survive.

That, Mr. Speaker, is why I propose and support this resolution.

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

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

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

It is pleasure for me to have an opportunity to say a few words on this particular motion which involves what I think is a very important matter for the people of this Province – and in particular, the people of the West Coast of the Province – and that is a dream that many have. As the Member for St. Barbe just expressed, is the desire to see economic development on the West Coast in the form of an oil industry.

We have all seen the wealth and the prosperity that the oil and gas industry has brought to this Province from wells that are offshore, wells that a lot of us do not see. Just as an example, the Province has estimated that there are 3.1 billion barrels of discovered and 6 billion barrels of

undiscovered crude oil offshore. There are three offshore projects that are happening right now. Hebron is in development.

Accumulative oil production from all of these projects to the end of 2012 was 1.36 billion barrels with an estimated value of \$93 billion. That is such a large number, it is hard to fathom. This industry and this activity have contributed very significantly to the economic prosperity of this Province, and to the fiscal coffers of this particular Province. For the year 2011-2012, for example, there were \$2.8 billion in royalties that came into the Province from the offshore oil industry, plus corporate income taxes they would pay, plus the personal income taxes that would be paid by their well paid employees.

Cumulative oil royalties since that industry started, up to the end of 2012, is \$14.3 billion came into the Province. These are large amounts of money. In 2011, this accounted for 33 per cent of our gross domestic product, 33 per cent of our entire economy.

This wealth has enabled governments from the royalties the companies pay and the corporate income tax they pay, it has enabled us to do things that people want to see done; to invest in health care, to invest in education, to invest in infrastructure, to fund progressive social programs, to do things we could not do in the past. We always must remember that these revenues are based on – these are non-renewable resources, and while they are very profitable and while they give benefits to the Province and the people of the Province, we must never forget that these non-renewable resources will at one day come to an end.

We have to make sure the revenues we get now, we spend wisely, and that we diversify the economy. We get rid of the massive debt that previous generations of our people have incurred. We get rid of that so our children and our grandchildren are not saddled with that debt, and that we build for them a framework in which they can pursue economic growth and prosperity.



Now, Mr. Speaker, those resources are offshore, but there has also been activity in this Province in the onshore. Unfortunately, that activity in the onshore, which has been mainly Western Newfoundland, has not been as successful. Petroleum exploration has happened in Western Newfoundland since the 1800s. I understand that in about the 1830s in the Parsons Pond area, British settler's first encountered oil seeps there. The first oil well in Newfoundland and Labrador was drilled in that area in the year Canada came together, 1867. That was the first oil well drilled on the West Coast.

While there has been lots of activity, and the Geological Survey of Canada has put out reports talking about the potential of billions of barrels of oil along with significant natural gas on the West Coast, unfortunately, there has not been success to date. While oil has been discovered, the volume that has come out has not been sufficient to make a business case. There have not been, we would say, economic quantities of oil to establish an industry.

On the West Coast there are seven exploration permits. There is one production lease. Then in the Western Newfoundland offshore, there are seven exploration licences issued by the C-NLOPB. It is the junior oil companies, not the large companies. The large companies are offshore where it might cost \$200 million to \$300 million just to drill a well, but on the onshore it is cheaper.

Onshore it is smaller companies, and regular individuals can get involved in the onshore oil and gas industry. There have been forty wells drilled on the West Coast since 1994. There are sixty-four historic wells, there is one offshore well, and nine onshore-to-offshore wells. Mr. Speaker, I will not go into some of these. We all know about Nalcor's efforts there, they have not been successful.

Now, there is something happening in the United States that has caught everyone's attention. It is oil that is coming from tight rock, such as shale. On the West Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador there is a shale deposit called the Green Point Shale deposit. It

is attracting interest from a company called Shoal Point Energy, which has been drilling in that area I think for some time. I have heard – this is subject to confirmation – that maybe \$30 million, \$35 million has been spent in that one particular well, but while oil has been encountered, the oil does not flow.

One of the things I have learned since I have become the Minister of Natural Resources, and one of the things that surprised me to learn was the fact that most oil wells have difficulty flowing, because they are caught up in rock which may not be porous; they are caught up in rock that is not permeable. The oil that flows is in rock that is permeable. There are pores in the rock so the oil can flow through these reservoirs.

Whereas in something called tight rock or shale, they are not permeable. The oil is caught up in the rock and it does not flow. Like most people here, I thought, from movies – I guess I watched too many movies and TV shows where they drill a well and if there is oil it comes up; there is a lot of pressure and it explodes. I understand that with most wells, that does not happen. Most wells need stimulation; they need secondary production. Secondary production is to inject water or to inject gas into the well and try to get the oil or the gas, whatever it is, to move because it is caught up, in many cases, in the tight rock.

In the late-1940s, I understand, in Kansas – I have read two different things; somebody said it was 1947 in Kansas and somebody else said it was 1949 in a place called Velma, Oklahoma, that somebody discovered something called hydraulic fracturing, known as fracking. The hon. Member for St. John's East calls it sweet water. I do not know why he calls it sweet water.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Slickwater.

**MR. MARSHALL:** Slickwater. I assume that is a reference to the chemicals that are in the water.

This happened in vertical wells. Basically it meant that water and sand were injected into the

well with chemical treatment under high pressure. The idea was to fracture the hole. You can imagine this equipment in the hole or drill pipe in the well hole with holes at the bottom of the pipe. There would be like a little mini explosion out there to try to get the oil to get into the pipe and come up the pipe.

That has gone on for six decades, sixty years. I am told that in our country, in Alberta and in British Columbia, there have been 167,000, 170,000, some say 200,000 of wells drilled in Canada which have used hydraulic fracturing or fracking. The regulators in British Columbia and the regulators in Alberta tell us that not one of those – not in one case has there been any contamination of groundwater. That is a great record and it just goes to show that the regulation, if it is done properly, can prevent that. Admittedly, the results coming out of the United States have not been nearly as stellar.

Mr. Speaker, the change, what is new to this debate, is that there is new technology and now wells can be drilled horizontally. Instead of a vertical well, instead of a well at a slant, you can now go down and when you hit the strata, which is the shale rock, you can now horizontally turn the well so it drills horizontally. Then what you can do is you can do this fracking; instead of doing it once in one area or a couple of times in one area, you can now do it in multi-stages along the horizontal.

The whole idea is to inject water and sand with some chemicals into the wellbore under high pressure and that will crack that tight rock. That will crack the shale. It will put fractures. That is why it is called hydraulic fracturing, or hydraulic fracking, hydraulic meaning water and fracking meaning you make the cracks like fractures, so that the rock is cracked, the oil or the gas will then flow into the wellbore, and then it is taken up.

This has been very successful in the United States in a place called Bakken, North Dakota. There is shale oil and they have been very successful there. I cannot remember how many wells are there now. One of the beauties of this is if you are drilling vertically into shale oil, you

will have to have a number of vertical wells, a lot of wells up on top. With the hydraulic fracturing, if you can do it horizontally you only have to have the one up there and it can fracture as it moves along.

Mr. Speaker, there are people who have concern about this. It just so happened a number of years ago I was watching CBC and they had a page or a couple of pages dealing with fracking in New Brunswick. It kind of piqued my interest and that is where I first heard of it. It had to do with shale gas in New Brunswick. Sure enough, it has arrived here.

We found out, much to my surprise, it came about because Shoal Point Energy wanted to do it and they have entered into an agreement with a company called Black Spruce Exploration. Black Spruce Exploration wants to drill a number of wells on the West Coast of the Province, I think it is four over this summer, and they will be using hydraulic fracturing.

Of course, at this point nobody has approval to do that. There has been no registration accepted by the Department of Environment and Conservation. My colleague, the Minister of Environment and Conservation, will speak on this. There has been no application that has come into the Department of Natural Resources, and I do not believe there is anything at the C-NLOPB. In our Province, offshore oil wells, as everybody knows, are regulated by the Atlantic Accord legislation and the regulations under that dealing with the offshore oil. The well will be on land. The well will go down on land, probably at a slant, go out into the shale, so the fracking will actually take place offshore, out into the ocean.

If a well is onshore, it is regulated by the Department of Natural Resources, our Petroleum and Natural Gas Act and the regulations under that. If you have a well now that is onshore to offshore, that is now regulated by both, through an MOU that exists between the provincial government, the Department of Environment, the Department of Natural Resources, and the C-NLOPB. All the regulations have to (inaudible).

Mr. Speaker, I am running out of time, quickly. I have now explained how it works and I have talked about our regulations and the C-NLOPB's regulations, and the Minister of Environment will talk about regulations under the Environment Act and the Environmental Protection Act.

