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Speaker: Honourable Ross Wiseman, MHA

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Before we start today's proceedings, I just wanted to acknowledge a couple of guests in our galleries: Mr. Frank O'Leary and Mr. Chris Henley from NAPE.

Welcome to our galleries, gentlemen.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today, we have members' statements from the Member for the District of Bay of Islands; the Member for the District of Exploits; the Member for the District of Port au Port; the Member for the District of Harbour Main; the Member for the District of Baie Verte – Springdale; and the Member for the District of St. Barbe.

The hon. the Member for the District of Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to a dear friend, a well-known businessman, and volunteer from the Town of Cox's Cove.

On November 20, Alex Samuel Park passed away at the age of seventy-two. Born and raised in Cox's Cove, Alex was involved in his community for many years. He was a devoted family man, dedicated to his church and to his town.

Alex formed the first town council of Cox's Cove and served many years. He was a great volunteer and served with the Recreation Committee, North Shore Development and the Great Humber Joint Council. His dedication to serve and contribute to his town is what he is to be commended for.

Alex's business ventures started with grocery stores in Cox's Cove and Meadows and, later,

with Island Roofing Ltd, which today has grown into a very successful family business, employing up to eighteen people from the town.

Alex was a very kind-hearted, gentle, and caring person who gave freely to others, requesting no recognition in return.

His wife, Mona, was his angel during his illness, and his devotion to his family and his church, even during this difficult time, was unwavering.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing Alex for his contribution to his community, both as a volunteer and a businessman, and extend condolences to the family.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Exploits.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: Mr. Speaker, the Dr. Hugh Twomey Health Care Centre Auxiliary in Botwood recently partnered with the South and Central Health Foundation to cost share the purchase of a Cuddle Bed for the Palliative Care Unit at the Twomey Centre. Palliative care patients and their families will benefit from the purchase of this bed.

Members of the Auxiliary were joined by Dr. Jody Woolfrey, Mr. Doug Prince – Director of Health Services for Exploits – and foundation board members for the presentation of the new specialized bed which cost \$9,000.

Mr. Speaker, the Dr. Hugh Twomey Health Centre Auxiliary is well known for their passion and dedication to the centre and this is another tremendous contribution to improving services at the centre.

I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating the Auxiliary on the purchase of

this new specialized bed and wish them all the best with their future projects.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CORNET: Monsieur le président, je prends la parole aujourd'hui pour rendre hommage à M. Émile Benoit, qui a été désigné personne d'importance provinciale au titre du Programme provincial de commémoration historique.

J'ai eu l'honneur d'assister à cet événement le 18 octobre à L'Anse-à-Canards, d'où était originaire Émile et où son épouse, Rita Benoit, a fièrement accepté le certificat attestant les réalisations de son défunt époux.

Émile Benoit était déjà un artiste connu à l'échelle locale lorsqu'il a remporté un concours de violon en 1973, ce qui lui a permis de voyager à de nombreux endroits pour divertir les foules grâce à sa musique et à ses récits.

Émile a obtenu nombre de distinctions durant sa carrière, dont un doctorat honorifique de l'Université Memorial de Terre-Neuve, un prix du Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council pour l'ensemble de ses réalisations, de même que le prix Roger-Champagne.

Les musiciens talentueux que j'ai eu l'occasion d'entendre lors de l'événement témoignent sans contredit de la marque laissée par Émile sur la culture et la musique au sein de notre communauté.

Monsieur le président, je demande aux députés de se joindre à moi pour honorer Émile Benoit à titre de personne d'importance provinciale dans la province de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador.

Merci.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HEDDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House to honour recipients of the Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Awards at the presentation ceremony on Saturday, November 30, 2013 at the Capital Hotel.

To qualify for an award, a participant must undertake a balanced program of volunteer activities and meet the prescribed standards in four important areas of self development. These areas include community service, adventurous journeys, physical fitness, and skill development.

The Honourable Frank F. Fagan, Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador, presented awards to eighty-three successful participants. I congratulate all award winners and, in particular, five award winners from the District of Harbour Main, members of the Frank Robert's Duke of Edinburgh's, CBS. They are Andrew Butler, Emily Lockyear, Colin Tucker, Maddie Lundrigan, and Mitchell Searle.

Mr. Speaker, these young people are part of 3,800 youth participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in this Province. I am sure all members of this Chamber will join with me in honouring these young people for their dedication and commitment, as well as thanking the provincial council and the countless number of volunteers who work behind the scenes to provide this tremendous service to the youth of this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. POLLARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is the season of giving, celebrating and tradition.

I rise in this hon. House to recognize and thank two special people from Baie Verte.

Over thirty years ago, retired educators Mary Lou and Ellis Stuckless hosted an open house celebrating a Christmas get-together, welcoming one and all. It all began with family and friends dropping in for a warm up as they waited in the cold at the conclusion of the annual Santa Claus Parade, organized by Kinsmen.

The menu consists of three kinds of soup; rabbit, cream of carrot, and autumn, served with fresh buns, croissants, and a variety of baked goods, topped off with tea, coffee or hot chocolate. Each year the community looks forward to the event, signaling the start of the festive season.

