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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.

Before we start proceedings today, I want to welcome to our galleries the Jewish Community Havura of Newfoundland along with their President, Mr. Jonathon Richler.

Welcome to our Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we have members' statements from the District of St. John's North; the Member for the District of Bonavista South; the Member for the District of Port de Grave; the Member for the District of The Straits – White Bay North; and the Member for the District of St. John's East.

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House today to thank the Larkhall Academy community for inviting me to come to the school last week to attend the third annual parent breakfast.

Staff at Larkhall originally started the event to provide parents with an opportunity to engage with teachers, staff, and the school community in the learning environment of their children. It provides a positive, casual, no pressure way for parents and staff to interact in a relaxed atmosphere.

In addition to parents, Larkhall extends invitations to other community members, including artists, community leaders, and individuals who volunteer at the school. I, like many others, have been very happy to help out by joining the serving line.

A small organizing committee of staff members does the initial planning for the annual parent

breakfast. All present, and some past, staff members of Larkhall work together during the pre-day set up and at the breakfast itself to make the event successful. Attendance numbers are up each year. This year we served about 440 parents, children, and guests.

I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating the staff of Larkhall Academy for the continuing success of their annual parent breakfast.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bonavista South.

MR. LITTLE: Mr. Speaker, hon. colleagues, I rise today to recognize Bonavista native, and NHL player, Michael Ryder, who scored his 200 career goal on January 26 of this year. Michael is the first and only resident of our Province to reach this goal.

Son of Wayne and Debbie Ryder, Michael was the first drafted by the Montreal Canadiens in 1998.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LITTLE: He began his career playing for the Hull Olympiques of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League. During his three seasons in Hull, Michael captured All-Rookies Honour, Top Scorer Honours, and was bronze medalist with Canada's World Junior Team in 2000.

In 2003-2004, Ryder made his NHL debut with Montreal, finishing the season leading all rookies in points, power play points, shots and goals.

In July 2008, Ryder signed a three-year contract with Boston Bruins, and in 2011, helped the team win the Stanley Cup. This was only the second time ever that the cup was brought back to Newfoundland and Labrador.

In July 2011, he signed a two-year contract with the Dallas Stars and was then traded back to the

Montreal Canadiens during the 2012-2013 season.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LITTLE: Next to me is the hon. Member for Bonavista North who is a Toronto Maple Leaf fan and the hon. Member for Cape St. Francis who is a Boston fan. We can all agree, when one of our own excels as a true Newfoundlander on the national, international, and the world scene we are all proud and definitely commend one of our own.

Mr. Speaker, hon. colleagues, please join me in congratulating Michael Ryder on such a successful career.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Mr. Speaker, I stand today in this House to congratulate Amalgamated Academy on their production of Beauty and the Beast.

At the Western Region Drama Festival of the Eastern School District the performers and production received numerous awards. Leading the way were three young performers. Erin Mackey of North River won Best Junior Actress, Liam Dawson of Bay Roberts won Best Supporting Actor, and the Adjudicator Award went to Brady Snow-Bollard of North River for performing with a walking brace. Certificates of Excellence were awarded to John Efford Jr. and Liam Healey, and Phoebe Wilkins was also nominated for Best Supporting Actress.

The production itself won awards for the best musical, best use of light, best set design, best backstage crew, and drew sellout crowds for its performances prior to the festival.

We give accolades to those teachers and volunteers who worked so hard to make this show such a success. Mr. Marc Warren was

recognized with the Senior Adjudicator Award for his continued support and involvement in both the Amalgamated Academy and Ascension Collegiate productions.

I ask all members to join with me in congratulating Amalgamated Academy on such an outstanding production.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to congratulate some really golden girls – the Canon Richards Wildcats.

The Canon Richards Wildcats earned gold at home in Flower's Cove in the provincial Girls 2A high school ball hockey tournament this past weekend. Ten teams from across Newfoundland and Labrador competed for the title.

The weekend event saw many hockey fans come out and show their support as girls from across the Province displayed their dedication, skill, and talent. I hope everyone was able to bring back memories of their experience in The Straits – White Bay North. Winning is terrific, but we must remember it is the excitement of the game that keep the fans coming back.

The Wildcats advanced to the finals and defeated the King's Point Vikings 7-0 to win the provincial championship. Team members are: Allie Coles, Tana Genge, Yvonne Genge, Jessica Gould, Alyx Lawless, Trisha Lawless, Morgan McLean, Alyson Moores, Sandi Noseworthy, Jillian White, Megan White. Assistant coaches were Tony Lavallee and Mark Whalen, and Emma Coles was the coach and teacher sponsor.

I ask that all hon. members join me in congratulating the Canon Richards Wildcats, girls' 2A ball hockey champions.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On April 7, the Jewish Community Havura of Newfoundland and Labrador, with the co-operation of the Atlantic Jewish Council and the Beth-El Synagogue held their annual Holocaust Memorial Service.

The service is always moving, but this one was special. Not only was this the seventieth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the community hosted two Holocaust survivors who had made their home in this Province, Dr. Phillip Riteman and Mr. Ernie Mauskopf. In the audience were two grandchildren of Newfoundland soldiers who had helped liberate the European camps.

Almost 1,500 people came to the Sheraton Hotel this year to commemorate the people lost in the Holocaust. Together all those people, and many who were unable to attend, shared the grief, the hope, and all the emotions of this year's Holocaust Memorial Service.

Today, I ask all House members to join with me and recall the 6 million Jewish victims of the European Holocaust. We then also remember the millions of other victims of Nazism: the Romani, the Sinti, also known as the gypsies, the Catholics, homosexuals, mentally and physically disabled, the Social Democrats and Communists, partisans, political opponents of the Nazi regime and others slaughtered by the Nazis in those particular years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FRENCH: I rise in this hon. House to recognize athletes honoured at Sport Newfoundland and Labrador's recent Stars and Legends Awards Gala. This annual event involves the induction of new members into the Newfoundland and Labrador Sports Hall of Fame and the presentation of sports awards that recognize the athletic achievements in the Province.

Mr. Speaker, Raeleen Baggs, Linda Barrett, Alan Ross, Wayne Russell, and Nicola Will are the newest members of the Newfoundland and Labrador Sports Hall of Fame. These women and men have achieved much throughout their sporting careers and have set a wonderful example of our Province's up-and-coming young athletes and our sports community.

In addition to the induction ceremony, Sport Newfoundland and Labrador honoured the Province's top athletes. Basketball player Hannah Jardin, baseball player Myles Vincent, swimmer Katarina Roxon, rugby player Ciaran Hearn, baseball executive Robert Morgan, softball coach Jeff Kirk, gymnastics volunteer Lindsay Rayner, and the 3Cheers Pub softball team are all to be congratulated. All of these recipients are truly deserving of such an honour as they have put forth tremendous effort and commitment to their chosen sport.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial government is committed to providing provincial athletes with every opportunity explore their potential in sport performance. This is done through the Premier's Athletic Awards Program, the Elite Athlete Assistance Program, the National Travel Subsidy Initiative, and funding to provincial sports organizations.

I am pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that since the launch of Active Healthy Newfoundland and Labrador, a recreation and sport strategy in 2007, approximately \$172 million has been committed to recreational and sport infrastructure, programming, and athlete development throughout our Province. Just this morning, Mr. Speaker, the Premier turned the

sod on a brand-new \$22 million facility in the Town of Paradise.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FRENCH: That kind of investment helps our athletes compete at the highest level, and we will support the members of Team Newfoundland and Labrador at the Canada Games in Sherbrooke, Quebec, this August.

I invite all members of this hon. House to join with me in congratulating these women and men for their hard work, dedication, and the significant role they play in the advancement of sport throughout the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy. I noticed the Premier turning the sod on the new facility. She also turned the key to close the West Coast Training Centre out in Stephenville. So, we might add that.

To all these athletes and coaches and volunteers, Mr. Speaker, I offer my congratulations. I know a lot of the ones who were inducted into the Sports Hall of Fame. Back when I was a real young fellow, I knew a lot of those people playing in their sports. I remember Alan Ross. If anybody ever knew Alan Ross, you were whipped in shape pretty quick with Alan Ross.

I look back at Hannah Jardine and I tell her dad Mike, the only way she got to be such a good basketball player is because she started her roots at J.J. Curling when she lived in Corner Brook. Myles Vincent and we are all so proud of Katarina in her endeavours also out on the West Coast. So you can see this is all across the Province. I congratulate all the athletes. I congratulate all the people who inducted in their sports and the executive.

I see the government is taking a lot of credit, which they should because there has been a lot of money invested in sports in Newfoundland and Labrador, but we cannot forget the volunteers and the parents who make this a driving force. We have the facilities, we have the funding, and we also need the volunteers and the parents. I would be remiss if I did not recognize the volunteers and the coaches who spend endless hours and endless time with these athletes to ensure they can do the best they can when they can.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. These awards and recognitions acknowledging the contributions of our provincial athletes and coaches are so important, as they do incredible work and work so very hard and inspire others. Our elite athletes need continued support from government to travel outside the Province to compete on a higher level, despite our own infrastructure investments.

It is important to have a regional balance, as well, of high-calibre sports training centres across the Province. This comes at a time when government is pulling back in this year's Budget on the West Coast Training Centre and making cuts at the community level, downloading more responsibilities to financially strapped municipalities.

Congratulations, certainly, to these athletes and coaches.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Over the last decade, this Province has lost its marine rescue sub-centre, we have seen the downgrading of services in our Coast Guard services, and of course we have seen significant tragedies, those being the loss of Burton Winters, the *Ryan's Commander*, the *Melina and Keith II*, Cougar Flight 491, and the *Check-Mate III*. The recent federal AG is recommending that search and rescue services need to be improved across this country.

I ask the Premier: With all of this information, what more do you need to convince yourself that we need an inquiry?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I stated in this House yesterday, we are extremely concerned by the matters raised in the AG's report on search and rescue. Everyone in this Province is seriously concerned because all of us, to this day, are still connected in some way or other to the sea, and the health and safety of the people who earn their livings on the sea or who play on the sea are extremely important to us.

Today, as a result of this independent, objective, and systematic review of air search and rescue by the Auditor General, we are asking the federal government to immediately begin implementation of all of his recommendations.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BALL: Mr. Speaker, these departments have already agreed with the recommendations; that is clearly outlined in the AG's report. Concern is not enough. What we need, Mr. Speaker, is courage from this government. We need will from this government. We need a public inquiry.

We did that with the Wells Inquiry. We have seen that in our history. Our history has shown that we get positive results from inquiries. We remember the Cameron inquiry and we remember the Wells inquiry. It is obvious now, with all of this information, that we need an inquiry into search and rescue services in our Province.

I ask the Premier again: Will you call for an inquiry, a full inquiry, into search and rescue services in our Province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Auditor General of Canada has done an independent, objective, and systematic review of our search and rescue services in this country, Mr. Speaker. The matter has been well studied and well reported on, too, I might say, and recommendations have come about as a result of it.

The time for study is done, Mr. Speaker. What we need now is action. The people of our Province, the people of our country, who earn their living on the sea, could be at risk because of the lack of capacity that has been clearly identified in search and rescue, Mr. Speaker. That is why we are calling on the federal government not to study more, but to act.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have seen enough tragedies in our own Province for our own government to call for action. We need to see action from this government, not more study, not calling on the federal government to implement and just call for action. We need to see more action from our own government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BALL: As an example, the minimum standard response time for the Canadian Forces is, what, 8:00 to 4:00 o'clock, Monday to Friday – it is thirty minutes. On the weekends, it is two hours. I say, Mr. Speaker, globally the response time is fifteen to thirty minutes, twenty-four hours a day.

I ask the Premier: Your lobbying efforts with this federal government have failed; will you now commit to making improvements to response time a priority for your government?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has just pointed out inadequacies in search and rescue, inadequacies that are clearly identified in the Auditor General's report. I expect that is where he lifted that passage from.

Mr. Speaker, the review has been done. It has been independent, it has been systematic, and it has been extremely thorough. It certainly does identify issues around scheduling, Mr. Speaker, because the services are not focused around the busiest times commercially or recreationally. There are issues with task time; there is issue with aging infrastructure, aircraft and vessels. There are problems with communications technology. What we need now – we know what the issues are, we need action.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What the federal Auditor General's report did not do is study the provincial responsibilities. It did not study the impact of, for instance, the closure of our Coast Guard offices. One of the most glaring deficiencies identified by the Auditor General is with the search and rescue information systems. It is near the breaking point he called it, and we cannot even effectively track search and rescue operations.

In your full court press, Premier, that was mentioned yesterday: What steps have you taken to address this vital service to ensure the safety of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General does address communications and aging communications technology within search and rescue, and recommends that it be replaced. He talks about task time, Mr. Speaker, and recommends that be totally reviewed. He talks about any number of systemic issues that run throughout search and rescue.

He has done an independent, objective, systematic review outlining under capacity, the need for more training, more technology, and more infrastructure in search and rescue, Mr. Speaker. He does talk about the Marine Sub-Centre and those communications. You should read the whole report, I say to the Leader of the Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier has made comments about lobbying and communications with the federal government. As a matter of fact, last year I believe it was on April 3, there was mention of a call going to the federal minister.

I would ask the Premier: Will you please table in this House of Assembly the communications that you have had with the federal government?

We know that it has not worked. We need to see the information, the people of this Province need to see the information. Will you please table that information, I ask the Premier?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious issue for the people of this Province. I do not know of any issue that is more important to the men and women of Newfoundland and Labrador and to the children of Labrador who have their parents earning their living on the water.