Again, I will say that our government's approach to the regulation is sound and is based on precautionary principles. We support economic development, subject to different conditions. One of the conditions are that the people of this Province have to be the beneficiaries of that development. Two, economic development that we support must take place in a framework that protects the health and safety of members of the public and the workers who are working on the rig and it must take place within a framework that provides for robust environmental regulation, and the Minister of Environment will talk about that.

We approach industry regulation based on the precautionary principle. We will ensure that any well, whether it is hydraulic fracturing or not, is carried out safely and poses no dangers to workers or the public of the Province or the environment. We are confident that the regulations presently in place will deal with this, but we, of course, will continue to review our regulations to ensure that if enhancements are needed they can be provided.

Also, we have the capacity – and I am running out of time – to make a condition, a term and condition, of any licence to drill a well. We can add any regulations that we consider appropriate to that. We can order the oil companies to publicly disclose on an Internet site what chemicals they are using if they are fracturing. Right now, we have very robust regulations that deal with the casing of the well and protection of groundwater.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure if I can just take a minute to sum up –

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

Does the member have leave?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** By leave.

**MR. SPEAKER:** By leave.

**MR. MARSHALL:** I am sure that as we get into the Speech from the Throne and begin the debate on the Budget that we can talk about more and more of these issues, such as what has to be regulated, the casing around the well, the cementing of the casing, the secondary casing; to ensure that the aquifers and the groundwater is not contaminated in any way; to ensure that the chemicals are properly stored on top of the ground; to make sure that the chemicals when they come out of the ground – hopefully with oil attached – will be properly treated and will be properly recycled.

No well will be drilled in this Province without being subject to rigorous regulation, rigorous terms and conditions attached to their approval by the Department of Natural Resources, by the C-NLOPB, and especially by the Department of Environment to ensure that the public and the workers, and our Province and the people of the Province are protected.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The Member for Bay of Islands.

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

I stand in my place today to speak on this private member's motion from the Member for St. Barbe. It is an issue that is taking a forefront in a lot of places around North America, in the US, and in Canada. It is something that, as a Province, we must try to grapple with and to ensure that we are prepared and ready for it: the fracking, Mr. Speaker.

As the minister mentioned, fracking, if done properly, can bring a lot of growth to the economy, and it can help build – like, for

example, ensure that we have the second \$500 million for the hospital in Corner Brook that was committed a few years back. We can support the economy like that, instead of having things like the PET scan taken out of the hospital in Corner Brook. We will be able to find the funds to put it back in, instead of having it taken out. That is the kind of things that hopefully fracking can bring and make a contribution to the economy, Mr. Speaker.

That can help out, and there are a number of other things. For example, ensure that the hospital in Corner Brook has more acute care beds when it is developed than what is there now. As we have this growth and we are going need more acute care beds, we are going to need to ensure that we have the funds to do that, Mr. Speaker. So, those are a couple of the things that we need, if we get the economy.

I know the NDP, where they stand on fracking, and as we know, Saskatchewan has been supporting fracking for a number of years. I know this goes to two departments in government and the C-NLOPB, Mr. Speaker.

As we all know, there are certain parts of the Province that this fracking is going to be very effective and it is going to be very good for the economy. In Western Newfoundland, I know it is going to be good for the economy.

In Lark Harbour they are planning on doing some fracking. There was a public meeting in Lark Harbour probably about four or five months ago that I attended on this, Mr. Speaker. The big concerns for the people of the time, and of course we all have to get educated on this, are jobs for the community, prosperity for the community, a chance to revitalise some parts of Newfoundland and Labrador, and a chance that people will find employment and stay in their own communities. There is a big concern with it. We all agree that there should be some advantage and some prosperity given to these people who are hoping to stay in their own area.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, when we look at this type of project, we have to look at this worldwide, in the economics worldwide. In 2017-2020, the US will become self-sufficient in oil because of fracking.

Now, we hear some horror stories about fracking and some of the drawbacks of it. If not done properly or safely, I can understand the people's concerns and why people are so concerned about the environment. That is why I encourage the government, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier, there is the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Environment and Conservation, and the C-NLOPB that are going to be involved with the regulations.

What we do not have in this Province – and this is where I encourage the government – is a developed set of regulations for fracking. I heard the minister previously, and this is no condemnation of the minister or the government, because this is hitting everybody in Newfoundland and Labrador in the last little while. What we need is to take the regulations from Natural Resources, take the regulations from Environment and Conservation, and take the regulations from the Offshore Petroleum Board, bring them all together, and develop regulations for fracking. That is what we do not have. We have different regulations for different parts, if it is on land and off land.

Again, I say to the minister, I know it is just hitting Newfoundland and Labrador at this scale. Some of the figures we have seen, we are talking a lot of prosperity for Newfoundland and Labrador if we can do this right. That is what we need in this Province, a book that you are going to say: here are the rules and regulations on fracking. You can live by it or you can walk away from it, but at least we will have the rules and regulations.

Mr. Speaker, some of the concerns that have to be in those rules and regulations have brought about – and we would be remiss if we did not bring up some of the concerns that are expressed and some of our own research that we find, like groundwater contamination; nothing can get into the groundwater if there is water in the area.

Some people worry about their drinking water; there can be methane in the water through leaks in the pipes and in the cement. That is a concern.

We have to try to ensure that there are regulations in place, to ensure that the cement and the capsules that go down are protected in such a way that this does not happen. One way that we can do it is go all across Canada, go all across the US, and find regulations to bring it in and get the most stringent regulations we can.

That is one concern, Mr. Speaker, that has been brought to my attention, contamination of the water, the groundwater, through methane. Then again, that is where you need to bring in the experts on how we can ensure that we mitigate all of the risks for that in the development of fracking.

We also have to ensure that all of the wells are properly sealed. Again, this is a concern that was raised at the meeting out in Lark Harbour, to ensure that the wells are sealed, to ensure that there was no leakage. This is something, again, that we need to ensure before anybody even goes in, to have these regulations put in place.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that the people who I was speaking to – and I will just use out Lark Harbour way; people want to see industry in their town. People want to see it, but they also want to see regulations to protect their environment in their town.

I am a firm believer that if any person who can create prosperity in their town, protect their environment, and leave the environment in the same natural state, or in some way protect it so there is going to be no adverse effect on it, I honestly feel that they would be pro-development.

Another concern, Mr. Speaker, that they have is wastewater. As we all know, the amount of wastewater that is going to be used in fracking is high in volume. Mr. Speaker, the concern is: how are we going to dispose of this wastewater? That is another concern. There are natural ways, like through contamination. You can bring it to

a water treatment centre somehow, which in some cases it was said that it can be done. They can set up a treatment centre if it is a high enough volume.

That is another concern, Mr. Speaker, that was brought up is the waste water. Ensure that when the waste water is used, because there will be some contaminations in the waste water, that it is disposed of in a way that will bring the water back to its natural state, or ensure it is treated in some way that there is not going to be any harm to the environment when it is released back into the environment. It can be done.

I know out in Stephenville there were some contaminated sites, they go through the process and it can be done. It definitely can be done. What we need to do as a Province, and it is just not government but all of us together, we need to ensure that all of these regulations are in place so that we can stand up if we support it, stand up and say yes, to the best of our ability, the environment is being protected. If we cannot do that, it is going to be hard for us to stand up and support this without a guarantee that we feel confident the environment will be protected, and the environment will not have any adverse effects for the future. It is incumbent upon us, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, another concern that was brought up, and it was brought up in smaller municipalities. It is a smaller concern of the environment, but when you are doing the fracking – I will just use Lark Harbour, for example, Mr. Speaker. I will use Lark Harbour for an example. With the amount of waste water that is going to be coming into the Town of Lark Harbour, it is going to have to be trucked in. If you bring in that many trucks, twenty-four hours a day over the roads, we as a government, we as parliamentarians, we need to ensure the infrastructure can handle that.

If we are going to create prosperity in around Western Newfoundland, we need to ensure that the roads are up to a certain standard. We need to ensure the infrastructure. It is no good to say, okay, we are going to start fracking in Lark Harbour if we do not give the companies the

ability to get the equipment, to get the water they need and get it back out, the waste water they did not need. That is a concern that was brought up, especially going to a lot of our rural parts.

If it is going to be that good to the economy, we have to support it, Mr. Speaker. This is an important issue because a lot of the roads in rural Newfoundland are a bit narrow. They may need some work done on the roads. It is a concern for infrastructure if this goes ahead. This is something that I am sure is going to be expressed to a lot of people.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know in fracking there is a certain percentage of chemicals used. In some cases there is 0.5 per cent up to 1.5 per cent that is used, Mr. Speaker, in the actual fracking. Two concerns have been brought to me. One, I already addressed, is the waste water. We need some kind of water treatment facility to ensure that the waste water is disposed of somehow, or some other mechanism which is not harmful to the environment.