Mary Lou and Ellis truly represent the spirit of the season as they give of their time and energy to celebrate with community.

Please help me celebrate the wonderful, kind gesture of the Stuckless's as they continue this tradition, at which I had the privilege to experience again this past year.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate Daley Samson, Mason Samson, Corey Patey, Dylan Murrin, Todd House, Nikita Elliot, Shauna Patey, Jason Patey, and Tyson Samson on receiving a Certificate of Commendation from the Governor General of Canada.

This commendation has been awarded in recognition of their actions in helping their friends following an avalanche in Eastern Blue Mountains on March 10, 2007, which claimed the life of one of their friends, Jamie Patey. Without the action of these young people this

avalanche would have been a much bigger disaster.

I ask for a moment to remember the late Joshua Hynes, also one of the brave youth that day, but no longer with us as he succumbed to injuries from a motor vehicle accident in Alberta on May 26, 2012.

The selfless actions of these youth are an inspiration to others and represent a high form of citizenship of which we are all very proud.

I ask all members of this hon. House to join me in congratulating those nine young people, and take a moment to remember the late Jamie Patey.

MR. SPEAKER: Observe a moment of silence, please.

[A moment of silence is observed.]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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 a government, we are deeply committed to providing a model of care to seniors and adults with disabilities that is sustainable over the long term and achieves positive outcomes for families and their loved ones.

Development of a paid family caregiving option has been carefully considered to ensure it will provide a quality care option for those who will use it. The complexity of developing this program is highlighted by the fact that no other Canadian jurisdiction has developed a policy that aligns with our vision.

Our design objective with the Paid Family Caregiving Option is to increase a client's flexibility and choice by making it easier for adults, who require and are assessed as eligible for home support, to hire a family member. Through this option, we will broaden the definition of family members who can provide care to include parents, children, grandparents, grandchildren, siblings and relatives residing in the same home. This excludes spouses and common-law partners as there is still the expectation that the natural caregiving roles provided by these individuals will continue.

Beginning in January, training will be provided to appropriate staff of the regional health authorities who oversee the Home Support Program. The training will ensure that staff has adequate time to become familiar with this new option and the requirements for assessing a family member's ability to provide that care. Once training is complete, this option will then be made available to 250 new home support clients beginning in March of 2014.

An evaluation of the program will be carried out after the initial eighteen months to help determine the interest in the program, uptake and satisfaction, workload and financial impacts, and most importantly, client and quality care outcomes. The evaluation will inform decision making with respect to expansion to current home support clients and will also support program modifications.

Over this eighteen-month period, we will ensure there is a high level of accountability and parameters in place to ensure that client safety, quality of care and satisfaction are paramount.

Mr. Speaker, for more information on this caregiving option, interested individuals can contact 1-855-653-6440.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of the statement. Certainly, I am happy to see this announcement today. It took a long time and a lot of questions asked. As they say, the devil is in the details. It is a very positive announcement on its face, but a very cursory read of this. We received it this afternoon.

There are a number of questions I have to ask, and I am just going to put them out there now. I do not usually have a good track record of getting answers during Question Period so I will ask them now. We are talking about costing. I am not sure what the costing is on this. There is an assessment tool we need to see. Is there a new assessment tool? Is it the same assessment tool?

We see the number of 250. How are these going to be allotted? Will they be done by regional health authorities? How are they going to be divvied up? Is it first-come, first-served?

We come back to the costing on this. We know there was \$6.1 million announced in last year's Budget, which would have been pro-rated \$8.2 million over the year. What is the actual cost on this? Is there going to be new staff allotted to oversee this? We know that it is starting in March and the eighteen-month period would bring us up to the fall of 2015, which is a period of time I think we are all looking forward to.

Again, a great announcement, but the devil is in the details. We need to see more here. I am looking forward to the press conference that I am sure the minister will have to announce what is a long promised initiative.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. It is no doubt that it is important

to have a family caregiver option, especially in many rural communities where caregivers are hard to find, but the resources need to be there for training and for regular monitoring to achieve the high level of accountability that is being promised. It is an important step but it is not enough. We need it to be part of an overall, publicly administered and regulated home care program. This would only be one little piece in that program, Mr. Speaker.

There are so many questions. Will the training required for the extra workload for those currently overseeing the Home Support Program – will it be an extra workload? It is going to be an extra workload. How are we going to protect the family caregivers if they become injured? Are they going to be the same as self-employed home support workers? What is the protection for them under Workers' Compensation?

We are given such a little bit of information here today, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to hearing much more from this minister.

Thank you.

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

AN HON. MEMBER: Leave.

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

MR. KIRBY: Thanks to the minister for an advance copy of her statement.

Like many Members of the House of Assembly, I receive many calls from constituents regarding this long promised initiative. From the conversations I have had there is a high need for this sort of initiative and a great deal of interest, especially with regard to care of persons with disabilities. It is too bad it has taken so long to get this off the ground, but I certainly look forward, like my constituents do, to the widespread implementation of this.

Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House of Assembly today to recognize two very successful women leaders in our Province.