Mr. Speaker, every opportunity that we have to talk about search and rescue, which is every meeting with the Prime Minister, every meeting with the minister, we raise this important issue.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Mr. Speaker, we talk in meetings. We do not write notes back and forth to one another, I say to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, we raised this issue because it is important to us, it is important to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We have a solid report here, Mr. Speaker. We are saying to the federal government, act on it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, the federal Auditor General's report is very alarming. The reports on search and rescue finds that while minimal standards of readiness have been met there are still two factors which present significant risk, the availability of trained search and rescue personnel and aging equipment, including aircraft.

I ask the Premier: Are you asking the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to be satisfied with minimum standards, or will you push for the best search and rescue standards in the world for this Province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, search and rescue is a clear responsibility of the federal government. We are not responsible for air search and rescue.

Mr. Speaker, like all other services that the federal government are responsible for, we demand the same quality and the same excellence of services here in this Province as anywhere else in the country, anywhere else in the world. We want the gold standard. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador deserve the gold standard, Mr. Speaker. That is our position with the federal government. It is a position we are going to continue to press and there should not be any division between both sides of the House on this matter.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, minimum standards for search and rescue should never be acceptable when it comes to saving lives. The Auditor General clearly states that national standards need to be improved upon, especially

when it comes to availability of resources and equipment. Since the audit, Mr. Speaker, this Province has a downgrading of service, potentially putting us below minimum standards.

I ask the Premier: Will you lobby Ottawa to reinstate the Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre in St. John's and prevent other Coast Guard stations from closing?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our position on the Marine Sub-Centre has not changed. We believe that service should not have been moved out of Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General in his report does speak about the Marine Sub-Centre, how it happened to be put here in the first place and why it has been drawn back to JRCC, and why Quebec's Marine Sub-Centre to date has not been called back to JRCC. The Auditor General speaks at length about it.

Mr. Speaker, we expect a gold standard. It is important to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We have had a report that is very objective, that is very comprehensive, and makes recommendations. We are not calling for more study, we are calling for action.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, the time for rhetoric and spin is long overdue.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, the Premier cannot push responsibility back on the federal government alone. Newfoundlanders and

Labradorians deserve and need concrete action on search and rescue now. Mr. Speaker, the federal government has opened the door, now it is up to the Premier.

I ask the Premier: Will you call this inquiry to ensure the protection and safety of the people of this Province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador takes its responsibilities very, very seriously. This is a very serious issue for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and there will be no rhetoric and spin on this side of the House and if there is none to be on the other side of the House, I recommend that the member stay in his seat.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that this is not about rhetoric and spin on this side of the House. This is indeed a very serious issue. I asked a question about tabling documents and letters from the federal government, in this particular case Minister MacKay.

Last year on April 3 we asked a question in this House, and this was the response from the Premier. "I have immediately put in a call to Minister MacKay to have him confirm that the federal government is prepared to engage in a joint inquiry – because that is what we would need, Mr. Speaker..."

It goes on to say, "Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to hearing back from him, as well as hearing back from him on the questions we posed to him in our letter. Once that is received, Mr. Speaker, I will have more to say on the matter."

I ask the Premier: Will you please table this letter.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we did ask the federal government to participate. I had a number of conversations with Minister MacKay. I had conversations with the Prime Minister. I asked them to participate in a joint inquiry and they refused to do so, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it was a very important issue to us. It was not quite so important to the Leader of the Opposition. When he had the opportunity to meet with Minister MacKay himself, he did not go. He sat outside the door while his House Leader went inside and met with Minister MacKay, and even then she did not ask for an inquiry. Now, that is the action that speaks for itself and the motivation from that side of the House.

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador know this is an important issue. We call on the federal government to act.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Mr. Speaker, you talk about rhetoric and spin. The Premier knows that is not what happened with Minister MacKay last year in April. She knows the difference. I did speak with the minister, this was brought up, and it was addressed there in Hansard on the same day.

I ask the Premier, she should apologize for that statement. That is not the case. For her to suggest that this is not important to me, she should be ashamed of herself – she should be ashamed. We represent the people of this

Province and she does not take ownership of this. That is a shameful statement to make, I say, and she should retract that statement, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to dwell a great deal on this part, but I had a conversation with Minister MacKay and I asked him – yes, you met him in the corridor and you had a chat with him. I understand that.

I asked Minister MacKay: What was the representation from the Leader of the Opposition when he met with him in Ottawa? He said: I did not meet with the Leader of the Opposition; he was outside my office while I met with the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair. I said: Did the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, on behalf of her Liberal Party here in Newfoundland and Labrador, ask for a joint inquiry? No, Premier, he said, they did not.

Now, if you have an issue with that, you take it up with Minister MacKay. We talked about it here in the House at that time, Mr. Speaker. It is in the record.

This issue is bigger than this. This is important to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We call on the federal government to act as the Attorney General has recommended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, Monday night in Budget Estimates it was revealed that government will save \$600 by cutting the circuit court in Bonavista and just \$1,000 by cutting the court in Burgeo. These miniscule savings cannot compare to the hundreds of dollars in

costs incurred by people who will travel hours to attend circuit courts at tremendous cost.

So I ask the minister: Are these so-called efficiencies in cuts to our justice system what was intended or is government really just trying to download the costs onto the residents of this Province?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, as people would recall here, this issue was raised in this House actually pre-Budget. It was not connected to the Budget. It was raised before Christmas.

The Provincial Court – the chief judge did a thorough review of the circuit courts and court delivery in the Province, looking at best practices, looking at ways to find efficiencies. Last year, I am advised by the judge that there was more than \$200,000 spent on the circuit courts, and that is for travel costs and rental of locations only. It does not factor in the salaries of judges, the salaries of lawyers, and security and other personnel who may have to travel from time to time

This decision, Mr. Speaker, was not taken lightly, I am told, by the judge, but the chief judge is the one who made this decision on behalf of the courts, independent of government.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Minister, you will recall Monday night you saved \$50,000, and the figures do not lie here – \$600 you save by cutting it in Bonavista; \$1,000 by cutting it in Burgeo; and maybe \$4,000 if we cut it all in Labrador.

The previous Minister of Justice for this government said that access delayed is access denied. The elimination of these courts in many areas of the Province will delay justice for hundreds who have to travel long distances for

their day in court. Travel expenses, child care, loss of work, and other costs come out of the pockets of residents of this Province.

I ask the Minister: Why are you denying timely access to justice so you can save a few hundred dollars?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, as I said a few moments ago, first of all, that is not my decision to make. It was a decision that is made by the judiciary on behalf of the Provincial Court.

I would also remind the member that as I outlined any number of factors that would have been considered as part of the decision to realign the circuit court process, equally as important was maximizing the use of resources. So, the chief judge advises me that he would have certainly considered the amount of downtime that would have occurred in Stephenville – the busiest court, I am told, in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador – and the justice that may have been denied and delayed for the people there, who would have had to wait while the judge was away tending to other business.

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Third Party.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

There is immediacy to search and rescue. When people are in peril, they are in urgent need of help right away. The Premier here in the House today is saying that she is calling upon the federal government to put in place all the recommendations of the Auditor General. What I want to say to the Premier, Mr. Speaker, is calling on the government is one thing, what the people from this Province are going to be looking for is actions.

What is he going to do to impress upon Stephen Harper the urgency of immediate improvement to search and rescue capabilities? Actions, not words, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said yesterday and again today in this House, this is a very important issue to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. There is not a family in Newfoundland and Labrador who is not somehow connected to somebody earning their living on the water.

This is a serious issue when we understand that the capacity that should exist to help people if they are in trouble is not there. Thus, we have the recommendations coming from the Auditor General which we absolutely accept.

Mr. Speaker, we are calling on the federal government to implement all the recommendations. I have tasked my minister to write immediately to the minister responsible to reiterate our position, and to ask for a meeting as soon as possible to discuss these important issues with him.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I hear what the Premier is saying and now my question for the Premier, Mr. Speaker is: Doesn't she as the Premier of this Province, as the leader of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, have the power to get the Prime Minister on the phone and meet with him herself?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I am not about to play political football with an issue that is this important to the people of the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Mr. Speaker, the minister has primary responsibility for this portfolio. This is the appropriate place for us to start. We are moving immediately; we expect a response from the minister in short order. If we do not receive the meeting in a timely manner, then we will take other steps.

Mr. Speaker, all sides of the House ought to be united in our voice, calling as one voice to the federal government on an issue that is extremely important, calling not for study, but for action for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

That is what I am calling for. I want us to have one voice around these recommendations, but the Premier is the leader of the government here and has a leadership role to play.

Mr. Speaker, the men and women who work at sea do not keep banker's hours. The current federal air force search and rescue response time standard is to dispatch a search plane within thirty minutes of receiving a distress call, but only during business hours. After 4:00 p.m. or on weekends they require two hours to respond, which everyone in this Province knows is absolutely ridiculous.

I ask the Premier, Mr. Speaker: What immediate actions is she planning to impress upon her federal counterparts that people working on the water, as she knows, need best safety and rescue practices of thirty minutes wheels up, twenty-four seven?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, absolutely, we absolutely endorse all of the recommendations of the Auditor General. He talks about these things. He talks about aging vessels and aging aircraft. He speaks of a lack of capacity in human resources so that people are not able to have the state-of-the-art training that they need. He talks about lapses in scheduling, Mr. Speaker, so that when the oceans are most busy with commercial activity and recreation the search and rescue have not the capacity to respond. They have not scheduled properly.

He talks about communications, Mr. Speaker. He talks about our former Marine Sub-Centre. He talks about Quebec's Marine Sub-Centre, the JRCC, and he talks about communications technology. We agree with all of it, and we call on the federal government to act on his recommendations.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The thirty minute standby for eight hours a day, Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. means that only 17 per cent of the incidents requiring search and rescue services occur during that period. Over 80 per cent of the tasking for

search and rescue aircraft happened during the so-called quiet hours after 4:00 p.m. before 8:00 a.m. and on weekends.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking the Premier to tell us: What is she going to do to make sure that people in Newfoundland and Labrador are not going to have to wait months and months and maybe years before these recommendations of the Auditor General are put in place?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, not only are we calling on the federal government to implement these recommendations immediately, we are asking the federal government for a timeline so they can tell very clearly the people of Newfoundland and Labrador when they can expect these recommendations to be fully implemented.

Mr. Speaker, we are always engaged with the federal government. Whether they listen to us or not is not something we always have a great deal of control over, but that does not stop us from being engaged. We do not do social visits once a year or once every couple of years like the crowd opposite, Mr. Speaker. We engage on a daily basis and we push these issues that are important to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, as we are doing now, Mr. Speaker. With one voice I hope Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are saying to the federal government act now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Town of Torbay is looking for an alternate water supply. Its first choice was South Pond

only to have the town discover that the water supply is tainted with hydrocarbons.

As the damage caused falls under federal jurisdiction, what measures is the department taking to remediate the damage in the area, and will the government be asking the federal government to clean up its own mess?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. O'BRIEN: The hon. member should know, Mr. Speaker, that we support municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador to the tune of \$650 million since 2008. Certainly, I will be assisting the Town of Torbay in regard to the federal responsibility in regard to the issue that he has just outlined, as well as anything that we can do to support the community, as well to offset any issue in any community in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that. He may have a bigger mess on his hands. There are other ponds closer to the airport than South Pond. Island Pond and Western Island Pond to name a few, not to mention as well the various rivers and streams in the area.

Will the minister consider testing these waters for hydrocarbons to see how extensive the damage to our water may be in these regions where the damage has occurred?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HEDDERSON: Mr. Speaker, as all municipalities around this Province should know that we from Environment and Conservation have great expertise in doing the testing that is required, especially to maintain a good sense of comfort for the people who are using any water supplies. We have offered that support to the Town of Torbay, as we do to any town, because again we realize the importance of a water supply for any town in this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Seniors, people with disabilities have to climb nineteen stairs at family and rehabilitative services with no elevator at the Mission Store building at the St. Anthony hospital properties. I have been asking for the relocation of this office to a more accessible site, eleven months later in writing, the answer was still the status quo.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services saw fit to move months ago. I ask: When will the Minister of Health remove this barrier for my constituents?

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, as the member opposite knows, we have had discussions around this. It is not as simple as just moving out of a building and finding another building, especially in small communities, Mr. Speaker.

Through our repairs and reno budget, Mr. Speaker, we have committed to looking at that issue. We are always looking at issues of that

nature and it is very much a concern of ours. I have spoken with the member opposite as well around clinics that we are opening up in that area and around looking at space around those areas as well. These are concerns of ours, concerns that we intend to address.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, The Strait of Belle Isle Health Centre has an individual trained as a nurse practitioner who is being underutilized, impacting continuity of patient care. Since February, 2012, I have asked for the full utilization of this position with regular clinics so patients would receive improved service and Labrador-Grenfell Health would get better value for their dollar spent.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Health: Why is she not interested in getting better value for our health dollars?

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 can hardly believe the question that he just asked. I do not know if he has been in this House in the last few months or not, Mr. Speaker, but one of our biggest concerns in this House is around driving efficiencies within the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, that is why we implemented a benchmarking service within the Newfoundland and Labrador Health Authorities. That is why we are going to go forward with a clinical efficiency review, and that is why we are going to go forward with a management efficiency review. We are very much concerned about finding all of the efficiencies that we can in this Province, Mr. Speaker, so that we can have more money to

invest in the programs and services for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for The Straits – White Bay North, time for a quick question without preamble, please.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Health: When we can expect to have regular nurse practitioner clinics started that other areas of the Province already enjoy?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services, time for a quick response.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the member opposite was in the House the other day when I presented a particular statement around nurse practitioners. We have more nurse practitioners practicing in this Province right now than we have ever had in our history, Mr. Speaker. We have the highest number of nurse practitioners operating in Canada per 100,000 population.