The other thing we need to do, and this is something a lot of people – if there are chemicals going to be used, we should ensure all chemicals that are going to be used in fracking are listed. So people will say here is what is being used. We all know it, and it is just human nature, if we do not know something we are going to assume the worst. That is human nature.

If you have people out there saying: What chemicals are used? If we cannot say here is what is going to be used – and there are going to be times, Mr. Speaker, when the government will have to step in and say: No, you cannot use this chemical, we have no way to ensure that it is going to be safe after. That may be but whatever the regulations are, whatever chemicals we are going to allow the companies to use, we must make it public.

We must be able to for the general public to say here is what is being used, so they can do their own evaluation. Once we say here is what chemicals are going to be used, here is how we

are going to dispose of the waste water, then let's have a discussion. Is this the proper way to do it? Can the environment be safe? Can the environment be protected?

Only with the proper information upfront can we have an honest debate and an honest discussion. If all these commitments are made, I feel most level-headed people will support it if we can guarantee the environment is safe and it will bring economic benefits to the town. Mr. Speaker, this is something that we must do.

We must have a clear list for the companies to say here is what you are allowed to use, here is what you cannot use. Everybody knows, everybody – we have a package. Here are the rules and regulations. If you want to frack in Newfoundland and Labrador, here are the rules and regulations. If you cannot meet by these rules too bad, hard luck. At least they will know what they are dealing with. They can make a business decision then if they want to do it.

There are two things, we have to balance out the economic, and we have to ensure safety and protection of the environment. Mr. Speaker, it is very important. It is incumbent on government to ensure that all information is made public.

Mr. Speaker, if we can do this properly, and if you look at in the US where fracking has taken place and done properly, there is a decrease in greenhouse gases. There is an actual decrease in greenhouse gases. So it can help the environment if it is done properly. That is something, Mr. Speaker, that we as parliamentarians have to try to ensure is done so we can help decrease greenhouse gases.

This is not being political, but this is something – I cannot go to this government today or any business and say: What are the regulations on fracking? We have to go to two or three different departments to try to haul them out and say here are the regulations. I am just going on as a person who never got involved with fracking in his life and does not know what the pros and cons, with the proper environmental regulations, are. This is someone who is now saying, if I wanted to go fracking here in

Newfoundland and Labrador, can I go get a book and say here are the rules and regulations. If I wanted to get a driver's licence, here are the rules and regulations.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the government to get this in place. I can assure you –

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

**MR. JOYCE:** I know my time is up. I will clue up, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Does the member have leave to clue up?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** By leave.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The member has two minutes.

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, what I will do is if the government can come up with the regulations that can guarantee it is going to protect the environment to the best of all of our abilities, of all the sciences around, to protect the environment and to ensure a safe and pristine environment once fracking is over, I have no problem supporting fracking. I have no problem whatsoever, for economic benefit. I cannot support fracking if every time – I heard the minister just a minute ago say that we can add stuff. We need to put down regulations.

I say to the minister, it may come up later that we need to put more regulations or stringent regulations. That is fine, but we need it in place so we as parliamentarians can make a decision and we as parliamentarians can say, yes, we support it. I support economic development; I also need to support the environment. I honestly feel that we can come up with regulations where we can balance out both to ensure a prosperous Newfoundland and Labrador where fracking is taking place and ensure that our environment is pristine and clean once they are up and running.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Humber West.

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

It is indeed a privilege and an honour this afternoon to stand today just for a few moments to talk about the motion on the floor. I believe it is a timely one, Mr. Speaker, the one that is presented on the floor of this House, regarding potential oil development on the West Coast of the Province and its potential impacts.

I want to say from the start that it is good to see the Official Opposition understand that there is great potential on the West Coast, unlike what I hear from time to time from the Third Party. I just want to remind the Third Party, before I get into my speech this afternoon, that between 1989 and 2012 the total known expenditures by companies operating onshore and offshore in the Western Newfoundland Region has been approximately \$175 million. That is dollars that can be invested in new roads, new construction, spin-off jobs, procurement, new employment, but the real jobs and the real benefits, I say to the Third Party, is when or if we get into production, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to put this into context. I have made the West Coast of Newfoundland my home for nearly the last twenty-five years. Indeed, for one of those years, I spent it in Stephenville and had the opportunity while I was in Stephenville to go down the Port au Port Peninsula on numerous occasions.

Since becoming elected, I have had the opportunity to go and visit and chat with people on the Port au Port Peninsula, with my hon. colleague to my left from the Port au Port district, and have sat and chatted with those people with regard to potential development that can take place on the Port au Port and indeed in the entire Western Region.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say from the start here today that I stand for economic development on the West Coast and, in particular, on the Port au

Port Peninsula. I will further say, Mr. Speaker, that I support environmental assessment that is appropriate for each development, whether onshore or offshore, Mr. Speaker.

I have never believed that we should take a blanket approach on economic development or indeed on environmental issues, Mr. Speaker. I strongly believe, however, that the legislative responsibility be such that a great degree of strength and control be obtainable for each and every development based on the circumstances of that particular development.

Mr. Speaker, I have based my entire professional life for the most part on theory and research and practice and believe then, as I do now and continue to believe, that we cannot have one without the others; however, I have come to learn that we must balance theoretical with the practical in every situation. As well, Mr. Speaker, we must look closely at every situation because the circumstances for one situation, although similar, could be very different. For example, I believe that individual assessments must take place because of the geographical differences, as an example, and the environmental differences between Shoal Point, Sally's Cove, Lark Harbour, and Bottle Cove.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that oil and gas exploration and development have played a significant and monumental role in the economic growth of Newfoundland and Labrador and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. It may not be the sole engine that drives the economy – because there are other economic drivers – but without a doubt, it is indeed one of the largest propellers of economic and personal growth for Newfoundland and Labrador and indeed, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Much of that growth, Mr. Speaker, has been seen on the East Coast, as the hon. Minister of Natural Resources spoke earlier, with all of the growth in our offshore fields. That wealth has been distributed, as we all know, throughout every region of the Province, but now, Mr. Speaker, the potential is there for the West Coast of Newfoundland to contribute to the industry of oil and gas and potentially to become a game

changer for the region and indeed, the entire Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We have known, Mr. Speaker, for decades that the Province's West Coast onshore and offshore areas contain the geophysical makeup to generate and trap petroleum products. We must progress with that in mind. That potential has been documented and researched by the Geological Survey of Canada and various petroleum engineering firms to contain billions of barrels of oil.

We have seen, Mr. Speaker, various pieces of activity over the entire Western region. Indeed, Minister Marshall has spoken to that earlier today. Over the years, continued activity is necessary to lead to commercial production. That is what we are talking about here today, Mr. Speaker.

It is very important to remember that the work in Newfoundland in onshore and offshore areas has proceeded in accordance with stringent regulations and rules that guide all aspects of petroleum drilling and production.

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

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Things do not happen, Mr. Speaker, by chance. They happen successfully with solid planning and implementation.

The work that is to take place on the Port au Port Peninsula in the region will be just like that.

The Minister of Environment, I hope, might get a chance to speak a little later this afternoon and it might allow him to discuss in detail some of these regulations already and currently in practice in Newfoundland and Labrador – not only to speak of the regulations, Mr. Speaker, but assert the strength of those regulations and strength of his office in any and all environmental assessments that take place throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

I have always said, Mr. Speaker, that knowledge is an important thing. We must inform our



decisions based on real knowledge. Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker: we must always make our decisions based on local conditions and situations without having a blanket approach to development.

I have taken some time to review, Mr. Speaker, some of the information that is out there and I will continue to do so over the coming weeks and the coming months. We cannot dismiss an idea or development in the public until we have in front of us what exactly constitutes that particular development. That is important. There has been so much said over the last little while. A great deal of it has been said by the Third Party.

Again, I want to repeat that: we cannot dismiss an idea or development in the public until we have in front of us what exactly constitutes that particular development, and the particular plans a proponent may or may not have. Until then we should all wait and see what comes forward, Mr. Chair.

There is a saying that we stress ourselves over stressors that often do not come to reality. Mr. Speaker, if we listened to the Third Party, we would expand every single program in the Province, add new programs to the list on a daily basis. We would have to say yes to every request, Mr. Speaker, but say no to the economic drivers that would pay for the ever-growing list that they ask for.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador support a balanced approach to economic development with the protection of the environment and safety of workers as its highest priority. A balanced approach, Mr. Speaker, protection of the environment, and safety of workers is our highest priority.