Each day, Mr. Speaker, we see the invaluable contributions women make to their communities and in the business sector. Two of those women were recently recognized for their outstanding ambition, innovation and leadership roles. These women serve as exemplary models for the business, social and political communities.

On Tuesday, December 3, Susan Patten, Chair of the Board of Directors of A. Harvey & Co. was recognized by the Women's Executive Network, Canada's leading organization dedicated to the advancement and recognition of women in management, executive, professional and board roles. Annually, the Women's Executive Network recognizes 100 women leaders in the country who have moved to the highest levels in their respective fields, overcoming obstacles to become some of Canada's most powerful women.

Susan Patten is one of eighteen Canadian women in ten categories to be honoured as the recipient of the Glencore Trailblazers and Trendsetters Award. The Women's Executive Network classifies the women who achieve this award as fearless, ambitious, innovative, determined, natural leaders and true pioneers.

Mr. Speaker, Susan Patten is a distinguished business leader in the Province who has already received the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Order of Canada. Her work ethic is paralleled only by her volunteer ethic where she continues to be a pillar of the volunteer sector.

Mr. Speaker, I am sincerely honoured to also announce that our very own Premier Dunderdale was singled out by this esteemed national organization at their awards gala in Toronto last week. The Premier received a special honorary

Top 100 Award for setting an example for all women who strive for more in their professional and personal lives.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SHEA: I offer my congratulations to Premier Dunderdale – our Province’s very first female Premier – and I thank her for the guidance and leadership she is providing to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the inspiration she is providing for women everywhere.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. The Women’s Executive Network recognizes each year 100 women from around the country who are leaders in their own right, both in the public and private spheres. These women are a powerful network for each other and tremendous role models for future women leaders.

I congratulate the Premier; I also congratulate Susan Patten on her being recognized as a trailblazer amongst us, Chair of the A. Harvey Group of Companies. Dr. Patten can add this award to a tremendous list of recognitions, from the Red Cross Humanitarian of the Year Award to the Order of Canada. Just this year, Dr. Patten was awarded an honorary degree from Memorial University for her accomplishments and contributions to the community.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize an incredible Newfoundlander who also made this year’s top 100 but was not recognized today by the minister, Lorraine Mitchelmore, President and Canada Country Chair for Shell Canada Limited. Ms Mitchelmore is a native of Green Island Cove and a graduate of Memorial University. Ms Mitchelmore worked her way to

the very top of Shell Canada, and this should be celebrated here today.

Congratulations to all the remarkable women who made this top 100. Women have fought hard to find their place in this public sphere and seeing these women make it to the top is truly inspiring.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. Susan Patten truly is a great woman we can celebrate here today. We can be proud of the work that she has done. We know how important it is to have women who are fearless, who are ambitious, who are innovative and who are natural leaders and true pioneers.

Bravo Susan Patten and bravo to the Premier for her inclusion. However, as a woman leader, Mr. Speaker, she cannot be proud that the Family Violence Intervention Court was cut on her watch. This court was a crucial tool in helping women who are the victims of domestic violence. The Premier must do the right thing as a woman leader and reinstate the Family Violence Intervention Court.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

AN HON. MEMBER: By leave.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. Women deserve recognition for

success and commitment to our communities and business. Lorraine Mitchelmore, as mentioned by the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, President of Shell Canada, of my hometown, was also a recipient of the top most powerful women in Canada and awarded at this gala.

Ms Susan Patten and the Premier are to be congratulated for inspiring others to reach for the top in business, social, and the political arena.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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.

On November 4, 2013, the Premier stated in this House that the removal of seafood tariffs under CETA was valued at \$25 million and would go up. In the CETA documents released last week, it is clear that the Premier when giving up on the minimum processing requirements, that there was no value attached to this loss.

I ask the Premier: Was there a financial analysis carried out on the value of the minimum processing requirements?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we entered, as a Province, into discussions with the federal government in 2010. In this process, unlike NAFTA at this point in time with CETA, the Province was engaged with the federal government in terms of input back and forth in terms of issues of importance to

each province and certainly the ten provinces and the territories in terms of what is important to them.

In the fishing industry, first and foremost, we wanted to get immediate access to a huge EU market, removal of end-use restrictions, and get our industry on a new level in terms of accessing that new market. We went through a number of evaluations. The hon. member mentions MPRs.

We engage the industry, the FFAW, seafood producers, industry stakeholders, and collectively it was thought the benefit that we could achieve through access to EU was far greater than holding on to MPRs. That is why we moved forward.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question was more about – as we would in any negotiating process, you would establish what it is you are willing to give up at the negotiating table. We understand \$25 million and up were the value of tariffs.

What was the value of the minimum processing requirements that you discussed at that table?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Speaker, we looked at MPRs on a national level too, Newfoundland and Labrador. We looked at what was happening historically in Atlantic Canada and the other provinces in terms of them having MPRs, certainly Quebec. We looked to BC in terms of the presence of MPRs. It is a significant inland fishery in Western Canada.