We are very proud of the work that our nurse practitioners do in the Province, Mr. Speaker, and we are very much intent on seeing to it that they move about the Province into other areas as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I hereby give notice, seconded by the Member for Bay of Island, that on a future day we will move the adoption of the following resolution:

WHEREAS Newfoundland and Labrador has many seasonal industries; and

WHEREAS the climate of our Province determines when work can be done in agriculture, forestry, the fisheries, highway construction and tourism; and

WHEREAS workers in these industries have become skilled employees whom their employers value; and

WHEREAS many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians rely on the Employment Insurance program to sustain them for part of the year during the off-season or where their employer is functioning at a reduced capacity; and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has introduced changes to the Employment Insurance system through the provisions of Bill C-38, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures; and

WHEREAS some of these changes have had a disproportionately negative impact on our Province as well as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians; and

WHEREAS the reforms may force these skilled workers to find year-round employment in trades other than in their own making them unavailable for seasonal work, which will be devastating for seasonal industries;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador urge the Government of Canada to recognize the

cyclical nature of seasonal employment and industry; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador urge the federal government to review its employment insurance reforms with the intent of eliminating the aspects that negatively impact the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and our Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the concern over access to adult education is growing and the frustration is growing. A lot of this stems from students, instructors, and other groups around the Province not knowing how Adult Basic Education is going to unfold.

There are 600 students in three communities in Labrador, Sheshatshiu, Rigolet, and Nain. They do not know if private institution access is going to be available in remote areas. If so, if it is, they do not know if the seats are going to be available.

One thing, Mr. Speaker, that the College of the North Atlantic did supply to Adult Basic Education students, I guess you could call it in kind, was access to guidance counsellors, access to student development officers, technical support, and library facilities. Certainly these things are being questioned by students and we hope to hear some answers from this government fairly soon.

Thank you.

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS recently it was announced that the West Coast Training Centre in Stephenville will lose its annual funding from the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation and will close at the end of June; and

WHEREAS the West Coast Training Centre is a training centre for the region, not just the immediate area, and has regularly hosted provincial training programs; and

WHEREAS closing the centre will affect the training of hundreds of young people in Western Newfoundland and beyond who will have nowhere to train but St. John's, reducing the number of elite athletes coming from outside the St. John's area; and

WHEREAS closing this facility will mean lost opportunities for young people to obtain skilled coaching and for the public to enjoy regular sporting events and activities;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to maintain funding to the West Coast Training facility in Stephenville, and work with user groups to develop a sustainability plan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is representative of about 335 names from the Port au Port region. This centre means an awful lot to those people in that particular region. We all saw the pictures of the protesting that was happening. It is representative as well as to what this Budget can do and what the Budget cuts were actually doing to smaller regions, rural regions of the Province.

These people have a right, Mr. Speaker, to be heard and to have government listen to them. We are talking about \$200,000 in funding; about \$90,000 of which was coming from the Tourism department and about \$100,000, \$110,000 from Transportation and Works to keep the building open.

Mr. Speaker, this was a very small budgetary item that has a huge effect on the people of the Port au Port area. This is a centre where young people were going. This is a centre where it gave younger students, younger people in the area, something to do on a Friday night. It would get them out there and socializing.

Besides that, Mr. Speaker, we also have the instance here where you had low-cost physical activity that was happening here, lower than probably what you would find in the City of St.

John's. This was also a cornerstone of the community that the government was dumping. These people want to know why.

These people are signing because they want to see that sustainability plan put in place, Mr. Speaker. They do not want to lose their centre and we wholly support them in their efforts.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for St. Barbe.

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

WHEREAS home care allows the elderly and people with disabilities to remain within the comfort and security of their own homes, home care also allows people to be discharged from hospital earlier; and

WHEREAS many families find it very difficult to recruit and retain home care workers for their loved ones; and

WHEREAS the PC Blue Book 2011, as well as the 2012 Speech from the Throne, committed that government would develop a new model of home care and give people the option of receiving that care from family members; and

WHEREAS government has given no time commitment for when government plans to implement paying family caregivers;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to implement a new home care model to cover family caregivers.

As in duty bound, your petitioner will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is actually a petition that came through from last year and the petitions keep on coming in. Admittedly, the government now

seems to have made some feeble steps to outline some funds that they may advance for this particular program sometime during this year. Mr. Speaker, that does not give much comfort to the people who require the service, the people to whom the service was provided.

If the government made a promise, if the political party made a promise that the government is supposed to follow through on, it would seem much, much better for them to then follow through on their promise instead of having to be dragged kicking and screaming up to – almost like drag them up the bar and say look, you made this promise a year ago, two years ago, three years ago, when will you satisfy your promise.

Ultimately, nobody likes someone who makes a promise and ultimately, begrudgingly decides to go along with it. It does not mean that they made it willingly; it does not mean that it was made in good faith. It means that they made a promise, they benefited from a promise at the polls, and finally they are being held accountable.

Mr. Speaker, the people are watching and really want this promise to be satisfied as soon as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS ROGERS: 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 transgendered people face high risk of discrimination, violence, underemployment, and a lack of access to housing and other services; and

WHEREAS a recent EGALE Canada survey found that 90 per cent of transgender youth hear transphobic comments regularly from other students and one-quarter hear such comments from teachers; and

WHEREAS the Public Health Agency of Canada reports that nearly half of trans youth seriously considered suicide and one-fifth attempted it in the previous year; and

WHEREAS all individuals should have equal opportunity to live their lives and meet their needs without being hindered or prevented by discriminatory practices based on gender identity or gender expression;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to amend the Human Rights Act to include gender identity and gender expression in the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have such mixed emotions to stand today and to present this petition. I think it is only fitting to stand and present it when we were so honoured to have members from the Jewish Community Havura here in the House, as we honour the work that they did in their Holocaust memorial. The Jewish community constantly has to remind us the cost and the effects of bigotry, of hate, of discrimination, and of intolerance.

They are constantly reminding us that we have to be vigilant, and this is what we are dealing with here with transgendered folks. They are among the most vilified, bullied, and discriminated against people in our society. They are still without explicit rights and protection in our provincial Human Rights Act.

Without full co-ordinated health services, many groups and individuals are making a difference by pushing for change that is long overdue. I am also urgently asking the Minister of Justice to consider this, particularly because he has cut the

budget of our Human Rights Commission in half in the last two years – in half, Mr. Speaker. This is not the time to be cutting the budget for that.

I find it profoundly disturbing that at this point in our history when the human rights law is telling us that this needs to be done, that this Province is dragging its heels. I find it profoundly disturbing. It is time for this government to do the right thing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

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

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is something I have received numerous e-mails on. I know that members on the government side are getting them, too, because I see their names in the CC section. I

know they are getting it. I hope that they are reading it and perhaps even responding and explaining to these people the rationale behind the decision.

Certainly, I have not had any opportunity to find out why. I have listened to the answers given by the Premier and the minister. The numbers do not add up. They do not agree with the report they paid \$150,000 for, so I find it hard to figure out who is right or wrong here. Is it John Noseworthy or is it the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills?

Again, some of the decisions made by government, they have instituted their own duplication. They have contradicted themselves in many ways. All of this is doing is hurting the students and the teachers in the communities in which ABE is involved. I still have not seen the RFP; I am looking forward to that and. Hopefully at some point we will get some answers. I know there are certainly a lot of students and teachers out there in this Province who would like to get some. So far none have been forthcoming.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

WHEREAS there is no cellphone service in the Towns of St. Pauls, Cow Head, Sally's Cove, or Trout River, all of which are enclave communities in Gros Morne National Park; and

WHEREAS there is either very poor or no cellphone service in most of Gros Morne National Park; and

WHEREAS visitors to Gros Morne National Park, more than 100,000 annually, expect to use cellphones when they visit the park; and

WHEREAS cellphone service is an important safety feature for numerous travellers, hikers, and others in the park; and

WHEREAS cellphone service is necessary to modern business development;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to partner with the private sector to extend cellphone coverage throughout Gros Morne National Park and the enclave communities within the park.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, if this government would move forward with proper regulation for fracking, and if the exploration companies will be permitted to do the exploration where they want to do the exploration in certain enclave communities near and adjacent to the park, then the economic development that would be generated would generate a commercial need for the services that these people are being denied. It is a real irony that these people, sixty-two of them from St. Paul's, and I see one from Reefs Harbour, who signed the petition would like to have cellphone service. They would actually like to have cellphone service in their communities. Cellphone service bypasses them.

The type of economic development that the park has brought has been good economic development, but very short term, summertime. It certainly does not serve all of the residents that well. In fact, it may now be a hindrance because others may oppose any further development in the park, which would be a downside. These people would then be left without services that would surely come if the government would move forward, bring in proper regulations related to fracking, and permit development to proceed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Today being Private Member's Day, I now call on the Member for St. John's West to introduce the motion that is in his name on the Order Paper.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is my privilege to move the following private member's resolution, seconded by the hon. Member for Bonavista North.

BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House supports this government's actions to ensure public programs and services for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are designed and delivered in ways that are results-focused and effective as well as innovative, efficient, and affordable.

Mr. Speaker, I am quote pleased to rise today and speak on this motion. As a government, we have a mandate and responsibility not to a single community or an organization, but to residents of all communities across the Province collectively.

Mr. Speaker, this government has done a lot of great work over the past number of years. We have introduced and expanded many innovative programs and services, and we have made significant and smart investments across the board; significant and smart investments in areas such as health, education, social programs, and infrastructure. We did all this while still being able to pay down the provincial debt by \$4 billion.

Mr. Speaker, that is sound and responsible fiscal management. To continue our great work, to ensure our future prosperity, and to ensure that our economic development continues, this government has developed a strategic approach and a sound plan to ensure that public programs and services for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are innovative, efficient, and

affordable. This includes investments in people and in skills development.

Through Budget 2013, the provincial government is allocating \$466 million to enhance skills and training at the post-secondary level, including the continuation of a tuition freeze at the College of the North Atlantic and Memorial University for the 2013-2014 academic year. Mr. Speaker, speaking of affordability, it is worth noting that Memorial University undergraduate tuition fees are approximately 53 per cent lower than the national average, while the College of the North Atlantic tuition fees are approximately 49 per cent lower than the national average.

Just a point of reference, Mr. Speaker, I know the Member for The Straits – White Bay North rose yesterday and said he was twenty-seven years old. Twenty-seven years ago, almost to the day, I graduated from Memorial University. At that time, I graduated with a significant debt. I come from a humble household. The tuition fees of today are not that significant compared with what they were twenty-seven years ago. The challenges we faced back then as students were incredible in terms of getting ourselves through university. The challenges we faced as graduates was even more incredible in terms of getting ourselves attached to the workforce.

Mr. Speaker, today, going to university today with the tuition freeze the way it is now, it is so much more affordable and so much easier on our students. The opportunities today that exist versus twenty-seven years ago are absolutely incredibly amazing in the difference, and I hold that for sure.

Mr. Speaker, securing educational opportunities, encouraging life-long learning, and advancing literacy throughout Newfoundland and Labrador are key priorities of our government, because they open the door to long-term success. In recognition of the importance of effective adult learning and quality post-secondary education, we are working with students to advance our long-term plan to provide better, viable, more effective supports to help people overcome challenges and barriers to employment.

Mr. Speaker, as part of this approach, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills is changing – changing, I say, Mr. Speaker – the delivery of the provincial Adult Basic Education Program, which will include moving the program out of the College of the North Atlantic and engaging new training providers, both in the private and non-profit sectors through a Request for Proposals process. It is important to note, Mr. Speaker, that 60 per cent of all Adult Basic Education students in Newfoundland and Labrador today currently receive their education through third-party providers.

So, really, the change is not that significant for most of the students receiving ABE training. In spite of the fears that are circulating, mostly from misinformation, it is important for students to know that ABE curriculum itself is not changing, and the eligibility requirements for funding will also remain the same at private providers and non-profit organizations as they have been at the College of the North Atlantic.

In the coming weeks, Advanced Education and Skills staff will be meeting with the students to develop a transition plan that will ensure the switch to a different training institution is as smooth as possible. Working together, we will continue to empower people through quality adult learning and help them seek opportunities in our thriving economy. Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, we want to build an Adult Basic Education Program that supports the need to ensure a more effective delivery of services for students.

Mr. Speaker, annually, it costs approximately \$5,000 more to provide ABE to students at the College of the North Atlantic than at private institutions, and the average cost of ABE per student in this Province is about three times the cost of other Atlantic provinces. Mr. Speaker, for anybody to suggest that we should accept that and move forward with the status quo, I find that unacceptable.

I think we need to be looking at efficiencies and effectiveness when it comes to whatever programs we deliver, and for anybody to suggest otherwise, Mr. Speaker, are not handling the

public purse as well as they should be. These numbers, combined with the fact that the graduation rate in 2011-2012 for ABE was approximately 37 per cent, clearly shows that a new plan for Adult Basic Education was needed to strengthen accountability, improve results, and ensure adult learners get the education and skills they need.