Mr. Speaker, we have already today placed – and I want to stress this – stringent environmental regulations on the books that protect our valuable resources. As I said earlier, and as the Minister of Natural Resources said earlier, and the Minister of Environment will get a chance to speak to it in a little while, these are

on the books, they are very stringent, and they work, Mr. Speaker.

Between the offshore regulator the C-NLOPB, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Environment and Conservation, we have many tools already in our tool box of regulations that will look closely at the potential exploration and potential development on the West Coast, Mr. Speaker. That is something that all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians should keep in mind when listening to topics on or about this particular development, or in fact when we are discussing and talking fracking or some other stimulation methods.

This conversation taking place here today on the floor of this House, Mr. Speaker, is an important step in getting information to the population on this very important issue.

Mr. Speaker, the world is changing, and as it changes it is becoming smaller and smaller as we speak. This government does not operate in a vacuum. It is important to know and understand that we have had regulation in place for some time in this Province that has overseen many of the large-scale developments both onshore and offshore, particularly here on the East Coast; however, amendments have been made from time to time, and that is important to remember. Amendments have been made from time to time as we progress along the specific line of exploration and development. This government, Mr. Speaker, continues to review regulations from other jurisdictions, as the Minister of Environment may get a chance to speak to in a little while.

To answer some of the questions put forth earlier this afternoon by the Member for Bay of Islands, it is important – there is no reason we as a government cannot, under the current environmental assessment review process in Newfoundland and Labrador, pull something from other jurisdictions, jurisdictions in other regions of Canada, jurisdictions in other regions of the United States, or jurisdictions, as I am currently reading, from New Zealand, and superimpose them in our requirements as we

move forward to receive the developmental proposal from proponents.

There is confidence in the current regulations. Many have confidence in the current regulations and legislations, like the environmental assessment act and the water control act, and the sharing of information between authorities, within government, between governments – the national government and our government – and between agencies in our society.

Let us be clear here: if there are conditions that need to be added as we develop not just one potential find on the West Coast, but potentially more than one, under our current legislation, under our current regulations, and under our current framework, specific terms and conditions can be added prior to drilling. These specific terms and conditions can mirror what is happening in other jurisdictions, from New Brunswick, Quebec, other parts of Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and indeed other parts of the world.

These specific terms and conditions as well can be specific to the best practices that are in other jurisdictions and indeed within industry, Mr. Speaker. In fact, as the Minister of Natural Resources articulated earlier this afternoon, our department is working with partners to ensure that any programs on stimulation or fracturing are properly assessed to determine whether specific terms and conditions should be attached to any approval to drill a well or multiple wells.

I am doing some reading, as I mentioned earlier, specifically now from New Zealand and in other areas. The overwhelming conclusion that I see as I read is that environmental risks associated with fracking can be managed effectively – and these are the key words: managed effectively; they can be managed effectively with, as I have said first: one, best practices in the industry, and two, regulation like our environmental assessment and water control act, along with others.

This is even stronger, Mr. Speaker, especially when we add the power to attach conditions to any proposed development, as we do have with

our current legislation in Newfoundland and Labrador through the Department of Environment and Conservation. Again, I stress I am all for development, but within the realm of doing it in a balanced approach, with the protection of the environment and safety of workers being a strong pulse of whatever would take place. That is what our regulations and legislation allow us currently to do and continue to do, Mr. Speaker, in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, we understand the concerns raised, but I hope this debate today will assist everyone throughout Newfoundland and Labrador with thinking about the issue not with blinders on, but with the full understanding and information of the multiple levels of informed decisions, such as our government's precautionary principle and approach to exploration and development. We will ensure that any oil well, whether there is hydraulic fracturing or not, is carried out safely and poses no danger to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, no danger to the environment, and that we keep in mind the care of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and the communities in which they live, Mr. Speaker.

After reading a fair bit and listening to many, I am confident in the current regulations that we have presently in place; however, it is important to continue to review regulations, policies, and developments in other jurisdictions to determine if any changes or improvements are required, Mr. Speaker. No application has been received to date for such exploration or development related to fracturing on the West Coast of the Province, and I suggest that the prudent thing to do, the right thing to do, and the responsible thing to do, is to make our decisions for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador when it is appropriate and when we are ready to do so, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. GRANTER:** I see that my time has run out. I will conclude with that.

Thank you for the opportunity.

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

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

The Member for St. John's East.

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

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

I take pleasure in rising in the House today to talk about fracking. We all know that this is a good argument over industrial development and the development of a resource. Again, when I stand up in the House and present a petition it is because the people have concerns that need to be addressed, and that is one of the reasons why we have to talk about fracking.

It is new. We know that it has been done, for example, since the 1860s. The Minister of Natural Resources talked about it earlier that yes, in that respect, fracking has been around for a while but back in the 1860s not only was it used for oil, it was used for such things as the development and the extension of water supply systems, for example, for water wells and that process was used, but not necessarily using those particular chemicals that we are talking about today. The whole process that we are talking about today is the advent of something that is called slickwater fracking.

Slickwater fracking has been going ahead with reckless abandon since 1997-1998. Particularly I think the first well that was fracked using that was actually done in the Eagle Ford basin Texas back then. Ever since then, it has advanced to the point now where even places like North Dakota have seen astronomical growth in oil production. I think last month it was recorded at something in the order of 756,000 barrels a day of production compared to what it was probably back in 2008 I think was the first figure I saw on that – I think it was somewhere around 38,000 barrels a day. That is how fast the fracking phenomenon and how much of an impact it is having on shale oil resources or basically on oil resources, and no doubt we are going to hear

much more about that in the future when it comes to discussions of oil prices.

We have to ask ourselves why we need protection, and it is exactly for that reason. It is because it is only a new process, Mr. Speaker, that we have to put up the alarm bells. That the people of the Port au Port Peninsula are putting up alarm bells as regards to the process. That the people living up in the Gros Morne area and Parsons Pond even are putting up alarm bells. The flags are waving. They want protection from government for government to step in and develop these regulations concerning a new process that pretty much leaves everybody to question exactly what fracking is.

One of the concerns that I have heard over all of this, as regards to needing that protection, is of course they want their water resources protected. They want that 100 per cent assurance that there is not going to be any damage to their water resources because so much can happen to water resources if these things, these chemicals, for example, that are used in the slickwater process, if it leaches back, for example, into water aquifers or water wells, if they poison the water, if they ruin water. Certain things that happen during the fracking process – maybe the chemicals do not get back but it causes a release of methane gas, particularly, that also has a tendency to ruin water supplies.

We have to remember that people have the right to clean water. Again, last week we talked about it in the water motion that it was even covered by the United Nation's Charter. I am surprised that we would be thinking about the possibility that water supplies could be ruined, but they can.

We can turn to places like Rosebud, Alberta; we can talk about a case that I was just reading about last week from National Public Radio, a lady and her family had to move out of their premise in Pennsylvania and they ended up with a \$750,000 settlement because it ruined all of the water on their land. It caused disruption for that particular family.

Again, there are a number of reasons why we need that protection. One of the things that I

was thinking about, in conversation with somebody in the Gros Morne area – and let's talk about the tourism protection because while the hon. Member for Humber West was talking about \$175 million that is being invested by oil companies on the West Coast since 1989. The last number that I saw as regards to the tourism industry investments that happen on a yearly basis, not since 1989, but on a yearly basis, brings in approximately \$200 million in revenues to the tourism industry. We have pretty much around the year employment from the tourism industry, be it if it is from skiing or adventure tourism. Think about how much of a draw to the Province that Gros Morne National Park has been and how much of an economic impact that it has had, even since 1989.

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** It is in the billions of dollars if it is \$200 million a year. We cannot ignore that fact. We cannot ignore the fact that if fracking happens within the Gros Morne area we are talking about the possibility of the United Nations lifting World Heritage status. That is a direct concern of tourism operators on the West Coast of the Province. Would it be a concern of the provincial government? I would say yes. If it did not, it would bother me. It certainly would.

I think that we have to have these protections in place for things like that, for protection of the tourism industry, along with the protection of water. The protection of an existing industry that is there now should come first and foremost, paramount. The right to clean water, we all believe in that. We passed that motion last week, sponsored by us.