Collectively, we saw that most jurisdictions did not have MPRs. What was happening in terms of access to our resource, which some have indicated now will happen tomorrow, we did not think was realistic. Speaking to industry and looking at what we were doing, we did not think it was realistic.

Overall in that assessment – and second to that, as we know, we have access to a \$400 million fund to continue to build the industry in Newfoundland and Labrador, in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. Through that assessment, and collectively, all industry agreed this was the best route to go. Certainly, as a Province we support it, and as a government we think it is the right thing to do.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, it is very clear from the discussion that there was probably no value at all that was established about MPRs. I will say, we keep talking about a \$400 million fund; it is actually \$280 million from the federal government – of course, the \$220 million is coming from us.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier is on record as stating that as a result of the CETA negotiation that there would not be any job losses. Yet, on June 1, 2013, in a letter from the Minister of IBRD to the federal trade minister, it states that worker displacement was one of the reasons for adding the federal component of \$280 million.

So I ask the Premier: Do you still stand by your comments that dropping the MPRs will not result in job losses?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Mr. Speaker, let me begin by advising the Leader of the Opposition that the amount is \$400 million; \$280 million from the federal government and \$120 million, not \$220 million, \$120 million from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador – all new money, Mr. Speaker.

Now, you can slice that how you like. That is still \$400 million new dollars going into the fishery to ensure that it becomes all that it can be.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DUNDERDALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this was an incredibly important deal for the Province as a whole, but particularly for the fishing sector. Like everything we do, we understood that there would be little to no impact on workers in this Province; but, in some case if there was, we would have the opportunity to look after those people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will agree that it is \$120 million from our own taxpayers' money, and an extra \$280 million from the federal government. So that is the new money that came in as a result of this, not \$400 million.

Mr. Speaker, an MOU between Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador appears to permit direct sales by harvesters to foreign vessels in Canadian waters or over-the-side sales.

So, can the Premier confirm that fish caught in Newfoundland and Labrador has to be landed in this Province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, any fish that is landed in this Province under our current MPR regulations would need to be processed here. Under CETA, there would be one exception made to the EU in regard to if there was someone in the EU who wanted to interact with a processor here in Newfoundland and Labrador. He talks about –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. HUTCHINGS: I am getting to it; take your time.

In regard to the MOU that we signed prior to that, today, Canada has control on foreign waters in terms of over-the-side sales. I understand it has been about thirty years since that has taken place. Through our analysis we certainly identified – and this is something that was worked on between Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada in regard to over-the-side sales – that we would put a formalized process in place. In case at any point that would come up, the federal government would be obligated to contact the Province and to deal with the Province. We would have clarity in terms of that request.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last year this government passed Bill 53, allowing for new industrial-rate power for Labrador. At the time, government expressed a sense of urgency to pass the bill and allow for a new transmission line to service developing mines in the area.

It has been a year and we have not seen any action on this new transmission line. I ask the Premier: Why not?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it has been some time since we have been discussing Muskrat Falls and the development of power in Newfoundland and Labrador for a number of benefits. Besides the least-cost option as well as selling excess power for value, we always recognize the opportunity for development, particularly in Labrador around our mineral resources, which is a great benefit to Labrador and the entire Province.

Mr. Speaker, in order to do that we all acknowledge they need more power. In terms of needing more power, the issue is around reliability with existing power. There are tremendous opportunities for billions of dollars worth of investment in Labrador. I can confirm that Nalcor and government were certainly considering and looking at the development of a new transmission line from Churchill Falls into Lab West.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Mr. Speaker, we have heard that the developing mines in the area point that the commitment from government that a new line must be built or the development plans will need to be revisited.

I ask the Premier: It has been a year now and the PUB process will obviously take additional time, so when will the process finally begin?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, the process has certainly begun in terms of looking at the needs, the demands, and where we want to go with this, and there are a number of options we can

consider in terms of building the line into Labrador through the PUB; also, consideration of costs as well as an impact on rates. We are considering which options we can take.

Obviously, I sense from the member opposite that there is an urgency to get the line built. We certainly concur with that, Mr. Speaker. We want to move forward and in that process we will determine what is in the best interests of the people of Labrador and certainly in the best interests of Newfoundland and Labrador, as always.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We understand that right now in Corner Brook there are seven ultrasound machines of which six are operational. We have been told that the design of the new hospital will only have three ultrasound machines.

I ask the minister: Can you confirm there will be a 50 per cent reduction in ultrasound services in the new hospital for Corner Brook?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our current model for offerings in the new Western Memorial Regional Hospital will include all of the services that are currently offered there. It is not our intention in any way, shape, or form to see a decline in any of the services that are offered.

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The question was about the ultrasound machines, and we have real good information that says it is going to go from seven down to three.

Will the minister confirm for the people of Western Newfoundland that that service will not be in decline?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what we have been doing recently in terms of laying out the functional planning for the Western Memorial Regional Hospital is that we have been looking at demographics. We have been projecting forward as to what the needs for that hospital will be and how we are going to be able to best serve the needs of the region into the future.