Mr. Speaker, just speaking about graduation rates, we obviously understand there are many people doing ABE who are facing barriers and challenges. Mr. Speaker, we need to provide the supports to help them through that. We know, for instance, that in the private institutions, and I have gotten calls from operators of private institutions who said their success rates were even higher than what has been reported. In fact, some of the colleges have been out in the media talking about 80 per cent and 90 per cent graduation rates and success rates.

Mr. Speaker, we know the private institutions are delivering good service. We also know the challenges and barriers facing some of the people who are out there are significant in achieving their ABE. We need to put quality control in place. We have to be results-oriented as we move forward, and that is part of the RFP process that we are going to go through. We want to make sure people graduate in a timely fashion when they are doing their ABE program so they can attach themselves to the workforce, skill themselves up and get a job sooner and quicker, and contribute to the economy.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to ensure that ABE is offered to people across Newfoundland and Labrador and we will ensure graduates will have the confidence, self-sufficiency and knowledge to contribute to our economy and, again, to help ensure a sustainable future. Students will receive the same standard and content of ABE at private institutions and not-for-profit organizations as they received at the College of the North Atlantic. This is very important, Mr. Speaker. Eligibility requirements for funding will also remain the same. Mr. Speaker, that is as equally as important.

Just to clarify again, some of the private institutions and organizations have been offering ABE and the exact same curriculum as the program at the College of the North Atlantic for more than twenty years. I know of at least three institutions that I spoke with that, indeed, are doing that and have done that. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Rabbittown Learners Program, which now offers ABE Level I, is about to celebrate twenty-five years of success. I am going to be happy to attend that ceremony this weekend coming up.

Mr. Speaker, our plan through Budget 2013 is a plan focused on developing new approaches that will better prepare people to find work and establish a career. Over 230,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are working, the most in our history. There are 70,000 job openings that are going to come over the next ten years.

Mr. Speaker, just to qualify that, I read reports in the media and some columnists have said: Where are these jobs coming from? Simply, Mr. Speaker, we are an aging demographic. We have people who are going to be retiring. There is going to be attrition. Ninety per cent of the 70,000 jobs are going to come through that attrition through retirements. The other 10,000 or 15,000 jobs will be coming through new economic opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial government is committed to maximizing this pivotal time in Newfoundland and Labrador's history to benefit all residents, to improve our financial position and to deliver effective programming for the long term.

Mr. Speaker, what an exciting time it is to be exploring possibilities in Newfoundland and Labrador. Just last week I attended an ambitious conference featuring that very message. Hosted by the Office to Advance Women Apprentices, and officially opened by Premier Dunderdale, Exploring the Possibilities was held on April 18 and April 19 in Mount Pearl.

Mr. Speaker, over 1,300 women and young people attended the conference, which included

an interactive trades' expo and sessions with female role models already in the industry. Feedback on the conference was beneficial, enlightening and very positive. In fact, I am told by the office that five female apprentices received offers of employment after connecting with employers' right in the room.

Mr. Speaker, I was there with my son, and he spoke to a millwright who is in training. The millwright who is just coming out of school, he was an apprentice, had three job offers. When he told my son what the job offers were and how much he was going to get paid, my son made the decision on the spot that he is going to become a millwright now. We are still investigating where he wants to be in two years from now but he sounded pretty excited. The passion he heard from these students who were graduating, or in the process of graduating was just amazing and inspiring to him.

Mr. Speaker, when the Office to Advance Women Apprentices office opened in 2009, there were ninety female apprentices registered and nine female journeypersons after its first year of operation. Today, there are 613 female apprentices registered and forty female journeypersons. That is absolutely an incredible, impressive jump in a short period of time, and that is what we talk about when we talk about results-oriented, Mr. Speaker.

In a time when education skills and creativity are key, the provincial government is helping our young people explore rewarding lives and career paths, and making sure young people are ready for the growing needs of industry. At the high school level, for example, Mr. Speaker, we have expanded the Youth Apprenticeship Program which provides high school students in participating schools the opportunity to gain skilled trades work experience for five schools to ten.

Mr. Speaker, fostering an interest in skilled trades for our next generation of women and young people has been of paramount importance over the last decade for this government. After building on diversity and gender equity agreements for those under-represented in the

skilled trades and generating apprenticeship opportunities and journey person mentorship, we are investing a further \$42 million this year, Mr. Speaker, through Budget 2013 for the development of our skilled workforce. This includes \$5.2 million to support apprenticeship and trades.

Mr. Speaker, nothing happens by chance. It takes sound and decisive plans to help provide employment for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and help secure prosperity for the future.

Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago I mentioned about misinformation around the ABE changes. Similar misinformation has been circulating around the College of the North Atlantic. The truth of the matter is that the College of the North Atlantic will continue to help people realize their full potential and will do so more effectively by adapting to meet per province's skilled labour demands. Mr. Speaker, to ensure existing programs are run more effectively and efficiently, the delivery of programming at the College of the North Atlantic is evolving. Mr. Speaker, it is evolving so that the college is responsive to a growing demand for the skilled labour in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, last week seven new programs at the College of the North Atlantic were introduced for the fall semester. They are range from Primary Care Paramedicine course in Bay St. George; Personal Care Attendant in Baie Verte; Office Administration certificate and Cook in Bonavista; Construction Industrial Electrician in Grand Falls – Windsor; Personal Care Attendant in Placentia; and Powerline Technician in St. Anthony.

As post-secondary programs that no longer meet student labour market requirements are reduced, new responsive programs will be introduced by the college to address the gaps that exist. Mr. Speaker, this is an ongoing process with the college. They are always examining what programs they are providing and what programs they need to provide for the future. What is happening here is nothing strange, Mr. Speaker.

It is consistent with what has been done in the past.

Mr. Speaker, I see I have about a minute left so I would like to just close. Across the Province there are positive examples of how many investments this government is making that are improving lives, creating jobs, and making our future a very exciting one. From the Historic Skilled Trades Conference for Women and Youth, new course offerings at the College of the North Atlantic, and to the approved delivery of Adult Basic Education, I am optimistic for the future of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Ultimately, our investments are innovative, efficient, and affordable programs of services are investments to people, Mr. Speaker. We are doing this because their individual successes will be instrumental to the overall success of Newfoundland and Labrador into the future.

Mr. Speaker, it is going to be a great pleasure to get input from the Official Opposition on this particular motion, as well as the Third Party. I am pleased to open up the debate on this motion today and I look forward to hearing their views.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): Order, please!

The Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When I saw the private member's resolution, the two or three little lines that it is, I thought that the talent scouts who recruited Shawn Majumder and Rick Mercer missed the funniest people in the Province, because the funniest people in the Province are the ones who would write this private member's resolution and expect this government to be congratulated on the last ten years.

Good grief, there is a litany of losses and an absolute spectacle of incompetence for the last ten years. It is just completely unbelievable, and then they want to be congratulated on wasting money. Good grief.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, there is a story in January from *The Canadian Press*. It says, “Newfoundland and Labrador’s auditor general says provincial expenses have skyrocketed in recent years and are now about 50 per cent more per person than the average of all other provinces.” They are supposed to be congratulated for spending 50 per cent more than all other provinces.

He goes on to say, “Per capita expenses are the highest in the country”. Good grief, we went from a have Province to a we-have-money-to-waste Province. He goes on to say, “there might be some room for looking at reductions or efficiencies.”

“His departmental review includes some eye-popping examples of what his report describes as excessive salaries, lax accounting and breached funding guidelines.”

“For example, the vice-president of human resources and strategic planning was paid \$125,835 last year – an increase of 119 per cent” since 2008, over double the salary from 2008 to 2012. Good grief.

“The auditor’s review notes that the centre’s government-appointed board wrote to the provincial health minister on March 4, 2008” – five years ago – “about plans to adjust salary scales. It never got a response.” I think adjust would mean to come down, or maybe get in touch with reality. Instead of that, we have this ridiculous private member’s resolution, which makes you absolutely hysterical just to read it. I pity the poor taxpayers. They will get their chance in 2015.

In spending so much money, then the government trumpets how well it is doing, but how well is it doing? How well is it doing in health care? How well is it doing in education?

How well is it doing in business development? Not very well, Mr. Speaker.

In April 2012, the Canadian Institute for Health Information, CIHI, released results from the Canadian Hospital Reporting Project and said that our largest hospital, the Health Sciences complex, had below average performance in twenty-eight day readmission for stroke, thirty-day mortality after stroke, and five-day mortality after major surgery. This is what we are getting for our money, Mr. Speaker. It is absolutely disgraceful that the government would spend so much money, get such poor results, and then expect to be applauded for it.

Mr. Speaker, the way that they save money in this Province, this government does, is by merging health boards. Now they are merging school boards again after the second time around. In 2007, the Auditor General reviewed the merger of the health boards and noted that in 2004, when this Province merged their health boards, this government claimed they would save \$7 million. Over the next two years the cost for administration went up by \$51.8 million. Yet, they are supposed to save \$7 million over the two-year period for 2004-2005 to 2006-2007.

Let’s say we were getting good results for this extra money that we are paying, all of this money that is simply going out the door and down the drain. If you look at the state of health of the people of this Province – and, Mr. Speaker, it has been ten years. If this government had decided to take money and be proactive in preventive medicine and in lifestyle choices, what would we have?

Would we have that Newfoundland and Labrador has the most obese population per capita in Canada, 63.2 per cent more than a body mass index of twenty-five? We should not be there. If we did something about our transportation and promotion of good eating habits, we would not say that only 28.6 per cent of our population gets five servings of fruit and vegetables per day, compared to 43 per cent for the national average. The only two places to do worse in fresh fruit and vegetable consumption

are Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. They are practically in the North Pole.

We are sitting along side of the rest of Canada with all sorts of transportation, ferries galore, and we still cannot provide fresh fruit and vegetables for our population. What is the outcome, Mr. Speaker, when you have an obese population without adequate access to fresh fruit and vegetables? To start with, the heart attack rate is the highest in the country. The heart attack rate ten years after this government is 320 hospitalizations for 100,000 people, compared to the Canadian average of 209. We are 50 per cent higher than the Canadian average and the highest in the country. Not something to be proud of, not something to be congratulated for.

Then there is high blood pressure. We have the highest rate of high blood pressure in Canada. Then there is also diabetes. We have one of the highest incidents of diabetes. If you do not take care of your health – if this government had embarked ten years ago, instead of trying to consolidate hospitals and just throwing away money, had it embarked on preventive medicine, had it embarked on appropriate promotion for people maybe for exercise, health, and eating habits, maybe our diabetics would not be the highest in Canada. When we have a sky-high rate of diabetes – and even then the AG points out that this may even be under-reported in diabetes. Mr. Speaker, the complications from diabetes over a lifetime are horrific. They are absolutely horrific, from amputations of toes and feet to macular degeneration, all sorts of complications from diabetes, and the government yet congratulates itself and spends more money than any other province to govern us and more money than any other province for health care with such abominable results. It does not end there.

Mr. Speaker, the education system is simply not performing, and this comes from the government's own statistics. This is nothing invented by anybody else.

I noticed yesterday in Question Period the Minister of Education failed his math exam when he missed four classrooms of students

when he is trying to build a school. I do not know how many that is, probably seventy or eighty or a hundred kids. I think a course in demography might help.

What we also have not seen yet, is this government provided a school climate survey in 2012 of Grade 12 students all across the Province. It was put online, downloaded and printed. The school climate survey says only 48 per cent of the Grade 12 students in Eastern School District were able to get help regarding scholarships. Well, Mr. Speaker, if scholarships are available and students are interested in applying for scholarships for higher education, shouldn't they have the assistance from guidance and from teachers? Only 48 per cent of them said they received any help regarding scholarships.

Now we have more education cuts. How will this further impact students, who are seeking to go on to university and technical schools? It does not end with scholarship applications. Only 48 per cent of them said they could participate in science projects, and this is before we collapsed the boards – 48 per cent. This is Province-wide, Mr. Speaker, 48 per cent had an opportunity to participate in science projects and this government congratulates itself.

Yesterday the Minister of Education said that we are looking for a broader type of education, a broader type of student. A broader type of student is not one with a bigger body mass index. It is one with a better education, and we are simply not getting it. The performance is not here with this government. Is science important? Clearly, science is important to most schools.

Then we go on to school violence, anti-bullying. In the same school climate survey conducted last year of Grade 12 students in this Province, 39.4 per cent of the students admitted they had seen another student bullied within the last thirty days. How will collapsing school boards and getting rid of more teachers improve the school climate for our students in our schools?

Mr. Speaker, the tenor of this government has been to promote, promote, promote. This government is all sizzle and no steak. In fact, if this was in Western Canada – if it was in Alberta and somebody was commenting on this government, they would say: this is like all hat and no cowboy; all cowboy and no hat. They just do not get it.

This government is intent on promoting itself. How does it promote itself? It promotes itself by underhandedly manipulating public opinion polls on the radio. Well, Mr. Speaker, never mind the obvious. Why are public resources being used by elected officials on the other side of the House to make the government look good?

Some of the quotes that go back is, if you clear the history and cookies each time you start the Internet again, you can vote multiple times. To vote multiple times is to convince people that things are not the way they are. Mr. Speaker, it is improper, unethical, and in my view a corrupt way to manage public opinion to make people think that more people are on the side of an argument than there is.

Then we have another quote saying: Another awesome week on Open Line – and the member is looking right at me – thanks to everyone who participated. We will be in touch with you some time in the next day or so to arrange a schedule for next week.