Mr. Speaker, the list of chemicals used in slickwater fracking – there are a lot of carcinogenic chemicals. Even though the industry might like to put a positive light on it by saying it uses 90 per cent water, 9 per cent sand, and 1 per cent of these chemicals, it is that 1 per cent that we often wonder about and that the people of the West Coast of the Province are

wondering about. Indeed, it is not just the West Coast, Mr. Speaker; I have also presented petitions that had people from St. John's on it, who signed the petition. It is a Province-wide concern; indeed, this is a worldwide concern as well.

We have methanol and hydrochloric acid. We have formaldehydes in there. We have God only knows, boric acids, and everything that is being used in there, Mr. Speaker. We need disclosure of the chemicals that are being used in drilling.

I note that the Minister of Natural Resources can order a disclosure of chemicals; I think he stood up and said that. Mr. Speaker, under Bill 29, when we talked about it, Bill 29 told us about proprietary information belonging to companies, that they do not have to disclose.

Then he talked about listing their chemicals on Web sites in a voluntary role. Mr. Speaker, that is not acceptable to anybody, to have to do it voluntarily. I think that he was probably referring to sites – for example, like FracFocus – that are out there, that are being talked about now that would have a voluntary disclosure of chemicals.

Like I said, unless the government is prepared to repeal part of Bill 29, we are not going to get disclosure of the chemicals that are there. Tell that to the people over on the West Coast right now in Jeffrey's. There was one person over there who sent me a note talking about where some fluids, where some drilling mud and everything was dumped. They were dumped in the Jeffrey's landfill. We do not know what else was dumped there. Let us talk about disclosure then, if we have to. That is another reason why we have to talk about putting in some solid regulations when it comes to fracking.

Mr. Speaker, we are also talking about the cautious need for full environmental assessments of the project. We are talking about the disposal of chemicals that are used or potentially recycled. In some processes they are talking about dumping them into the ground, deep in the earth, with the possibility that they are not going

to leach up. Ask the people of Parsons Pond whether anything leaches up out of the ground.

The Minister of Natural Resources was just there on his feet and he was telling us about the early drilling projects in Newfoundland and Labrador. Folks, we had oil leaching up through the ground from time to time. Why wouldn't wastewater do the same thing and leach up through the earth? It is only natural that if you fracture the earth no longer is it going to be any kind of a protective shell, for example –

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** – an old salt cavern or something, such as some places would (inaudible).

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** We have the possibility here of the leaching of some of these chemicals into aquifers and everything. We need the guaranteed protection that these chemicals not only are not going to be going into the ground and in some cases, like in Ohio, causing seismic activity and earthquakes, but we also need the seismic monitoring to go along with them. We need those guaranteed protections. It is not much, I do not think, the people of this Province are going to be asking for when it comes to that.

Let us talk about the evaporation techniques, Mr. Speaker, they are talking about. They are talking about making massive holding ponds for some of these waste chemicals, setting up these little spray nozzles, if you will, industrial-sized spray nozzles. If this makes any sense to the average person, I do not know why they would think it was a good thing. They take the wastewater chemicals, put it into a holding pond, set up this evaporation nozzle, and hopefully this is not going to add to the greenhouse gases by the process of evaporation. That is what they are talking about, for the possibility of one form of disposing of these chemicals next to the other

form of burying them deep in the ground, deep in the earth, through a high-pressure activation that might cause earthquakes.

It makes no sense to take that much water and use it in a process that is a ruination, possibly, of other people's water supplies, not to mention that possible scar and environmental eyesore that government has no regulations around when it comes to holding ponds. We need not look to any other place but South Brook, who is just outside the Gullbridge holding ponds, the tailings pond from an old mine that let go and we almost lost a water supply down there. You cannot tell me that we are not going to see the possibility of an environmental disaster ending up in somebody's hand, Mr. Speaker. That has to be a consideration when it comes to all of this.

We do not have any way of recouping money from a company once it has pulled out and left us with a holding pond. If that holding pond causes environmental damage, how are we going to recoup the cost if the company has already hauled the oil up out of the ground and they are gone? They have probably gone years before. We do not even have a fund that government can create so we can remediate. Who does the remediation?

Let us talk about natural gas burn off from the drilling process. Everybody thinks that because you are recouping shale oil there is not going to be any kind of an amount of natural gas there that is either A, going to have to be re-injected into the well, which might be a bit more difficult than what the other option is going to do. They are probably going to take it and they are going to flare it off; in other words, they are going to burn it.

Now, I can see the people of Sally's Cove being absolutely pleased by looking over the horizon and seeing natural gas being flared off from the latest fracked well. Mr. Speaker, I do not know if that is going to endear anybody to go to Gros Morne Park just to see the second sunset. It does not work with me and I do not think it is going to work with a tourist – not to mention the smell that would come from something like that.

We have an awful lot to think about when it comes to that.

Again, I talked about the dangers to water resources, particularly when it comes to the human health component, but I am talking about the possibility of this stuff leaching up, getting into the environment. If it gets in, what does it do to a fisheries resource? What does it do to natural fauna? What does it do to farming, for example, over there on the Port au Port Peninsula? I think there is a lot of sheep farming that goes on over there.

I know particularly on my last visit over there, I think somebody was over there raising Lamas. What does it do to these other industries without the protection that is there? The type of action needed by people, what they wrote to me about, what they wanted in the petition is a moratorium on any further drilling until comprehensive regulations are developed. That is not too much to ask for.

The federal government is trying to get out there now – they are due to come out with a report in March, 2014 that talks about the chemicals used in fracking. They are going to be coming out with their own report. Surely to God we can wait until 2014 for the federal government to come out with a report on that. Mr. Speaker, there are an awful lot of protections here that are needed, and the people are not asking for much.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to present an amendment to the member's bill.

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** The proposed amendment would be as such.

“(1) In the third recital clause by replacing the comma with a semicolon; (2) by adding a fourth whereas clause which reads: ‘Whereas it is incumbent upon the provincial government to ensure that our natural environment is protected from harmful industrial processes;’; (3) by adding a fifth whereas clause which reads:

‘whereas citizens of the province are calling for a moratorium on slickwater fracking until government develops comprehensive regulation while also ensuring that each proposed project undergoes a conclusive environmental assessment to determine whether it is safe for the environment, the integrity of water supplies and human health,’ (4) in the resolution clause by replacing the words ‘safely while protecting’ with ‘if conclusive environmental assessments ensure the protection of’”.

Mr. Speaker, I have several copies of this amendment, and it is seconded by the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

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

Order, please!

We have an amendment put forward by the Member for St. John's East. The House will now take a brief recess to consider whether the amendment is in order.

### Recess

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

We have considered the amendment as put forward by the Member for St. John's East and have determined that the amendment is not in order.

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

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

We would have hoped to make the amendment stronger, making good note that the people of the West Coast, with their concerns, would have been noted on that. It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker. I will relay the floor to somebody else so they carry on the debate.

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

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

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

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

**MR. HEDDERSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I certainly would like to rise today to speak on this private member's motion, a motion that has generated some good debate this afternoon, debate that is absolutely necessary, because we understand the concerns that the people of the Province have with regard to any project that comes forward – any project, I would say, Mr. Speaker; when we are talking about any project, whether you are simply building a shed out in your back yard, or a house, or a megaproject like Muskrat Falls, it is going to leave some sort of an environmental footprint. We have to ensure that footprint, that intervention, is of such a nature that it is, what I call, environmentally friendly.

Again, this is a project that we understand will be coming forward for our assessment. When I look down through the motion, Mr. Speaker, I see and can agree with some of the points, but not all of the points that are made with regard to the motion that has been put forward today.

I will start off, Mr. Speaker, just going down through it. We do know that there is potentially oil out there. There have been some reports back that indicate that there is some amount of oil. Whether it is billions, I am not exactly sure, but we do know that some test results have come back indicating that there is oil. We also know that it has been difficult to, obviously, get any oil flowing back up to the surface, so therefore we see this proponent probably coming forward with a procedure that may indeed bring a flow of oil.

Whereas the second talks about that petroleum exploration needs the certainty and confidence of a stable regulatory regime. Mr. Speaker, I will point out that when we talk regulation of a drilling environment, we have what I call a very stable, very robust regulatory regime that is legislated through a number of different acts. You have to take into account, Mr. Speaker, the Environmental Protection Act, the Water

Resources Act, and, of course, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Act under Natural Resources.

This establishes for us, as a government, the framework that we need in order to assess any project that comes forward. I stress the term framework, because that is already in place. What this is asking us as a government to do is to go back to square one, to look at the legislation, to look at the framework, and to somehow or another start at ground zero and build it up again.

I am making the case, Mr. Speaker, that does not need to be done. As a matter of fact, a lot of these acts and the legislation that ensued came through the previous Administration because, again, it was important then, as it is now, to have in place a framework, an absolute framework that is going to be able to allow us as a government to do what needs to be done.