What we will look at is all of the equipment that is required, and all of the staffing that we anticipate will be required, and so on. We are not looking at any downgrading of services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, in addition to there being a reduction in ultrasound services, the new hospital will not provide any radiation services.

I ask the minister: Can you confirm this; and, if so, what is the rationale for not providing such vital services to the Western Region of the Province?

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 have, in this House of Assembly on any number of occasions, told the member opposite that we will not be providing radiation services at Western Memorial Regional Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, we are taking the best advice from everywhere that we can get it – in particular, the Work Health Organization, from NLCHI, from experts in the field and so on. The reason for it is that radiation treatment ought to be offered in a tertiary care centre where the provincial cancer program is offered, Mr. Speaker. So that is the primary reason for it.

The other has to do with the actual use of the equipment that is offered, Mr. Speaker. A linac – I am hoping I will get more time then to answer that question.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: I see she consulted everybody except the physicians and the people in Western Newfoundland about the radiation services, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on November 22, I asked the minister about putting a PET scanner in the new hospital. She said they would not endanger the people of the Province by transporting these isotopes. These isotopes are transferred all over the country on a daily basis. For example, the University of Saskatchewan gets their isotopes from Hamilton, Ontario, 2,500 kilometres away. This is another excuse for not installing a PET scanner in Corner Brook.

I ask the minister: Should you give the people of Western Newfoundland a truthful answer instead of trying to scare them?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if there is anybody out there trying to fear monger the people of Western Newfoundland it is the Member for Bay of Islands.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Mr. Speaker, let's talk about that PET scanner, let's talk about the isotopes that he knows so much about from Saskatchewan. First of all, they are just putting in their PET scanner. So they are not bringing in any isotopes for a PET scanner, Mr. Speaker, because they are only just putting it in. The second part of that is that the isotopes that will be required for that particular PET scanner in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, will be provided by the university because that is where the cyclotron is going to be built.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in terms of a PET scanner for Corner Brook, I can outline as I have done in this House of Assembly on any number of occasions the reason why it is not sensible to do it at this point in time, and I really hope there is a follow-up question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Bay of Islands.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, as I said to the minister, if she wants to attack me she can but it is the people in Corner Brook I am concerned about.

I committed to the Member for Humber East –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I committed to the Member for Humber East that I will show a letter from the Dean of Medicine from the University of Saskatchewan saying that the PET scanner has been operational since May, 2013, and they are transferring the isotopes. I will

commit it to the minister and I will show him that e-mail I received from the Dean of Medicine. Just to show the minister, once again, is not being truthful with the people in Western Newfoundland. Mr. Speaker, she was talking about the isotopes to follow shipment.

I ask the minister: What is the real reason you do not want to ship isotopes from St. John's to Corner Brook when other provinces are shipping them all across Canada and the US?

MR. SPEAKER: Before the minister answers her question, I ask the member to apologize for suggesting that the minister was not truthful.

MR. JOYCE: I withdraw the remark.

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 am just as anxious to table material here in the House of Assembly. Mr. Speaker, I will be tabling here right now the PET scanner, CT scanner now operating in Saskatchewan June 20, 2013. I will table that document that talks about the fact that the isotopes will be made in a cyclotron in Saskatoon. I am happy to table that particular document.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Bay of Islands continues to fear monger on the West Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador about the quality of services that will be provided. That is so unfortunate. What we are providing will be the best in care. The best in care for that PET scanner will be here where the tertiary care is being offered, Mr. Speaker, in the sense of being able to put forward proper diagnosis and care for patients.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you.

Again, Minister, you should understand what a PET scanner is used for. It is used for a variety of detections, not just cancer. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I will say to the minister, she should check with other people, people who are involved.

Mr. Speaker, the minister stated in the House that it will cost \$40 million for a PET scanner. Once again, this information is not accurate. The \$40 million includes the cost of a cyclotron and renovations. The cost of a PET scanner is much, much less than \$40 million.

I ask the minister: Will you provide the proper information to the people of Western Newfoundland and stop making these outlandish claims?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my information that he calls outlandish comes from the World Health Organization. I am not exactly sure where his information is coming from, but I can tell you right now that I am happy to take information from the World Health Organization that talks about the fact that a PET scanner is used primarily for a patient receiving radiation treatment in terms of their overall health care plan. Mr. Speaker, he can argue with the World Health Organization if he wants to, but that is where that information is coming from.

Let's talk about the business of transporting isotopes as well, Mr. Speaker. What we know is that they have a very short lifespan when we are transporting isotopes for PET scanners. There are other kinds of isotopes, as I tried to explain to him before. We are talking about a specific one, which is F-FDG. That isotope has a 50 per cent –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for the District of Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Once again, Mr. Speaker, I hate to say it and I hate to repeat myself, she is totally inaccurate in the information that she is providing – totally inaccurate.

Enforcement of the Animal Health and Protection Act lacks teeth. The stories are being carried across the country. Citizens and animal welfare groups alike are saying police are not seizing animals in distress.

I ask the Minister of Natural Resources: Will you immediately meet with the head of the RNC and the RCMP about getting the message out to their officers?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, our government brought in the animal health act in response and collaboration, and listening to all the needs of the people of the Province around pet and pet care, and animal care throughout the Province. It is obviously very important to our government.