Mr. Speaker, this is the people who are elected to represent us and who are elected to govern us, and what do they do? They say: well, I realize this has been constant and I am sure many of you are probably sick of these PINs, however, this is very necessary in order to counter the political spin put forth by the Liberals, and particularly the Third Party. These guys are hungry, we must be hungrier.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, if government after ten years would simply govern and do a good job in governing, they would not have to worry about public opinion polls. The tenor of any organization comes from the top. It is the tone from the top.

On December 17, 2012, the Premier said: I am always happy when the polls are stable or good, and I am not happy when they are not but I can't govern by polls. Mr. Speaker, if you manipulate the polls to get the outcome you want by overloading the system and having people call and bypass a legitimate poll, than clearly it must be important to the government to pour these public resources into getting false positives.

September 11, 2012, the Premier also said: responsible leaders do not govern based on polls. I agree, absolutely. Responsible governments do not either, and properly performing governments do not need to. If the performance was there we would not need this waste of PMR, we would not need the self-congratulations, we would not need the members on the other side so bent out of shape clapping themselves on the back that probably by tomorrow they will all have to go off to a chiropractor to get straightened out. We certainly would not need that.

To show you how this government looks at governing, the Premier compared voting in online polls to TV shows like Canadian Idol and the annual CBC sports competition, Kraft Hockeyville. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that is exactly where we are with this government. This government is all show and no go, all sizzle, no steak, complete window dressing and that is what this PMR is for. They treat governing like a game show. They try to manipulate public opinion. This PMR is just one final step.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not be supporting this PMR.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENNEDY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have the opportunity to speak to this resolution today, but last night I had the opportunity in the House to talk about the years between 2003 to

the current Budget. Then I had the opportunity to talk about the current economic situation in the Province.

Mr. Speaker, the situation is anything but the doom and gloom that the naysayers on the other side would have us believe. We knew when we brought in this Budget, Mr. Speaker, that there would be criticism. We knew any time there are layoffs and people's lives are impacted adversely that there would be outcry. We knew there would be politics played on the other side in terms outlining all of the negatives that are in the Budget and negatives around the government.

Mr. Speaker, this government is about sizzle. On the other side, contrary to what the member said, it is about fizzle. That is what I am going to demonstrate to you today, Mr. Speaker, are the good things in this Budget. Because what happens, Mr. Speaker, is that – and perhaps it is as a result as a people having lived on this rock in the North Atlantic for so many years that we do not expect a lot from life.

Maybe it is as a result of having to scrape by over the years that we have had to have a sense of humour and always look perhaps more at what might have been than the what is, but it is the what is, Mr. Speaker, that is so positive in our Province today. Although there are, I accept there are criticisms of the Budget. The reasons behind the Budget are to ensure a bright and sustainable future for our children and grandchildren.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENNEDY: There are a lot of good things in the Budget. I am going to concentrate on two areas today, Mr. Speaker, and hopefully I will have the opportunity to speak again. I am going to talk first about those areas that most important to the people of our Province, at least that I heard during the pre-Budget consultations. Those are the health care system and the education system.

Let's talk a little bit about the investments in health care in Budget 2013, Mr. Speaker. Let's

talk about our investment of \$138 million in the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program, including \$5.1 million to allow for twelve new drug therapies, Mr. Speaker.

Let's talk about the \$30 million in dialysis services annually to support fourteen existing dialysis sites, seven of which have been added since 2004, Mr. Speaker. There is \$4.4 million for new cancer drug therapies; \$2.5 million for the Breast Cancer Screening Program, which will allow women aged forty to forty-nine who are referred by their primary health care provider to be part of the program; \$2 million for the continuation of the Newfoundland and Labrador Colon Cancer Screening Program; and \$2 million to address endoscopy wait times and wait-lists.

These are the kinds of good things that we are not hearing much about today, Mr. Speaker. It is somewhat understandable. I am hoping, though, that over the next few weeks our members will get up and they will talk about the good things that are happening in their district, and the good things that are happening throughout this Province, as I will try to demonstrate today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENNEDY: Let's look at a couple of these good things that are happening. Let's look at the \$14.4 million in Budget 2013 for the continued construction of the Labrador West health centre. I do not have the numbers right now, but the last figure I was aware of, Mr. Speaker, was \$90 million for a new hospital in Labrador West; \$12.5 million for the continuation of the PET scanner project at the Health Sciences; \$11.5 million for the continued redevelopment of the Central Newfoundland Regional Health Centre in Grand Falls-Windsor.

What we have, a new hospital in Labrador West, a PET scanner in St. John's at the Health Sciences, continued redevelopment in Central Newfoundland. What we are seeing is as a government we are ensuring that the wealth is spread throughout the Province as it comes to health care.

This is an area that I also want to talk about because we have not heard much about this; \$8.4 million in this year's Budget for the construction of the new Adult Addictions Centre in Harbour Grace, Mr. Speaker – \$8.4 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENNEDY: Mr. Speaker, \$6.5 million for the continued construction of the treatment centre for youth with complex mental health needs in Paradise; \$4 million for the continued construction of the treatment centre for youth with addictions in Grand Falls-Windsor. This year alone, Mr. Speaker, there will be close to \$20 million spent to build new addiction and mental health treatment centres in this Province.

This is a government that looks to helping people who have problems. Mr. Speaker, by doing that, we ensure that they have the opportunity to become contributing and functioning members of society. That is what we are trying to do, a government with a social conscience.

Then, Mr. Speaker, \$700,000 for the continued planning for the replacement of the Waterford Hospital in St. John's with a new specialized mental health facility. We are seeing addictions – Central Newfoundland, in Labrador, Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador and then the Waterford Hospital. Those are just some of the programs in health.

Then we have \$227 million announced over the next three years for the new acute care facility in Corner Brook.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENNEDY: So those figures alone are \$300 million or \$400 million I have talked about there invested in health care this year. At this point, 39 per cent of our total Budget is going to the health care system. That is a priority. That is all in Budget 2013. It is all good news.

Now, let's then get to education, Mr. Speaker. What are we doing in education in Budget 2013? All we have heard about is the negative, the

naysayers. Let's just look at what we are doing: \$102 million in Kindergarten to Grade 12 infrastructure over the past nine years – excuse me, there will be \$102 million for new and ongoing school infrastructure projects.

Twenty-five million dollars is for planning for a new school in Gander, an extension to Elizabeth Park in Paradise, Coley's Point, Portugal Cove-St. Phillips, Torbay, Paradise, and G.C. Rowe in Corner Brook. All over the Province the wealth is being spread, Mr. Speaker.

Then \$77 million for ongoing capital improvements; a new west end high school in St. John's, \$18.3 million for that, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENNEDY: Ten million dollars to continue construction of the new St. Teresa's school in St. John's; \$8 million to continue the extension and renovation at Roncalli Elementary in St. John's; \$6.6 million to develop the former Regina High in Corner Brook; \$4.6 million to continue construction in St. Anthony, Exploits Valley High in Grand Falls-Windsor, Virginia Park Elementary in St. John's; \$3.7 million to continue construction of a new school in Carbonear, then Torbay, Conception Bay South, Paradise, and Portugal Cove-St. Phillips.

What we have, Mr. Speaker, is money is being spread throughout the Province to build schools and to ensure good facilities for the education of our children.

We have heard the Minister of Education, who is doing an admirable job, stand up in this House and talk –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENNEDY: – about the thirty-nine schools. I have said to myself: No, it cannot be; that figure must be wrong. I have to go and add this up for myself. So I had a look at it. What do we have?

Since 2004, \$620 million has been allocated for K-12 infrastructure in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENNEDY: Nine new schools have opened; ten more are in various stages of planning or construction, that is nineteen; twelve are undergoing major extension and renovation projects, that is thirty-one; and eight more are underway or in the planning stages – thirty-nine, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENNEDY: Thirty-nine schools either built, being built, or in the planning and construction stages. Mr. Speaker, how can anyone in this Province doubt the Premier's commitment or this minister's commitment to education in this Province?

The minister himself, who has been under attack, has been an educator all of his life. I remember so clearly, Mr. Speaker, we were sitting there during the school board's press conference. I remember this because it really struck me as to what MHAs bring – we bring our life experiences; we bring our beliefs and morals to the job. The minister said: I have been teaching all my life. I have been an educator, a principal all my life. Why would I do anything that would hurt the children of our Province? That defines the approach we take as a government. Thirty-nine schools, I think, is a very good example of this approach.

Now, let's look at student debt, let's look at post-secondary, what we are doing there. Budget 2013 provides \$25.8 million to reduce student debt; an additional \$3.8 million to Memorial to continue the tuition freeze for 2013-2014. Mr. Speaker, over \$186 million since 2004, the tuition freeze has cost at MUN and at the College of the North Atlantic; \$19 million for the continuation of up-front, needs-based grants and interest-free student loans; \$3 million for continued debt reduction grants.

Mr. Speaker, Memorial University undergraduate tuition fees are approximately 53 per cent lower than the national average, and the College of the North Atlantic tuition fees are

approximately 49 per cent lower than the national average.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENNEDY: Now, faced with the situation we were in the Budget, Mr. Speaker, we could have raised tuition fees. We could have said we need to get some money; Memorial needs more money. We chose not to – again, showing the Premier's commitment and our government's commitment to ensure that the students of our Province receive a good education at a reasonable cost.

Do you know what has happened, Mr. Speaker? Memorial University has become the largest university in Atlantic Canada with almost 20,000 students right now. Drive by the parkway, look at the buildings going up; and, when we talk about buildings, \$88.3 million, a total investment to complete the opening of the new residence at Memorial St. John's and Grenfell campuses.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENNEDY: Look over there, Mr. Speaker, as you are driving down the Parkway. So we have lowered tuition. We have maintained the tuition freeze. We are building new residences. Is it any wonder that students in Atlantic Canada want to come to Memorial, want to come to St. John's, and want to come to Corner Brook to continue their education?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENNEDY: Now, I only have a couple of minutes left. I want to talk about our roads and our communities because that is another big area, Mr. Speaker, another big area of investment in our Province: \$59 million this year for provincial road construction projects; \$43.1 million to complete the last full season of paving on Phase I and commence widening and paving sections of Phase II and III of the Trans-Labrador Highway, \$43.1 million –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENNEDY: – \$26.5 million to support several major Trans-Canada Highway rehabilitation projects near Stephenville and Gander; \$20.6 million, if we get there, for the first year of construction of the Placentia lift bridge; \$10.4 million to finish the Conception Bay South Bypass and the Team Gushue Highway; \$12.3 million to begin construction of the replacement of the Sir Robert Bond Bridge, and the list goes on.

Now I want to move to our communities, Mr. Speaker, and to outline again. We have the Minister of Transportation and Works, but I also want to pay special attention to the work done by our Minister of Municipal Affairs, Mr. Speaker, who continuously meets with our municipal leaders throughout this Province. He communicates with them and he says: How can we help you help yourselves and help us make the Province a better place?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENNEDY: Let's just have a look at what we are doing this year in Municipal Affairs: \$130 million for the second year of a Municipal Capital Works Program to support water and waste water treatment, regionalization projects, municipal buildings, recreational facilities, and one of his favourites, firefighting equipment. What the minister has shown, Mr. Speaker, is he goes to every fire department in this Province. What he shows is that we recognize and accept the important role played by volunteer firefighters, and if we can do anything to help you, we will. That is what the minister has done, Mr. Speaker.

Also, we are moving into a new area now, so there was some trepidation but the minister went out and explained to the communities. We have \$25 million, in 2013, for a capital works program for our seven municipalities with more than 11,000 people. Then we have the Municipal Operating Grants that someone spoke about last night.

What we are seeing, Mr. Speaker, is a situation where health care services have not only been maintained, but have again been increased and

enhanced. We have our transportation, which is continuing to rebuild our roads to ensure that the money is spent throughout the Province. We have our education system which is second-to-none. Then, we have our municipal affairs in terms of our communities.

We have our families, we have our education and health care system, we have our roads, and we have our communities. That is not a bad start to a Budget that is supposed to be so negative, Mr. Speaker. I am sure you are going to hear over the next few weeks all of the work that has been done and you are going to hear the positive things that are going to happen, that have happened in Budget 2013.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to support this motion today, and it is very important to recognize that even in tough times this government is doing good things, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

I appreciate the opportunity to stand in this House and speak to this private member's resolution. I appreciate the words spoken by the members opposite.

The Minister of Finance is certainly on a roll, a very rousing speech today and a rousing speech tonight. I am trying to inject a sense of reality into – the good news that is coming out, there is another side. We are going to bring a bit of the other news that is coming out of this Budget as well.

The fact is this private member's resolution is really just a code, I guess, for a pat on the back. It is actually a case of breaking your arm off to pat yourself on the back, is what it really does to you. The fact is, we can talk about some of the

investments but we should talk about – the resolution says public programs and services. I want to bring up some of those public programs and services and some of the things going on here in this government's resolution. I guess self praise is better than no praise.

One of the things I want to talk about, the minister mentioned education and health care and roads. Do you know what? Those are all important things, but one important area that was not brought up is our justice system, which is a fundamental part of this system as well. I do not see anything coming from the other side talking about how we have improved our justice system in this Province.

We could talk about the fact that we actually cut a circuit court in Bonavista for \$600 savings, a \$600 savings to cut the court in Bonavista; or we could talk about the court in Springdale that was cut; or we could talk about the court in Burgeo cut for \$1,000. The coffee budget for one of your offices could pay off what it cost to keep a court open in rural Newfoundland and Labrador so people could have access to these services.