Under this environmental assessment process, which is very robust, a process that –

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

**MR. HEDDERSON:** I was just given some instructions there, Mr. Speaker, and I will go as quickly as I possible can. I think I know the reason and it is a very good reason.

What I am saying to you, and with all due regard to the hon. member who brought it forward, I have already had a conversation. Unfortunately, as a government, we cannot support something that is already in place, but I think what is absolutely important to understand is the aspect of regulations. Regulations are so important, and there is a whole regiment of regulations under the Natural Resources Act, under our Environmental Protection Act as well, that will allow me as a regulator to clearly lay it out.

Two of the members, the Member for St. John's East and the Member for Bay of Islands, the two of them stood up and spoke. I think what I got from it was that we have to ensure there is absolute protection, and protection along a number of different ways. I can assure the people of the Province of Newfoundland and

Labrador that we have the ability, Mr. Speaker, to make sure the protective measures are put in place for the proponent.

The facts have not yet been presented because the proponent has yet to register, but when the registration does take place I would say to you that no project is going to go further, Mr. Speaker, until the proper information is provided. The information that will come in will be an open consultation process, because the proponent has to put in all information that is necessary. Right down to the components, the chemicals that are going to be used in any type of procedure, that will have to be disclosed. That is an important one. I want the people of the Province to know that will not be voluntary. That will be mandatory. In those sorts of circumstances we need to know, as a government, all the information.

As for protection – I will just go down through a list very quickly; I know my time is running down. There are a number of factors, and I think this will cover what the members have gotten and the mover has brought forward. While no projects related to fracking on the West Coast have been registered with the Province for environmental assessment to date, there are a number of factors that will be taken into consideration should one be registered. Such as, and it is important: potential risks or impacts on groundwater contamination. That is about volume and that is about contamination. Handling and treatment of any waste streams for discharges or toxic substances by-products. Three, potential air emissions – I think that was alluded to – as well, environmental effects monitoring program.

It is not only that, but there will be monitoring. A baseline established before a project begins and monitoring all through the course of whatever the timeline of that project is. Monitoring, so if there is any change in that baseline it can be identified and quickly addressed. Environmental protection plans as well as contingency plans in the event of an accident and necessary bonding to cover any of such cost, and back to knowing everything that that proponent is going to be.

I say to the hon. members and to the people of the Province, we do, as a government, have the necessary regime in place in order to protect the environment, the people of this Province. As well, I as the Minister of Environment and Conservation can put the conditions, any conditions that we see necessary upon a proponent in any project. That will safeguard, because during this whole process – the initial process will take forty-five days. During that time we will be encouraging any stakeholder, especially the general public, to make their concerns known.

The proponent must make sure that all the information regarding the project is on its way. With regard to transparency and openness, all of this information will be posted on the Web site for everyone to see, digest and go.

Unfortunately, I cannot support the motion as it is written. I do support the principle of making sure that we will go forward with the regulations, with the assessments that are necessary to safeguard the people and the environment with regard to this or any other project that comes forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman):** The hon. the Member for St. John's South.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak in support of the motion put forward by the Member for St. Barbe. I thank the Member for St. Barbe for allowing me some of his time to speak to the motion. I know his time is very short now and I am cutting into that, so I will make my comments brief.

We do need specific regulations to deal with this. Government says we do not, the regulations are in place, but we do not have specific regulations to deal with fracking. While we do need to protect our economic future and the future of jobs for this Province, we also need



to protect our water, we need to protect our people, and we need to protect our tourism, Mr. Speaker.

Those are things we have seen with Baie Verte Mines, we have seen with Buchans, and we have seen with fluorspar mines and so on; we cannot trade off short-term jobs and destroy the environment. So we need to ensure the regulations are in place, and I do not believe the regulations as they stand – and I served two-and-a-half years in Environment, Mr. Speaker. I do not believe that the regulations that are in place today are sufficient enough to deal with fracking.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of jurisdictions around the world, including in North America, that have concerns with fracking. The reason they have concerns with fracking: there are tens of thousands of gallons of water used in each well that is drilled, mixed with a chemical cocktail to fracture the hole that is drilled to allow for the release of natural gas and other petroleum products.

Mr. Speaker, we need to know what is going to happen with the wastewater. We need to know where it is going to be treated, if it is going to be treated. What chemicals will the wastewater contain? How will it be transported? Where will it be stored? Will the proper people and agencies be trained to deal with any emergencies? These are all things that regulations would ensure are in place.

While we need the royalties and while we need the employment, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that fracking can help provide that, I do not believe we should do it without the proper regulations in place. I do support the amendment. I do hope that the proper regulations will be in place to allow Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to take advantage of whatever natural resources we have here, but if we are going to develop our natural resources, we have to do it in the best interests of the people of the Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the various speakers this afternoon. This is a very important issue to the whole Province, but it is absolutely critical in my district. My district in the Sally's Cove area, the entire area off Trout River and north to Bellburns, you would call this pretty much where it is going to happen if it gets to happen.

There is a really big concern that people are using fracking as the issue and my district as the battlefield. These are anti-development people, they want no development regardless, so they are going throw up all sorts of scare tactics to try to prevent economic development in a region that desperately needs it.

To give you an example of some of the misinformation that is going out, back on November 14, the day before Shoal Point did their first presentation, a group supposedly from Sally's Cove, although they were not really from Sally's Cove, put on a presentation and in presenting to a group of sixty or seventy people said: This is not really what is going to happen here, what we are going to show you, but this is good enough for our purposes to get the message across. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is not good enough – misinformation is not good enough.

Another item of misinformation – and I was disappointed that the member who brought the earlier amendment said that the World Heritage Site designation for Gros Morne National Park could be in jeopardy – absolutely, totally false. Anybody who says that does not understand why Gros Morne National Park received the historic designation – the same as L'Anse aux Meadows.

Gros Morne National Park will no more lose its designation than if you went down to L'Anse aux Meadows and bulldozed the huts that were put after the Vikings were there. The Vikings were there a thousand years ago, Gros Morne National Park received its international historic designation – it is a World Heritage Site because of the geology. It is only found in a couple of

places in the world that the geology came up – not even in the area where the drilling is going to be.

The individuals who comment probably do not even know why or where or how. It is because of how the mountains came up in Trout River area, and they came up upside down, and it is the Tablelands. You could have to level everything from Corner Brook to Port Saunders and you still would have a World Heritage Site, because that is how it happened. So, people who are raising these fears are raising these fears either recklessly because they do not know, or maliciously because they do know and they are trying to set fear into people.

The difficulty that I have with the people who are opposed to it who are primarily supporters of the Third Party is that while – and it gives reference to a speech that I heard Bob Rae give in Gander in November, and Bob Rae said that I understand the people of the Third Party, and he named them, and they can share up a cake better than anybody that I know. He said: The only problem is that they do not know how to bake a cake in the first place. They are sharing up somebody else's cake. It is easy to share up somebody else's cake when you do not put any effort, any development into it.

We have seen what the Third Party has been able to do in other provinces. They absolutely halted economic development under Dave Barrett in BC. Bob Rae ramped up Ontario's debt by 250 per cent, massive deficits so that they could not even afford to keep public employees employed on a full-time basis. Every third Friday they would have to let them off; the days were called Rae Days because they had to take a day off. That is what we will be looking at in this Province if we decide to go that far left with our socialist party.

Now, the problem that I see here is that we have a need to decide, and the decision needs to be to go ahead. I would say that failing to decide is deciding to fail in this instance. We must make a decision with all the information that is available, but we must not be so fearful of

imaginary, dreamt-up fears that we are frozen in place, unable to decide.

People who talk about bringing in a moratorium – a moratorium is to stop something that is going on. We do not need a moratorium for something that has not happened. I would think that just simply using the word moratorium, after what we saw with the cod moratorium in this Province, is another fear tactic to get people up in arms against this potential decision, to show that we are anti-development, that you should not come here and try to set up a business, and you should not try to develop our economy.

There are people in some of the more urban centres of this Province who want to deny economic opportunity to people in more remote areas, more remote areas where I live, where people I represent live, and where many of my colleagues across the hall and on this side also represent, in order to gain political advantage for people in and around St. John's and the other areas. The people who – one commentator called the rubber-boot crowd – are determined to destroy development. From my area, we will have absolutely no part of it, and, Mr. Speaker, that is why I urge members on all sides of the House to support this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those in favour of the motion, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Motion defeated.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Division.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Division has been called.

Summon the members.