Enforcement of the act is a process as well that we have been involved in, in terms of training and engaging people in different communities, as well as through SPCA, and working with the RNC and RCMP. I certainly will commit to the member opposite that any work needs to be done, the follow-up work, we will continue to do so because by way of our action in bringing in the act, animals are important to the people of the Province. Again, as minister, I can only encourage people who have animals, and particularly those who have pets, that they take proper care of their pets.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: I say to the minister, the act was so important you cancelled the \$40,000 or \$50,000 for the educational program. That is how important it is to your government.

Mr. Speaker, it is now below zero out, these tied on dogs are about to endure another winter tied on to a box. Nineteen months after proclaiming the act, only seven communities are trained to seize animals in distress.

I ask the minister: Will you do the right thing and make training mandatory and resources for municipalities to enforce this act?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, the \$50,000 was available to the SPCA to deliver a program but we did not come to an agreement as to how that program could be delivered. As a result, the funding has lapsed. If something comes forward in the budget, we will certainly consider that. That is one part of the hon. member's question, Mr. Speaker.

On the other side, Mr. Speaker, if the member has a specific case or situation that he would like the chief veterinarian of the Province to look into, I would be more than happy to take the information. I have spoken with the chief veterinarian. There are a number of cases before the courts, which is indeed indicative that the act is working.

As I said before, follow-up work, continuation and working with the people of the Province, Mr. Speaker, is certainly a priority for our government as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, the 2012 international math scores have been released and it shows our students have fallen from sixth place nationally to ninth place in paper-based mathematics. Now every Province, except PEI, is out in front of us.

I ask the minister: Can he explain to the people of our Province how this decline took place under his government?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to point out to the hon. member first, Mr. Speaker, that we are still in pretty good company with Canada, who scores at thirteenth amongst sixty-five nations in the world. Our investment of \$17.5 million in 2008 for the Excellence in Mathematics Strategy, Mr. Speaker, we continue to roll that out. This is the final year of implementation.

Mr. Speaker, assessments always inform instruction. In this particular case we will go back, take a look at the assessment, look at strategies that teachers are using, and then if we need to adapt some of our practices, that is what we will do, Mr. Speaker. It is about informing instruction and better learning for our students.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, a prominent math professor at Memorial University says our Province's math curriculum is lacking some key structural necessities and that is why our students are falling behind.

Since these students have only ever studied under this Department of Education, will the minister admit that his government has failed our students and engage the expert professional

help needed to reverse this shabby treatment of our students?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the individual the member cites, we have been in discussions with the Department of Mathematics at Memorial. They have endorsed the strategies that have been used in our particular program. We will continue to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you one thing: I will not accept the member's suggestion that we have failed our students. I would put our students up against any students anywhere in the world, and I would put our teachers up against any teachers anywhere in the world.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, while the lowest proficiency level tested is level one, the baseline to fully participate in modern society is level two. More than 6 per cent of our students, 50 per cent more than the national average, are below level two.

I ask the minister: Is he concerned his system is producing so many students that are not even able to fully participate in modern society; and if so, what is he prepared to do about this serious issue?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, one of the things we have already undertaken, and previous to these results coming back, is having discussions with the Department of Education at Memorial who trains teachers. We take a look at how comfortable our teachers are in teaching

math. What methodologies are employed now? We take a look at these so that again informs instruction. From that, we look to improve results.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Government rejected a call by the Voisey's Bay Industrial Inquiry Commission to provide a process for the imposition of a collective agreement when all else has failed, the only recommendation that they out-and-out refused to consider.

I ask the Premier, Mr. Speaker, why her government continues to refuse to put in place mechanisms such as mandatory arbitration panels for the protection of workers and the public interest?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have reports done from time to time by a number of committees and groups who have given us recommendations and advice on certain aspects of not only the collective bargaining process, but many aspects of government and policy and legislation for the Province. We accept some and we do not accept others. That is part of being a government. We are not obligated to accept every recommendation that is provided to us.

We also have an Employer Relations Committee that works with us from time to time, made up of representatives from labour as well as business and government officials. There are occasions, as we have done in this House very recently,

where they come with recommendations that are a consensus agreed upon by all parties. We sometimes bring those forward. We have other what we call non-consensus items that never make it to the floor of the House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I point out to the minister that the Federation of Labour accepted all of those recommendations and have seen very little for that.

I ask the Premier again to explain to the workers at Labatt's why it is all right for replacement workers, known as scab labour, to be doing their work while they stand on a picket line?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We are very aware with what is going on with Labatt's and we are very concerned with that strike. My officials, through a number of senior conciliation officers, have been involved for quite some time in trying to move that process forward. We are very hopeful and optimistic that we are going to find a resolution.

As I said to the member several days ago, we understand the best way to form a solution is through a negotiated process, not one that is imposed upon by a third party such as the government. It is not a policy of our party that we are going to bring forward the kind of legislation that she is advocating for in this House.