I am going to talk about some of those other positives that are out there. Again, we could talk about the positives – I do not know if it is a positive when over 1,000 people lose their jobs in this Province. That is not a positive, but it is a reality, and that reality needs to be brought up here.

We are going to get back to some of the other things that came out of this Budget. I have a lot of stuff here. One of the things here I want to talk about, again, I go back in justice. The other thing too, it is not only are we cutting courts but we are cutting legal aid, cutting the guts out of it so people have less access to legal aid. I think everybody in this room appreciates the fact that we all have that right. Some people, lower-income people, people with disadvantages, the vulnerable people, their access to this service cut.

I want to move on. Let's talk about health care. Do you know what? I will never doubt about the significant investment that has been made in

health care; however, there are some drawbacks. I did not hear anything in the Budget talk about the children in this Province who are suffering from cancer and need a drug called ondansetron. It is actually recommended by pediatric oncologists. They are not getting it.

We could talk about the other one, mutagen I think it is, that they need. It is recommended. Again, I would say to the minister, I am going to stand and speak. You will have all the opportunity in the world to stand and address and correct me if I am wrong.

We could talk about the dental plan, the one where you can get dentures one-half at a time. This year pick your choice, are you going to get the top half or the bottom half? Next year you will get the other end. If I am wrong, I think that was something that was said in the Estimates. We could talk about that. Again, I asked the minister in Estimates and it was not contradicted. Absolutely amazing!

We talk about the public programs and services and how they are planned and delivered.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. A. PARSONS: I hear the Member for Terra Nova, the parliamentary secretary. I suggest when you plan something, why don't you actually plan it? If you put aside \$6.7 million and it costs you \$20-odd million, you are probably playing. One of the things I would also suggest is you talk to the dentists who are going to do the work, the ones that were not consulted. That is what I suggest I would put out there.

If we want to talk about the investment, let's see, we are going to go back to patting ourselves on the back. The Fraser Institute, again, they have been applauded depending on some stuff they said because they have said good stuff about this government. They have said good stuff, but another thing they said is: 2013, overall Newfoundland and Labrador, worse bang for your buck in terms of health care spending. We

are spending the most per capita in Canada, yet outcomes do not reflect this.

In 2008, a report was done by the Frontier Centre for Public Policy that could serve as a score card for consumers. Let me see: It was the most glaring case of throwing good money after bad in Canadian health care. I just want to reference that.

I hear the minister chirping over there. I hear the minister chirping. She is going to get a chance to stand up. Do you know what? I will sit there and I will listen to what she has to say. I certainly listened to what the Minister of Finance had to say. He makes a lot of good points. I do not always agree with him, we all know that for sure, but I listened.

I say to the minister, again, we could also talk about the hospital in Corner Brook, a great investment. Now, she actually spends her time putting out press releases saying we do not want the hospital in Corner Brook – the most ridiculous thing you could ever say. What we want is the hospital that was promised.

Now again, not just promised in 2012 and 2011 and 2007. Fool me once – I am going to leave that to the Member for Bay of Islands. He has no idea. He does not represent the people on the West Coast. He does not know what is going on and does not talk about acute care beds.

It was promised once. It was great. We are all for it. It was promised twice – never got it. Again, 2015, I cannot wait, a banner year for this Province, because we are going to get the rightsized hospital with less acute care beds in it, absolutely fantastic – absolutely fantastic.

I will go off health care –

MS SULLIVAN: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services, on a point of order.

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to listen to anyone talk in this House of Assembly and that is what we ought to be doing in here. When we stand to speak, we need to make sure that what information we are putting out there is accurate.

AN HON. MEMBER: There is no point of order.

MS SULLIVAN: As far as I understand, Mr. Speaker, you get to make the ruling after I have spoken.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Member for Burgeo – La Poile, to continue.

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

Again, Minister, you are going to have all the opportunity in the world and you are going to tell us all about the hospital that you are rightsizing for the people of the West Coast, absolutely fantastic.

I see the Member for Springdale, he is directing me. He is not going to direct to the courthouse that was cut in his district that is for sure.

I am going to continue on. Because do you know what? This Budget – the one we hear all about the thousands of jobs lost for people all over this Province, rural, urban, does not matter where you are, one of the things I want to get to and that is the Parliamentary Secretary for Advanced Education and Skills. He is the Parliamentary Secretary for a department that we paid John Noseworthy \$150,000 to do a report.

AN HON. MEMBER: It was a great report.

MR. A. PARSONS: It was a great report, and I am going to educate the Parliamentary Secretary for Twitter now in a second.

Here are some of the words that John Noseworthy uses in his report: duplication, lack of integration, no priorities, no evaluation, no tracking mechanism, more reactive than proactive, gaps in services, inconsistency, low uptake, delays, program disincentives, and no strategic approach. That is just one-third of the way in. Yes, it was a great report because it shows what a mess of a department was created. It was created with no thought and no process whatsoever. It was tossed together; it was cobbled together.

I was on the record on CBC as saying I like where we are going, I think it is the right step, but I will reserve judgment until I see what the results are. I can give my judgement now. It is a colossal failure according to the people who they paid for the report. John Noseworthy was paid a good sum and came with a very heavy report.

So we can talk about some of the other stuff in Advanced Education and Skills. Again, I remind you, Mr. Speaker, just to go back for the people who are watching out there, we create a department, then we pay the failed candidate \$150,000 to write the report after we put it together, then we get the report in December but we do not read it until February, and then we send it back for more information but we say we are not going to incorporate this in the Budget. Then we get it back and release it on the day of the Budget, and there are clearly some things that were taken out of the report. We have approached this report and this department just like everything else: reactive rather than proactive.

Now, we can talk about the cuts to Adult Basic Education, something that is affecting all of us here in this room because it is in all of our districts. I am waiting for the RFP that comes out and says how we are going to do things. I have been hearing a lot from people out there

who are involved in the system, people in CNA, actually the same people who were never consulted along the way, which is another benchmark for this government. It is where we make decisions and then we consult with the people after, whether it is the Justice department, whether it is the Department of Health with the NLMA and the NL Dental Association, or whether it is Advanced Education and Skills.

We talk to them after we have made the decision, and it is not the way to go forward. It is not the way to deliver services to the people of this Province. We should go and listen to them first.

I have talked to administrators out there, administrators who want to contribute. They want to find efficiencies. They know that if there are issues, they would love to work together, but they were not given the opportunity. The scary thing is they are not allowed to say anything after. They are muzzled.

That is another interesting thing. This Budget Estimates process is interesting because one of the things we also found out there was no money spent for this year was any research into whistleblower legislation. That was something else that was promised in 2007 and 2011. Oh, we are going to do it. We are going to get there. No money and it is not going to happen. The reason is they do not want it. They do not want to hear the people involved in the system have any say.

We talk about this labour shortage. When you look at all the other cuts made in this department, whether it is EAS and all these acronyms, there is JCP, there is CNA, and ABE. There are all kinds of cuts there; it is amazing. This was all done without the benefit of looking at the \$150,000 report – absolutely amazing.

I am going to continue on here because there are so many things. Actually I found a couple of more terms from the Noseworthy report talking about this department and how we deliver: inefficient, ineffective, slip through the cracks, duplicate payments, no formal case management process, and inequity. A great department, a

great report, it would have been nice if we got the report before we formed the department. That would have been a step in the right direction.

I am going to continue on because I have so many other things I want to talk about, and I am missing a few things. There have been a lot of comments; one of them was how we try to lessen the burden on people. The social conscience is not limited to the people on this side; we are trying to lessen the burden on people. That is why those people who were laid off out in CNA who are dealing with ABE through this redundancy process, they are not actually getting the redundancy package. There has been a grievance filed there. There was a member across in the back there who said that yesterday and the e-mails I received on that were absolutely amazing. They have all quoted him here; it is fantastic to see.

AN HON. MEMBER: What did he say?

MR. A. PARSONS: He said, “We try to lessen the burden on people” and we go through the process. “They are not easy to swallow, and nobody has more sympathy to people who have been through it than I do.” That is why these people who have just found out their jobs are eliminated; they have no consultation, no say in the process. That is why they are not being given redundancy packages. Something that I believe was negotiated through their union and there is a grievance filed now. We should probably not say these things without actually knowing what we are talking about.

I am going to continue on here because we are talking about, let me see – ensure that public programs and services are designed and delivered in ways that are focused and effective. I have asked numerous times about how we are going to deliver ABE. They do not know. We do not know; the RFP is not out. The private colleges are saying we need some time here. We do not know. There is duplication.

We talk about EAS, Employment Assistance Services. A great way to put people in the labour market is to take away the people who

help people get into the labour market. They were cut and they are all on the way out now. We could see that coming because last year they were brought to the edge, the brink of getting their pink slip and they were given a six-month reprieve. They are all gone now.

It was brought up here, we are creating jobs. How can you say that with a straight face at the same time you just gave pink slips to thousands of people in this Province? When we have conservation officers cut, we have teachers who are going to be walking out, resource people, how can we talk about creating jobs? It just blows my mind.

AN HON. MEMBER: Poacher’s paradise.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, poacher’s paradise. That is just the conservation side now, where we have an officer in Stephenville who is expected to cover off the entire Southwest Coast all by himself now. We are putting him in a great position.

These are people for whom we ordered uniforms in the Department of Justice, got the uniforms, and then we cut the people. So we have all these uniforms that are actually sitting in boxes. Where is the planning in there? Where is the delivery there?

Mr. Speaker, my time is running short here and there so much I would like to get at. One of the things goes back to the health care too, these knee-jerk reactions. The knee-jerk reaction was something we saw in Justice. I have to come back and end off on that note because there was a lot of time put into these core mandate reviews and Budget analysis. We made a decision and under public pressure caved. We put together a super committee, gone. We reversed it. How can I trust in that planning if those are the results that are going to come out of it?

Mr. Speaker, I say in closing here, I am pretty sure my sentiment on this motion is evident to the people out there, and I certainly will not be supporting it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Bonavista North.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to express my thanks to the Member for St. John's West for bringing this motion forward. The resolution refers to a design and a delivery of programs that will have results for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is designed, which means it is active. You actually design your programs. You tailor them for the regions and the people for which you are designing them. Then you deliver them in appropriate methods to these people that will give you the results and the outcomes that you want.

I, too, want to talk about programs and services today. I do not know if you would notice, but when the Minister of Finance stood up my colour started to drain a little bit because part of what he was talking about, he was stealing some of my thunder, I guess, in the area where I went looking for information to see how this would apply in my life and the life of people around the Province.

There are so many good things in health care to talk about. There are so many good things in Innovation, Business and Rural Development. There are so many good things in this Budget that we all have many things to stand up here and crow and praise about because it is just a fact.

Investment in our people, it is not just the investment of dollars, Mr. Speaker. We can invest dollars and crow about them and praise about them all day long, but it is also the time, the supports, and I think the attitude that you invest in people that really gives positive results. A lot of the programs and the initiatives that are being undertaken do show that investment in the attitude of our citizens. I listened intently to the Member for St. John's West and I hope my

comments will connect to some of his comments and his vision for this motion.

Today is not yesterday, Mr. Speaker. Today is not yesterday. In the 1960s, if someone had to walk into one of our schools and had to wake up – if Rip Van Winkle walked into one of our classrooms today, if he woke up from thirty, forty years of sleep and walked in, he is in a completely different world. We cannot have programs, we cannot have designs and things for – our programs are going to offer our citizens that are built for thirty years ago. We have to bring them to the reality that it is today.

It is the same if you walk into the workforce; it is not the same today as it was thirty years ago. Technology has brought us so far advanced and the attitudes that we instill in our citizens bring us so far advanced that what we did for them many, many years ago is not acceptable or satisfactory today.

This is a great time to work and live in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, a Province that is expected this year to lead Canada in economic growth in 2013. Business optimism remains so high in our Province that we live in a time where the major projects of the resource sector have boosted our capital investment to record levels. We look at the investment of our resource sector, the wealth that comes from that is going to boost us to such record generating levels in our attitudes and in our employment opportunities and all of the aspects of our life, that we will not be the equal of anywhere else in this country.

We have seen growth in small and medium enterprises as a result of this growing economy. It is critical that funding and programs are relevant, flexible, effective, not only for the businesses but for the regions of our Province in which we use them.

As part of this government's platform in 2011, we committed to review all programs available to small and medium-sized enterprises to ensure they are focused and adapted to meet the changing needs of the local entrepreneurs and the enterprises that exist in our communities

today. If they are not relevant, flexible or effective for these businesses in our communities today, then there is really no place for them. That is the litmus test we have to put this up against. We need to ensure that we can remain effective for many, many years to come.

The number of significant changes that have already occurred to address the challenges with design and delivery of the former Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Fund, for instance, is just one example. The interest rate on loans has been reduced from prime plus 3 per cent to prime only. What an advantage to our businesses.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: What an advantage, very effective. It is sure to provide results.

Delegated authority has been increased at the regional level from \$100,000 to \$150,000. More decisions can be made now at the local and regional level to impact upon what our small businesses receive. A number of management and approval processes have occurred.

As a result of the consolidation of over twenty-two programs into two umbrella funds, the Business Investment Fund for commercial and the Regional Development Fund for non-commercial, we see a streamline of the activity that an entrepreneur or a business, or a not for profit or a development association would have to go through. You would not force them to jump through so many hoops to align the features they need to receive the supports and the funding that they are looking for.