**Division**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Are the whips ready for the question?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Ready.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

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

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

**CLERK:** Mr. King, Mr. Hutchings, Mr. Davis, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Jackman, Mr. Hedderson, Mr. Verge, Mr. Littlejohn, Mr. Granter, Mr. Cornect, Mr. McGrath, Mr. Dalley, Mr. Felix Collins, Mr. Sandy Collins, Mr. Kent, Mr. Lane, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Dinn, Mr. Brazil, Ms Perry, Mr. Kevin Parsons, Mr. Little, Mr. Cross, Mr. Pollard, Mr. Peach, Mr. Crummell, Mr. Forsey, Mr. Russell.

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

**CLERK:** Mr. Speaker, the ayes twelve, the nays twenty-eight.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The nays have it.

Motion defeated.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader and the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

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

**MS JONES:** Mr. Speaker, I think that is the loudest applause I have ever gotten in the House of Assembly, and it is coming in my last minutes here.

I certainly appreciate the time that has been given me today by all Members of the House of Assembly to stand and have a few short words.

I think there is some confusion out there today as to whether I was actually resigning today as the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

Just to clarify for the record, I will be resigning when the writ is dropped for the federal election in Labrador. If that happens between now and April 15, this could be very well be my last day in the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador, and I have been here for over seventeen years. It is quite a different experience, I suppose, a different speech than I have been used to making here. I do want to say some thank yous.

I was twenty-seven years old when I came into the House of Assembly. I came in here as an independent member, supported and endorsed by the wonderful people of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair. I sat over here where the Member for St. John's South sits today. I faced a government that was a majority and really comprised a lot of the seats across the room. They were not a new government; they were an experienced government. I faced full benches of ministers who had a tremendous experience as parliamentarians in the House of Assembly.

I grew up on the Coast of Labrador and I was probably as far removed from Confederation Building as you could ever imagine possible in this Province. Coming here was a relatively new experience for me – very new.

At that time, I grew up in a community where we were completely isolated. Not only did you not have the experience of being a part of what happened in Confederation Building, but in a lot of cases, you were cut off from many of the things that occurred throughout the Province. It was long before the days of computers and the Internet. For my Twitter friends across the way, you will understand.

Coming here was a tremendous eye-opener for me. Like a lot of people, when you start out in a job or in a new profession, you learn as you go. I had the opportunity to learn from some really great people in this Province. I had the opportunity to learn from many great parliamentarians who have had the opportunity to serve in this House of Assembly over the years.

I have learned from constituents who were strong leaders in their communities, who really had the passion and drive to make a difference. They taught me big lessons. They taught me that no issue was too small to take on, no battle was too big to challenge, and regardless of the result, it was always about how hard you fought and how well you did. That was the one thing that they taught me. Every day over those years that you stand on issues, no matter what side of the House that you were on, you always kept that in mind.

I think there are many times in the House that I have been here, people have talked about politicians, and oftentimes, we are not held in the highest of esteem throughout the public corridors I suppose. I tell you I hold politicians in very high esteem, because I know what the job entails. I know that politics is not about a party platform, and I know it is not about the degree of banter that goes on in a debate on a bill. It is really about how you reach out to make changes in this Province, fundamental changes that build a foundation that many others can build upon and grow over the years.

Being a parliamentarian and a politician speaks to how well you serve the people who send you here and ensuring that they are always your first priority. I see it as a very noble and very humbling profession, despite many of the naysayers that we often get.

One thing I have learned is that politics is not for the faint of heart. It is not for the thin-skinned and it is not for people who are not easily forgiving. I think we have all experienced that in this House of Assembly, even amongst the debate we have had with each other on many occasions. There always has to be a distinction between the views that you hold, the different opinions that you share, and the respect that you show each other as individuals. I can say that I have seen that demonstrated in many, many cases in this House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, we are all here because someone, some people in this Province, had confidence in us. They place their trust and their confidence in us to do a job for them. I have had the blessing

and I have had the privilege of having that trust and confidence placed in me through five provincial elections in the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

I have had tremendous support from my family and from my friends, and you need that support because you miss so many birthdays, so many anniversaries, so many special occasions, so many graduations and confirmations, and if your families are not accepting, understanding and supportive it makes it even more difficult to do your job.

I have had a wonderful campaign team and a wonderful networking team around me throughout my political career. Maybe it was because I started out as an independent member. I came here and I did not have a caucus. I did not have that teamwork and my team became people on the ground in my constituency who supported me. They became my caucus and they were the ones that I consulted, and to this day, I still consult them on a regular basis on everything I do.

I want to thank the leaders throughout the communities that I have had the opportunity to represent. A politician, I think, is only as good as the people that you represent. You are only as good as the leadership that comes behind you, as the leadership that you choose to become a part of. In the communities that I represented, I have seen people in those communities work so hard, work so hard as volunteers, and work hard without pay to put forward their visions and their ideas for change and for progress. I have seen people who work in different fields and occupations in these communities make so many sacrifices themselves to be on the road day and night, to be holding meetings, to be helping communities, writing proposals, and doing whatever it took to get a new business started, to get a new project going, and to get something happening progressive in their communities. That speaks volumes about the kind of people we have in this Province, and I have had the opportunity to represent many people like that, people who have been not only committed and dedicated, but very smart, very bright, very educated, and had great understanding of what

was required. Because of the work they were able to do, it allowed me to be more successful as their MHA and to be able to do my job better.

I want to thank my colleagues in the House of Assembly, some who I have served with longer than others. Some have come and some have gone. Those in my immediate caucus, I could not ask for a more supportive group of people. I have learned from them and I hope they have been able to learn a few things from me – the good things, anyway. I have really enjoyed serving in this caucus and with the members of the Official Opposition. I have gotten to know all of them personally and I know how committed they are to the job they do. They take their work very seriously.

Over the years I have been in bigger caucuses and I have been in smaller ones. I remember coming back here in 2007 after a general election in which Premier Williams formed the majority government. I came in; it was myself, Kelvin Parsons, the Member for Burgeo – La Poile at the time, and Roland Butler, the Member for Port de Grave. I remember the three of us sitting down at the board table in our little caucus meeting and saying: okay, one of us has to lead the party. Who is it going to be? At that time, they both invited me to do it and gave me their endorsement and their support to do it. I really appreciated them having that confidence in me because it was that position that really allowed me to grow and become stronger as an advocate and as a politician.

It was not easy times in the Official Opposition. We were three with one in the Third Party, the NDP, facing a majority government in this Province, and not just a majority government, but one of the most popular Premiers this Province has ever seen in terms of polling numbers and support. It was not easy times.

I remember in those days standing here in my place and bringing up issues with regard to wait lists at the hospital, patients that were not getting appointments on time, people going outside for treatment who did not have the funding to do so, people trying to travel to hospitals and so on. Sometimes I would think, you know, in the

bigger scheme of what they are dealing with, this seems like some days it might be so small; is anybody listening?

Well, what is comforting is that you do know that people are listening, because we have seen results on a lot of these things. I would say to any politician in this House of Assembly: do not ever think that an issue is too small to raise, because someone is always going to be listening, and do not think that they are not. I really believe that when you take on a position of governance, you take that very seriously, and you want to do what is right by people. Once you know what people's issues are, you are always better positioned to act on them.

To my other colleagues in the House of Assembly I want to say thank you for the support that you have given me in my time here on both sides of the House. I know I have not always been an easy person to deal with. I love heckling. I even heckle my own caucus; I think that is important, to keep them on their feet, Mr. Speaker.

I have enjoyed the debates that we have had here. I have enjoyed debating with people with differences of opinion. I think that is healthy and I think we all learn from that. We are not always going to walk in here and everybody have the one perspective on the direction that you need to take in this Province or the one direction on issues. If we did, well, you know, we probably would not be here, or we would all be on the one side on everything. How boring would that be for the rest of the people out there in the public? They would have nothing to tweet about these days. We give them lots to tweet about, but we give them lots to think about, and they give us lots to think about as well.

In my time here, Mr. Speaker, I have not only seen historic changes in my district. I have seen historic changes in this entire Province. I am going to speak for just a couple of minutes with regard to some of those changes in my district.

In 1996, when I ran in the first election in the month of February, I campaigned in most of my district by snowmobile, because there were no

roads. I went in and out of communities in the dead of winter and it was not very comfortable. In the 1999 election, I was driving into some of the communities for the first time. By the 2003 election, we were driving into almost all of the other communities. By the 2007 election, we were connecting some of the access communities and we were able to drive in there. By the last election, we were driving into Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

That is the tremendous change that I have seen over the time that I have been here in this House of Assembly. That was done because there were people in this Province, people in this House of Assembly who saw the vision that we shared in that part of the Province to have change, to have infrastructure, to build roads, to do things that was going to allow people to have further opportunity in life.