I might add I am very pleased to hear her here today arguing for the unions, when the bulk of her time is spent in this House arguing against

the 3,000 unionized jobs that we are bringing forward for Muskrat Falls.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: I ask the Premier, Mr. Speaker: In everything that they say over on that side of the House, whose interest is this government really serving, the workers of this Province, or that of multinational corporations that make billions of dollars worldwide?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, the government of this Province is serving the needs of the people of this Province and the interests of the people of this Province. That is why we are creating 3,000 jobs in Muskrat Falls. That is why over the last ten years the economy in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has never been in better shape than it is today. It is why the Province continues to grow.

It is why every single indicator brought before this House, even as recent as last week in the mid-year fiscal update by my colleague the Minister of Finance, shows very positive results in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is because of the leadership this government and our Premier has provided the Province.

We take back seat to no one, especially the Leader of the New Democratic Party who argues both sides of an argument depending on who is sitting in the gallery in this House. We stand by the policies that we bring forward in the best

interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

I would like to ask the minister: Last week you talked about all the wonderful things that they are doing for workers in this Province; what does worker retention mean or what does worker education mean when they will not stand by the rights of the workers as they are being stripped by multinational corporations?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, there are labour laws in this Province for a particular reason. It is so that people like the Leader of the Third Party cannot arbitrarily, because it suits the politics of the day, impose a political decision into the middle of a labour dispute. We have laws in place to support that process, and we have a Labour Relations Agency in place to support and facilitate finding resolutions for the workers, such as the one at Labatt's.

Our government is very understanding and very aware of the sensitivities of that dispute, and we have great concern about where it is headed – there is no question about that – but we do not intend to get into the middle of a dispute.

MS MICHAEL: (Inaudible).

MR. KING: Now, Mr. Speaker the Leader of the Third Party can shout at me across the way or she can let me answer the question. We do not support replacement worker legislation, first of all; but I will say to you that there is a request

for a conciliation board before me, and I am considering it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, inmates are still abruptly cut off their legitimately prescribed medication and courts are still reluctant to send certain accused individuals to HMP because of this. In his external review of the prison psychiatric services, Dr. Klassen recommended expanding the network of psychiatrists providing services in correctional facilities. The department agreed to develop a rotation of psychiatrists to provide on-site services.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Has this recommendation been implemented?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say, first of all, I always find it very troublesome as the Minister of Justice when a member, a politician, comes to this House and questions the independence and integrity of the court system in the Province. I always have great difficulty with that topic getting on the floor of the House of the Assembly.

This is a political environment and all of us should recognize, at least, that the court system in Newfoundland and Labrador is independent of any political bias. They operate totally autonomous to government, and that is how it has to be in order to maintain proper rule and order and ensure the proper application of the law of the land. So, I do take somewhat of an offense to the member continuously chastising the court system in the Province here in a political environment.

She is absolutely right. The report that was done by Dr. Klassen – thank you, I will get it on the follow-up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre, for a quick question without preamble, please.

MS ROGERS: Okay.

Mr. Speaker, the new Correctional Services Act received assent –

MR. SPEAKER: Without preamble, please.

MS ROGERS: Yes.

The assent on May 31 –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask the member to get to a quick question.

MS ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: What is holding up proclaiming the Correctional Services Act?

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The quick answer to the previous question that I did not get to is that we accepted the Klassen report. We accepted all the recommendations as it pertained to psychological services being provided at Her Majesty's Penitentiary, and we are moving forward with full implementation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The time for Question Period has expired.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bay of Islands, on a point of order.

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, in Question Period the Minister of Health mentioned that the PET scanner in Saskatchewan is not open. I just want

to table a news release from the Government of Saskatchewan that it opened in June, 2013.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

There is no opportunity for private members to table documents.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion

Notices of Motion

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009. (Bill 29)

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

Notices of Motion.

The hon. the Member for the District of Lewisporte.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, I give notice of a private member's motion to be dealt with on the next Private Members' Day.

BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House acknowledges the leadership that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are demonstrating through innovation ventures in areas such as ocean technology, robotics, digital imaging, software development, e-learning, genetics, aquaculture, food production, fabrication, offshore oil, exploration and development, and subsea electricity transmission for the Muskrat Falls Project.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have two notices of motion. First of all, I serve notice that the private member's motion just laid before the House of Assembly by the Member for Lewisporte will be the one to be debated this coming Wednesday, the next Private Members' Day.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. KING: Thank you.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I give notice under Standing Order 11 that I shall move that the House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 10, 2013.

I give notice further notice under Standing Order 11 that I shall move that this House not adjourn at 10:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 10, 2013.

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand today to present a petition on behalf of the people on the North Shore of the Bay of Islands, Route 440.

WHEREAS we are concerned over the deplorable condition of the pavement at Hughes Brook hill, Route 440; and

WHEREAS many residents of the Towns of Hughes Brook, Irishtown, Summerside, Meadows, Gillams, McIver's and Cox's Cove travel this road on a daily basis; and

WHEREAS after repeated requests for repairs to the pavement, the road has continued to deteriorate; and

WHEREAS the ruts in the pavement are creating a safety hazard; and

WHEREAS we feel that the condition of this road presents an accident waiting to happen;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to give serious consideration to making repairs to this road.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is a section of the road that has very dangerous ruts. I wrote the previous Minister of Transportation and Works last year on several occasions on this matter. Department officials in Western Newfoundland are well aware of these concerns.