The Business Investment Fund and the Regional Development Fund have been streamlined to ensure that it is current, it is properly focused, and it is flexible. These words keep popping up, Mr. Speaker, things are current, they are flexible, and they are focused. For growth in our small and medium businesses, that is essential. It is essential for all of the stakeholders, for all of the enterprises, for all of our regions.

The efforts that have been undertaken have been flexible enough to deliver the right resources, at the right time, at the local level, for the rural businesses to grow and compete in their markets, allow new businesses to expand into our Province and to support regional development efforts around the Province.

The renewed suite of business and regional development programs in IBRD will make \$47 million available to support economic growth in all regions of the Province this year; \$47 million for all regions of our Province. This funding support for local businesses will be done by providing loans, by providing equity investments, as well as non-repayable contributions to support productivity improvements, market development, and technical assistance just to mention a few areas.

Investment attraction efforts will continue to be available when opportunities present themselves. We encourage new investment into the Province by attracting new companies and facilitating outside companies entering our region and our area. We bring people here to our Province not coming here just because there are supports and funds; they are not just coming for these. They are coming because it is the right place to grow, the right place to invest, and the right place to bring our Province ahead.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: Some of these outside companies that come in will help this Province grow and go further ahead as if they were local people.

Investments made by our government are strengthening the business environment in our Province. I could keep on going with examples here – and I want to go into some health care regions as well.

The success stories are numerous in Innovation, Business and Rural Development, success stories of companies like Desire2Learn. Desire2Learn Incorporated is a leader in providing innovative learning solutions to academic and other leading organizations around the world. It is one of the new ways of learning

in this society that we are in, and it is not all in the classroom.

SubC Control located in Clarenville, a leader in providing revolutionary and reliable solution for video imaging and lighting requirements in the offshore and subsea markets. Again, a real innovator, a real business success right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Before my time expires, Mr. Speaker, I have to shift gears. There is no greater resource in Newfoundland and Labrador than the people and the families who make up our communities and our regions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: Supporting the health and the well-being of families by providing them with access to sustainable, high-quality health care is the top priority for this government. Budget 2013 reflects our commitment to families through strategic investments in infrastructure, in long-term care, in community support services, in prescription drugs, in paid family caregiving options, and many, many other key service areas. These are critical investments in our families, in our seniors, and most of all in our communities. Our seniors and our families will benefit and grow in the communities they are in today, tomorrow and well into the future.

In Budget 2013, nearly \$3 billion is allocated to improve health care for all residents of this Province – that is all residents of this Province, not one category but all through our population. Thirty-nine percent as our Minister of Finance stated, and we hear our Minister of Health and Community Services state about how proud she is about the expenditures that we have made in Health and Community Services.

We are continuing to place priority in other important areas, Mr. Speaker. We know they are critical areas such as dialysis and cancer care for patients and residents in our Province. Since 2004, the provincial government has invested over \$1.2 billion in health care infrastructure. I will concentrate on infrastructure for just a second or two. Budget 2013 includes a total

investment of \$226 million in capital infrastructure which includes \$165 million for continuing construction and redevelopment, \$40 million for new equipment, and \$20 million for repairs and renovations. What an investment in our communities, Mr. Speaker.

Budget 2013 includes new and continued funding for some other projects – and I will jump over what the Minister of Finance had mentioned earlier and if I accidentally run into one, I will not apologize because we are very proud of the expenditure that we have in our health care system right throughout our Province. The Minister of Finance alluded that these investments are all over our Province, not just in selected areas.

Mr. Speaker, \$11.5 million for the continued redevelopment of the Central Newfoundland Regional Health Care Centre in Grand Falls-Windsor; almost \$8 million to build a new electrical substation for the Health Sciences Centre in St. John's; over \$7 million for the continued construction for the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Human Genetics; \$7 million this year for the design and preliminary construction of a new acute care facility in Corner Brook. I am sure you have never heard of that one before.

Long-term care infrastructure is very important in this Budget. This year's investments: \$42.1 million into ongoing development of the Carbonear long-term care facility; \$25 million into the St. John's long-term care facility; \$2 million in Clarenville; \$200,000 to continue and finish in Bonavista. We invest many, many dollars and much of our resources into prescription drugs, into dialysis – as the minister alluded to, we are in fourteen regions of the Province now.

I notice my time is almost exhausted, but I do want again to thank the Member for St. John's West for bringing this out. It is clearly a matter of principle and focus. Focus from this government because we know where we came from, we know where we are going, we know where we want to go, we know why we are going there and why we need to get there. When

we get there, when we arrive, we also know what is next. The results shall be clear.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Littlejohn): The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

I am delighted to get the opportunity today to stand and speak to this private member's resolution. I am happy to get to speak to it, Mr. Speaker, because this government seems to have a fixation on doing nothing else but patting itself on the back.

It is very interesting, Private Members' Day and private members' resolutions are meant to give an opportunity to all MHAs, including backbenchers, to raise issues that are concerns that they have, issues that are concerns of their constituents, and issues that may relate to policy and even legislation that they may want to even try to bring into the House – not that we do that here in this House of Assembly; they certainly do it in Ottawa and other provincial Legislatures. It is meant to be a place where private members get to raise concerns that they have and ideas that they have.

What we see with this government, Mr. Speaker, which is very interesting, is that all the MHAs from the other side of the House do is stand and regurgitate everything that said by this government in their press releases and in their speeches here in this House. They get up time after time after time doing nothing else but patting themselves on the back.

They have had three opportunities since March, Mr. Speaker, to do a member's statement. Today, what are we dealing with? Today, we are dealing with saying that this House "supports this Government's actions to ensure that public programs and services for Newfoundlanders and

Labradorians are designed and delivered in ways that are results-focused and effective as well as innovative, efficient, and affordable."

Moved by the Member for St. John's West and seconded by the Member for Bonavista North. What a statement. We are supposed to stand here today and say, yes, you are absolutely wonderful, everything you are doing is perfect, and that is true. That is what their member's statement was today.

What was their member's statement in April? In April, we have a member's statement that I think was seconded by the Member for Cape St. Francis. I am not sure now who moved it. What was the one on April 17? It was, "BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House commends the government for returning half a billion dollars a year to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians by reducing personal income taxes and supports the government in its decision not to increase personal income taxes to address the Province's fiscal challenge." It is patting themselves on the back as if what they did was absolutely perfect. That is what their motion on April 17 was; backbenchers standing up and saying: Aren't we wonderful?

What was it on March 11, which was their first one in this year? Not in this session, but in this year. This was moved by the Member for Terra Nova and seconded by the Member for Mount Pearl North. This was, once again, "that this hon. House affirm that, by investing billions of dollars since 2004 in vital infrastructure – including highways..." – blah, blah, blah, blah, blah – "the government has taken the responsible approach and promoted long-term fiscal strength and sustainability."

So all they are supposed to do as MHAs is stand and pat the government on the back, their government, and say we are wonderful for doing what the government is supposed to be doing, I tell you, Mr. Speaker – for doing what the government is supposed to be doing. It is supposed to be building infrastructure. It is supposed to be taking care of the people of the Province. It is supposed to be putting education programs in place. It is supposed to be putting

health care in place. It is supposed to be creative, innovative, and efficient.

I wish they were, Mr. Speaker. I wish they were. They think they are doing it, but they are not. I am going to take some of those words that are in today's motion, especially the word innovative. Let us think about innovative for a bit.

I have today an e-mail from somebody in this Province who is really going through a very, very rough time. It is a rough time in the health care system and it is something this person has not been private about because this person has written every single MHA in this House about it. I am not using the person's name. I am not even going to say the community that the person comes from. Any MHA who goes to their e-mail will see this e-mail.

This person is talking about the lack of the presence of family physicians in the person's community – there is a health facility and there is an emergency – and the fact that this person, since moving to that community, cannot find a family physician. A person who has a chronic condition, a condition that has to do with cholesterol. A person who, because of that, has to have regular medication; but, because that person cannot get a family physician in that community, this person has to go to outpatients where there is no continuation and consistency of care. Where every time the person gets treated by somebody different who does not know his history and he has to go through the same thing over and over and over.

In his e-mail he talks about how when he has been in emergency, the line-ups and the waits have been so long that he has had to leave. A triage nurse has said: Unless you are an emergency, do not stay. This is somebody who is sitting there with a part of his foot that is infected, and we all know the conditions that can lead to that kind of thing. This person is asking: What is going on? Why can't I find a family physician? Why do I have to have my health jeopardized? Why am I in this situation? He is asking for a response from people in this House, and particularly from the government. He says

that he wrote all of us, and of all the people sitting on the other side of the House, Mr. Speaker, he says one person responded to him.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am using that as an example to talk about some of the creative things that could be done in our Province, and that is happening elsewhere with regard to health care. If we had a series of health clinics not just in rural Newfoundland, but in cities and in urban settings, clinics where you have doctors, where you have nurse practitioners – which cuts down on the number of doctors you need – where you have RNs, where you have maybe a social worker, where you have technicians, and those clinics are strategically located both in our cities and our larger communities and in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, if we had that kind of a system, we would not have the situation of this man here.

He does not need, you see, to be going to a doctor every time that he needs to have his medication renewed. That is not what he needs. He does need somebody who has the ability to check on his vitals and to give him a new prescription. That does not have to be a doctor. That can be a nurse practitioner. What we have not done in this Province is been creative in looking at the ways in which we could be spending our money in health care to meet people's needs. That is why I fear that this review that the government is talking about is not going to be creative, it is not going to be innovative, and it is not going to be efficient. Is only going to be looking at how to save them money because of the deficit that they have gotten us into.

It is not going to be saying: How can we spend our money better with the people we have? How can we do a whole variety of roles in a clinic where we can take care of people more cheaply but better? That is an example of doing more with less. Where you have people who can play their roles and you have somebody like a nurse practitioner who is well qualified to do what nurse practitioners do, but is paid less than a doctor who is not needed for the particular things that a nurse practitioner does. I am just putting that out, Mr. Speaker. You want

something that is innovative and something that is efficient, that is innovative and that is efficient. That is what this government does not think – they are not thinking creatively. They do not think outside of the box.

So, no, I am not going to stand here today and vote for this resolution which says that this government is delivering programs that are innovative, efficient, affordable, and effective. They are not. They are far from it. They keep promising these kinds of things and they do not happen.

Another place, Mr. Speaker, where we should be putting our money again because it will make for better care, and that is electronic recordkeeping. We are so far behind in this Province with regard to electronic recordkeeping of the health of the people in this Province. It is embarrassing when you speak to people in the medical profession from outside of our Province, when they tell you what exists in other places that we do not have here.

This man, for example, that I have been talking about if there were electronic recordkeeping, he would actually be safer going to the outpatients every time he has to go, simply because electronic recordkeeping would mean that his whole history does not have to be repeated all over again every time that he goes, and there would be a system that would link everything that takes care of him together and would make for better health care. That is the kind of creative thinking we need, Mr. Speaker. That is what I do not understand about this government.

The same way with emergency rooms, we are playing at using nurse practitioners in emergency rooms but we have so far to go in bringing our emergency rooms, in terms of the systems of our emergency rooms, up to what is happening in other places.

The people who work in our health care system are doing a wonderful job. They are fantastic people, but they want systems that will help them be more efficient. They know what can make things more efficient but this government does not seem to understand how to use money

in a way that is more effective and more efficient. They just keep putting good money after bad with the kind of decision making that they make.

Mr. Speaker, I was going to move on to something else but I am going to stay with health care. I am going to save what I was going to say for the last time I speak to the Budget because there are so many things in our health care that shows us this government is not doing what they say.

Let's think about what they just did in the Budget with regard to the Adult Dental Program. Here is a program they brought in last year. They said they brought it in as a pilot project. They brought it in, they put a small amount of money towards it and then when it showed the need was so great, that \$21 million got spent instead of \$6 million, they should have said: Pilot project and it is telling us something.

What are we learning from this pilot project? We are learning that there is a need in the Province. There is a serious need and it is more expensive than \$6 million. We are going to have to make adjustments. This is what a pilot project is about and that is what they do not understand. They do these pilot projects.

A pilot project is supposed to teach you something so that when you put a program in place you have learned from the pilot and what you put in place is now a good program. What did they learn? Oh, my God, it is not going to cost \$6 million, it is going to cost \$21 million. We are going to have to cut back. We are going to have to cap. We are going to have to tell people they can only get a certain amount of money. Now we are going to have people who think they are getting dental care with an inadequate program, a program that is not efficient, and a program that is not going to be good for their health.

This is the kind of thing – they said it is a pilot project. They do not know that means. They do not have a clue what that means. If they really did, for example, a good pilot project on a health clinic, or took one of the ones that is really

working well in the Province – because there are some that are working really well – take a look at it and say, what are we learning, how can we make it better, and now let’s repeat this around the Province. Then you are getting innovation, and then you are getting efficiency, Mr. Speaker.

I get so frustrated with the government using the language that it uses, the same thing with regard to long-term care and home care. They held extensive consultations, and I would bet spent tens of thousands of dollars on those consultations. I sat in on some of them. I heard the creative ideas that were put forward. I heard the things that were innovative. What have they done? Not only have they not done anything that was creative, they have done nothing that came out of those consultations.