Today, I am watching children right across my district – and I think that is probably the most significant milestone for me in politics, is to walk into a school today and know there are children who are having the opportunity to compete in sports, to be able to travel out to science and heritage fairs and things like this, that we never, ever had the opportunity to do when we grew up there. That to me is some of the most educational pieces that you can give the children of our Province, is the opportunity to learn and explore on their own, to form independent views about things. You can only do that when you give them some free rein to do it. Over the years we have been able to do that. It makes me feel good to know they have those opportunities ahead of them.

In terms of the Province, Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity and the privilege to stand in this House of Assembly through some of the most historic debates in this Province. I was here when we did White Rose, Terra Nova, Hebron, Hibernia South and – did I forget one? I was here with Voisey's Bay, Muskrat Falls, education reform, FPI restructuring. All of those things, I was a part of that debate. Not just in terms of learning about it, but I had the opportunity to contribute to it, to ask questions

about it, to provide opinions on it and to listen to what other people in the Province had to say.

I think over that period of time, we have seen a lot of change that has happened in this Province. We have seen a lot of it that has happened for the good. Oftentimes we have seen a lot of reception to change as well. I have been here in the days when there have been lockouts and protests, and there have been rallies.

There have been people not so happy about decisions of governments that I was a part of, or governments on the other side of the House. I guess that is all a part of it. One of the things I have learned in my time – and, by the way, I have held every position in the House of Assembly except the one you hold, Mr. Speaker, and the Premier. Also, the Government House Leader, I did not hold that position, but I think I have held all the others.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** So far.

**MS JONES:** So far, yes.

The one thing I think I have learned from having the experience in all of these various roles is that there are difficult decisions that often have to be made in governance. They are not easy and I do not underestimate to believe and to think that it is easy. I wanted to point that out because I think that is often lost on many people. They think out there in society that decisions we often make as politicians come relatively easy to us, but they do not. There is a great deal of aggravation and deliberation that goes into some of those decisions and they are not always done easily.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to clue up now because I know my colleagues, when they see the clock go past 5:00 o'clock, it is Wednesday, I am sure they have listened to me enough over the years. They do not want to sit and listen to me for too much longer.

Mr. Speaker, I have been asked a lot in the last few days: Why would you want to step back and have a run at federal politics, and so on? I think we all come to a point sometimes when we have

to reflect and look at: Where do we go from here, and what change are we going to make? I have made my decision, and I am very comfortable with my decision. I intend to go forward from here.

I do not think it is any surprise to anybody in this Legislature that my first love has always been Labrador. The opportunity is there for me to look at asking the people of Labrador to give me their support, and I will certainly do that.

It is like I said to a person a while ago, because I remembered the quote that I had heard, and that was, no matter what you do in life it is not going to be easy, but what you have to look at: Is it going to be worth it? One thing I will always do, and I would ask my colleagues to keep the same thought, and that is: When we move forward, whether it is from this place or within this place, that we always look at the fact that it is never going to be easy, some of the things we take on, but at the end of the day it will all be worth it, and the contribution we all make is worth it.

Thank you all for the time that I have had here. I appreciate the support you have shown me, both my colleagues, the staff of the House of Assembly over the years, and most importantly, the staff in the Opposition Office. I know how hard these people work every single day for the people of this Province and I wish them all the best as I wish all of you the best.

Thank you very much.

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

**MS JONES:** Note, Mr. Speaker, I got a standing ovation in the House of Assembly.

I want to thank the media, too. I want to thank the media, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I do not think that we can leave this House today at this historic moment – because it is an historic moment, actually – without being able to say a few words to the Member for Cartwright – L’Anse au Clair and to thank her for the service that she has rendered to her constituents for seventeen years.

It took a lot of courage at the age of twenty-seven to run for the first time as an independent because of her commitment. That is what caused her to run at that time, I think: her commitment to the people whom she ended up representing, to show that she was the one that they trusted, then to continue as a member of the Liberal Party as she has done, and to play all the roles that she has played, as she has outlined in what she has said here this evening.

She is the longest-sitting member in the House. I think it is right that we recognize that and recognize the history of that here today. She has not said it, but there were times when – well, she is now the only woman in her caucus, and was part of the times in this House when women in the caucus were not as numerous as they are now, and has been an model in that way for women as well, especially in her own party and in her constituency.

I am really happy on behalf of my caucus to wish her really well and to thank her for the role that she has played in this House. We all have to be honest: the road that she is going on next, we are all going to be fighting for something at that time. We all know that.

In a general way, in your life, going on in your future, I do wish you well.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. BALL:** If I can have, Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes to say it is really not goodbye for me, because I am sure we are going to get the opportunity to work with Yvonne Jones on

many occasions over the next few years. She is a very young woman.

I will say I first met Yvonne back in the late 1990s. She has also been an inspiration for me, and I will say that in my introduction to politics, Yvonne was always someone who I looked at as an inspiration and someone who always challenged me.

Even going back through some of the challenges that she had to face in life; I know that we had lots and lots of chats about different things in both our personal lives, I would say. I have always felt better leaving a conversation with the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair. I always felt more comfortable, I always felt inspired, and I always left with something that helped me grow and made me stronger as a person.

Over the last year I have had lots of opportunities to spend with our member, lots of opportunities waiting for our member, and looked at my clock many times and watched the seconds count down and saying: where is she? I quickly realized that through some of the things that she has had to deal with in her life, her clock is a little different than the clock would be for you and I. Always, though, I will say that even though many times it might have been down to the seconds, the outcome was always positive. She always delivered on time; she may not have always shown up on time, but she always delivered on time.

Mr. Speaker, for me, as I said, she gave me the opportunity. She stood by my side and we will do the same for her. She did everything here today in complimenting people – except ask for a political donation, which surprised me.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks by wishing her the best. I can say now that, unlike some members, I wish her all the success as she leaves this caucus. It is kind of mixed feelings for me, because we have had a great friendship. She has certainly been the – as the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi quite clearly said – only female member in our caucus, but, you know what? She has been much more than that. She

has been a tremendous part of that; she has helped us develop as a team. I wish her the best in the future. We will be there side by side over the next couple of weeks working hard on her behalf.

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We wish you all the best.

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

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

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

Before I offer a few words, I just remind the Leader of the Opposition, there is a half-hour difference in time between the Island and Labrador that would account for some of the delays, perhaps.

Certainly on behalf of the Premier and our caucus and the government, I also want to offer our congratulations to the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair and a thank you on behalf of the people of the Province for the service you have provided. Seventeen years is indeed a long time to serve in public life and to go through many elections, particularly in your circumstances, having come in as an independent and the ropes you have gone through.

I think it is fair to say, partisan politics aside, we have all enjoyed the spirit of debate in the House and the level of debate that you have brought to the House has always been interesting.

On a personal note, Mr. Speaker, I have been here for two terms with the member, but I had the great fortune last year, with a couple of my colleagues here in the House, to actually travel to Labrador. I have said this before publicly, but I will say thank you again because if there is one thing that was a memory for me, a lot of memories, but one thing that stood out was that there was no partisan politics. We were taken into the communities of her district, into schools and community centres, and a number of other



places and there was a never an ounce of partisan politics at all.

The member spoke very highly of us as Ministers of the Crown who were there and introduced us to people and spoke highly of government with respect to any commitments or things we have done. I think that is a measure of the person that you are talking about. For that you are to be congratulated, because not everybody can do that, on either side of the House.

Personally, I certainly thank you for that. I do not want to talk about the federal politics, but I do want to say to you on behalf of government we wish you all the best in your personal life and whatever the future brings for you. We wish you nothing but good health and good happiness. Thank you for your service to the Province.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** As the Speaker of the House, I think I would be remiss if I did not speak on behalf of all of you and wish the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair all the best as she pursues her political agenda.

I do want to remind her, though, and give her one piece of advice: The Speaker at the House of Commons, should you get there, is much more strict when it comes to timelines. He may not be as generous as he moves out on the edge of his seat. They have a clock that actually shuts you down, so mid-sentence you will be cut off in the House of Commons. I give you that bit of advice so you do not find yourself being interrupted. You might take a lesson from this House: Be much more sensitive in your next House to time limits.

I do want to wish you well and thank you for the contribution that you have made to debate in this Assembly.

Thank you very much.

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

**MR. KING:** With the speakers concluded, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that the House do now adjourn.

**MR. SPEAKER:** This House now stands adjourned until Monday, April 15, at 1:30 p.m.