The Minister of Health can laugh all she wants. She is laughing because she knows what I am saying is true, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

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, it had not been my intent to speak this afternoon but having heard some of what I have heard over the last hour or so, I think that I need to stand here in the House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing that we cannot stand for here in this House of Assembly, it is people who stand up and talk about things when they really do not know what it is they are talking about. When they can put out half-truths and then throw that out as if that were the gospel by which things happen. Then I find that I have to stand and I have to add correction to some of the commentary that was made. I will do that and I will weave that through some of what it is that I am going to say here, Mr. Speaker. I hardly know where to start.

I am going to start with, first of all, the fact that the Leader of the Third Party, her biggest criticism as she started out here today was the fact that all we do over here is get up and pat ourselves on the back because we outline for the people of the Province how we spend their money. Mr. Speaker, what I understand from what she is saying is that she does not want us to tell the people of the Province how we spend the money.

We just brought down the Budget, Mr. Speaker, a Budget of somewhere around \$8 billion and she does not want us to tell the people of the Province how that money is being spent. It is absolutely unbelievable that she wants to shroud approximately \$8 billion worth of money in secrecy, and for us not to tell the people of the Province what it is that we are doing with it. Instead, she tries to cover that up, or she pretends that is what she is trying to do because really she does not want us to speak about the good things. She pretends that the way we are doing it is that we are patting ourselves on the back.

Mr. Speaker, particularly in health care, what we are doing is we are making every effort to provide to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador the best, the most efficient, and the highest quality service of health care that we can in this Province. Mr. Speaker, I intend to tell them how we are spending their money for them to do that for us, because that is why we were elected. That is why they put us over here on this side of the House. They believed we could do a good job of that and therefore we have to show them that. We have to keep earning their respect by telling them what we are doing.

She can call it what she wants over there on the other side of the House. What we are doing, Mr. Speaker, is we are being honest and upfront with the people of this Province and telling them how we are spending their money.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Mr. Speaker, she went on to a number of different things when she stood to speak. One of them had to do with identifying

that we are not doing anything innovative and that we are not doing anything around the supply of physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, LPNs, PCAs, et cetera and if we are doing it, we are not doing it in any innovative way.

I do not know, Mr. Speaker, why it is she has not been listening in the House of Assembly because on a number of occasions I have outlined what we are doing around physician recruitment, what we are doing around nurse recruitment, what we have done in LPNs, and what we have done in a number of different areas. It has been exceptionally innovative. It has been so innovative that she is actually standing up here now and talking about what it is we are actually doing, and saying that would be innovation.

Well, Mr. Speaker, she is listening to what we are doing in long-term care particularly, and she is saying: They do not need the services of a doctor all day; they do not need the services of an RN all day. She is right, which is why we have introduced the skills-mix ratio that she has stood up in the same House of Assembly and criticized. She has absolutely criticized that, and today she stands up and says it would have been innovative if we had done it. That is what we are doing, Mr. Speaker.

We have a skills-mix ratio that we are using in our long-term care facilities that will see our LPNs, our PCAs, and our RNs working to their full scope of practice. That is innovative. It does save money. It is efficient. I am so glad she has recognized it. The only part she forgot to recognize is that we are doing it, not that it was her idea and we should do it. We have been doing it. We are doing it and we will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Mr. Speaker, she talked about physicians and the fact that somebody cannot get a physician. Mr. Speaker, just for the record, I need people to know that we have the highest number of physicians working that we have ever had in this Province, the highest number of RNs working, the highest number of nurse

practitioners working than we have ever had here.

Mr. Speaker, let me just pick one of the health authorities. I think I will pick Western Health. I do not know if she was referring to Western Health or not; I suspect she might have been. Let's talk about what we have done there just this year in terms of recruitment of physicians.

We have recruited, just in the last year for Western Health, seventeen physicians, Mr. Speaker. We have filled all of the pathology and psychiatry vacancies at Western Memorial. We have recruited a family physician in Port Saunders – one of the most difficult positions we have had to fill, Mr. Speaker. We are really happy about that. We have added twelve – and I want to say that again, twelve – new family physicians to the Western area; three of them from MUN, another anaesthetist from MUN who is going to the region.

In addition to that, we have recruited a second anaesthesiologist. We have also recruited a gastroenterologist and another family physician who is going to start work in the summer, Mr. Speaker. She still stands up and says we have not done anything. We have people out there who cannot get a family doctor and they are in emergency and so on.

She does not want to acknowledge to the people of the Province, though, what we have done. Instead, she wants to exploit one situation and put that out there. She has no idea, she does not want to learn, she refuses to acknowledge any of this at all the hard work of, again, I might point out, our public service who have done phenomenal work around recruitment and retention, which she finally said somewhere along the way. I do not think she said anything about recruitment and retention efforts that were made, Mr. Speaker.

Our overall physician services budget has increased from \$293 million to \$461 million. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because we want to see that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador get the best health care that they possibly can. We want to see that we have a number of physicians

working here in this Province, Mr. Speaker, and those efforts have resulted in some pretty impressive recruitment efforts right across this Province. Not only that, because of the other bonuses and incentives that we have put in place, they have also resulted in some pretty impressive retention efforts as well, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I want to acknowledge that she has talked about the innovation part of it in terms of how we use our health care providers out there. She has finally acknowledged that what we are doing, particularly around nursing, is the right thing to do. I am going to continue to remind her of that because we have been doing that. We have been following the 2006 recommendations and we have been doing that. I just want to make sure she is aware of that and that the people of the Province also get to know that because I know she does not want us to put out that.

She also talked about the fact that we do nothing in terms of any other innovations in this Province, Mr. Speaker, around health care. She talked specifically there about the Long-Term Care Strategy. As she questioned us on the Long-Term Care Strategy last spring, I had great difficulty sometimes because I had known that she really had not read very far into that report when she was questioning. I trust and hope that she has read the entirety of the Long-Term Care Strategy now and that she has simply forgotten some of the very innovative work that is happening in there.

Let us talk about Rapid Response Teams as an example of some of the very innovative work that is happening, Mr. Speaker. We all know that we have seniors particularly, although it does not apply uniquely to seniors, who present to our emergency departments. They may have a condition that requires some medical treatment, but really and truly that treatment could happen at home. For many of them, they are alone, they are living alone, and they do not have anyone to help them with that assistance.

Mr. Speaker, through our Rapid Response Teams, very innovatively, we are proposing that

we could send these people home with the proper supports in place so they do not have to be admitted into hospitals and so we can keep our beds freed up for acute care patients who need those beds, and also because we recognize that many of our seniors do better in their own surroundings. So we have put in place, and through this year's Budget we will see increases, up to four Rapid Response Teams.

Now, if that is not innovation, Mr. Speaker, then I do not know what that is. She does not want to acknowledge that. She says instead, no, we have done nothing in terms of the Long-Term Care Strategy and we are doing nothing around innovation. It is absolutely unbelievable that she would talk about that.

In Corner Brook, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the Corner Brook hospital because that has been brought up here a couple of times today; in fact, I believe that has been brought up here now a number of times since we opened this session of the House of Assembly. Again, if we are going to talk about innovation and doing things right in our health care system, then I want to point out that what we are proposing for the Corner Brook hospital or the Western Memorial Hospital is perhaps one of the most innovative, progressive forms of health care that we will have seen in this Province.

We recognized immediately that a large part of the problem we were having in the current hospital out there had to do with the fact that a number of our acute care beds were being occupied by people who could be more properly accommodated in other ways. We are looking for the right place, the most appropriate place to see to it that they receive the most appropriate care.

Part of what we did in our examination and being innovative and creative, Mr. Speaker, is that we looked at the demographics; we looked at the population that we are serving there in Western Newfoundland. What we saw is that we are serving an aging population. As opposed to simply going with the status quo and putting up the same thing as they have now with maybe some new equipment in it, new beds in it and so

on, we said no, let's look at where it is that we need to be providing care. Mr. Speaker, we are putting in an extra 100 long-term care beds because we see the need for it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: That is what we are doing. That is innovative, that is creative, and that is responding to the needs of the day. That is showing efficiency; that is showing thinking outside of the box, Mr. Speaker. As opposed to going with the status quo, we are thinking outside the box. We are identifying need, and we are responding to the need.

Mr. Speaker, some people in this House are saying that means that we are going to have less acute care beds. I am going to try to explain it one more time. We are not going to have less acute care beds. We are proposing 260 beds. We have 199 beds right now. Statistics over the last two years show that about 25 per cent of those beds are occupied by ALC clients, Alternate Level of Care clients.

Again, we are thinking outside of the box and we are looking for ways to provide care to those Alternate Level of Care clients properly. Some of them, Mr. Speaker, are in those acute care beds because they need rehabilitative care or restorative care. What we are doing in Corner Brook right now is we are in the process of constructing a fourteen-bed restorative care unit. That frees up fourteen beds in that hospital.

Mr. Speaker, we have many people who are in hospital in Western Memorial – and this is statistically proven over the last two years – because they are waiting for long-term care. The 100 beds will look after those people and then some. We also have people who are waiting in acute care beds in that hospital because they may have had a stroke, and in order to return home they need renovations done to their house. They, too, are occupying those acute care beds. We can put them in restorative care beds, Mr. Speaker, where they are getting the proper OT and PT that they need. That will free up beds. We have five palliative care beds in that hospital, but we understand palliative

care is best delivered in long-term care. So we can move those five palliative care beds into long-term care. Mr. Speaker, that is innovative, that is creative. That is freeing up acute care beds as well.

Mr. Speaker, we have people who are waiting in our acute care beds because they may be waiting on assessment for home support. We have people who are waiting assessment for all kinds of other treatments, Mr. Speaker, who can be better and more properly attended to in other sorts of beds and services within the delivery of health care. That is what we call thinking outside the box and providing the right care at the right place.

Mr. Speaker, I realize she wants to talk about the fact that we have not been innovative and creative, unfortunately my time is run out because I have pages and pages here that I can use to address exactly how we have been innovative but I will stop for now and have another opportunity.

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): Order, please!

I remind the member her time is up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would just like to comment on all the people who spoke, all the hon. members who spoke here this afternoon. First of all, I would like to thank the Leader of the Third Party who once again is never afraid to misrepresent the facts.

Private members' resolutions are meant to stimulate debate on issues that are important to the people of the Province, and that is exactly what we did here today. This private member's resolution was meant to correct the

misinformation coming from the other side day in and day out, Mr. Speaker, because we hear it every single day.

As MHAs on the government side, we need to get the facts out there. We need to get the facts straight when we hear things like this. We need to let the people of the Province know what we are doing and why we are doing it. Mr. Speaker, that is my first comment.

I would like to thank the Member for St. Barbe. Again, he continues to misrepresent the facts and issues to the people of Newfoundland. At least you are consistent. Here is one fact I would like to throw out there as he prepares for his next rant and his next doom and gloom rant, I should suggest.

According to the latest survey from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Newfoundland and Labrador is now home to the most optimistic entrepreneurs in all of Canada. These results came out last week, so we have the business community in Newfoundland and Labrador that are indicating they are the most optimistic of any business leaders in all of the country, Mr. Speaker, and they know what is going on in this Province. Obviously, the people on the other side do not.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the Member for Burgeo – La Poile for his fact-deficit rhetoric. Again, it is consistent, Mr. Speaker.

The ABE program has not been cut, Mr. Speaker. It has not been cut. There are no cuts to ABE. None, Mr. Speaker, end of story.

As the new Department of Advanced Education and Skills was formed from the former HRDC into Advanced Education and moved the mandate of the department –

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: If I may say, I am just wondering if the hon. member's side will tell us where ABE is going to be in the fall because nobody else in the Province seems to know that right now.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

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

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, as the new Department of AES was formed from the former HRDC into Advanced Education and moved the mandate of the department to one of more of an economic, job-creating focus, versus a department focused on social programming. We think it is a good idea, and it is still a good idea, Mr. Speaker. That transformation is continuing and we are getting to a better place every single day. This is a perfect example of how we are changing things to move forward, more focused, more effective, innovative and efficient, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Member for Bonavista North, who often speaks from the heart. Who understands first-hand from hard-bought personal experience, how life can be unfair and that there are great programs available to the people in this Province and to families in this Province that keep those in mind who need the help most, and they can become productive members of society. So, thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the Minister of Health and Community Services for putting the facts out there and correcting comments coming from the other side of the House.

Mr. Speaker I would also like to thank the Minister of Finance for getting, again, the facts out there and tabling the incredible investment this government is making with Budget 2013 in helping make our Province a better place,

including the over \$18 million that we are spending on a new high school in the West End of St. John's. I know my constituents are very pleased about that. I hear it every day I am in my district. They have been waiting patiently for this day, and that day has arrived, Mr. Speaker. I especially like his line: Even in tough times this government has found ways to do good things.

Mr. Speaker, once again I must stress that this government has done a tremendous amount of great work since coming into power in 2003. Great work that we are proud of, Mr. Speaker. We have been fiscally responsible. We have shown fiscal discipline while making significant investments right across the board. Mr. Speaker, we are governing responsibly and we will continue to make decisions that are in the best interest of the people.

Mr. Speaker, any time government makes changes to the delivery of programs and services there will be some people who will have questions, and we get that. We understand that, Mr. Speaker. Questioning government is not only important but it is healthy to any functioning democracy. I believe the majority of the people of the Province understand, or will come to understand what we are doing and why we are doing it.

A government is about ensuring public programs and services are designed and delivered in ways that are results focused and effective, as well as innovative, efficient, and affordable. Mr. Speaker, this is what the people want. This is what we have set out to do. Mr. Speaker, we are doing it.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Debate is now concluded on the private member's resolution.

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 carried.

This being Private Members' Day and the debate now adjourned, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, at 1:30 p.m.