Last week, Mr. Speaker, and today when people call me, I say: I wonder, is this part of the \$251 million or \$271 million not spent this year? We hear so many announcements about the amount of money used for roads in this Province when we have a condition like on Route 440, which is travelled by school buses. A lot of kids travel this to get to their school in Meadows.

There is a lot of heavy equipment. The fish plant in Cox's Cove is a prime example. There are a lot of heavy equipment and tractor-trailers that go back and forth here. It is a very dangerous situation. The hill is very steep. The hill is very long, Mr. Speaker. Going up on both sides there are ruts going up on Hughes Brook hill and coming from the North Shore towards Corner Brook, coming up that steep part again, are dangerous ruts. As the winter moves on, the

conditions are going to get worse because of the ice.

Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to the government's attention on many occasions. I have written the ministers on many occasions. I assume it is going to be a priority for this government because safety is a major concern for the Province in the roads. I just call upon the government to make this area a priority. It is a much-needed priority, not for luxury but for safety.

Mr. Speaker, once again I will be presenting petitions throughout every opportunity I can on this route because it is very dangerous. The people asked me to present their petitions. I can assure you government will not be able to say next year that it was not on our list because we were not aware of it. They will be made well aware of it. I trust they will do the right thing and make this road safe.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS play-based, full-day kindergarten has been proven to give children a stronger start in school and in life; and

WHEREAS a full day of learning early in life can help improve children's reading, writing, and math skills, and provide them with a strong foundation for further learning; and

WHEREAS full-day kindergarten provides opportunities for children to socialize with others and develop the academic and social skills necessary for future success; and

WHEREAS children in full-day kindergarten programs are able to remain in familiar surroundings with staff and friends all day, rather than moving between different locations; and

WHEREAS full-day kindergarten makes the transition to Grade 1 easier for both parents and children; and

WHEREAS provinces that invest in full-day kindergarten are seeing a return on investment in terms of better school achievement and fewer students at risk of falling through the cracks;

We, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge the government to introduce a full-day kindergarten program for children and families in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, with the limited time I have, I want to relate a story I had a couple of nights ago to members of the House of Assembly with respect to this issue. I have a couple of friends who have a small child who is kindergarten age who just moved to the national capital region, Ottawa, if you will.

As you know, lots of people who work in Ottawa also live across the river in Hull. When they were relocating from Montreal to the national capital region they had to make a decision. Some of the rents were actually cheaper across the river in Hull than they are in the Ottawa area, but in Ottawa there is full-day junior kindergarten. Parents are not forced to partake in this but there is an optional full-day junior kindergarten for four year olds, and also an optional full-day program for five year olds.

Just based on the availability of that full-day program for their four-year-old child, they decided to live in Ottawa and not in Hull. Think about that when it comes to Newfoundland and Labrador, the attraction to people who are considering moving here. That is another reason to have a full-day kindergarten program here. People will want to come here because we have

that for our children. It is a good idea, I say, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

MS MICHAEL: 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 strikes and lockouts are rare and, on average, 97 per cent of collective agreements are negotiated without work disruption; and

WHEREAS anti-temporary replacement workers' laws have existed in Quebec since 1978, in British Columbia since 1993, and successive governments in both those provinces have never repealed those laws; and

WHEREAS anti-temporary replacement workers' legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

WHEREAS the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community, the local economy, and the well-being of its residents, as evident by the use of temporary replacement workers currently by Labatt's, and in recent years by both Ocean Choice International and Vale in Voisey's Bay;

WHEREUPON we, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge government to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout;

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to stand and to present this petition today on behalf of the petitioners. As they point out in their

petition, we have a particular situation in the Province right now where we have workers who have been on a picket line for eight months. Over the last seven years that I have been in this House of Assembly, Mr. Speaker, we have had at least four protracted strikes in this Province, everything from the Vale workers, from eighteen months on the picket line, through to the workers at the St. John's Airport Authority for eight months, and now Labatt's workers for eight months.

In all cases, Mr. Speaker, we know that the ability of employers to use replacement workers, known as scab labour, is one of the issues that helps maintain a strike to be prolonged.

In the report that was done by the Voisey's Bay Industrial Inquiry and released in 2012, the commissioners pointed out that it was a major factor in the eighteen months strike in Vale. We know from other provinces, as the petition references, both in BC and Quebec, they have shorter strikes when they do have a strike and they have a fewer number of strikes. Both of those factors have contributed to the fact that they have anti-replacement workers' legislation in place so that employers cannot hire replacement workers while people are on the picket lines.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this government to reconsider its position that it has been stating so strongly with regard to legislation that we need. I beg of them on behalf of the petitioners to listen to the prayer.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: 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 government has a responsibility to ensure that Internet access is broadly available so people have the right to be able to access the Internet in order to exercise and enjoy their rights to freedom of expression and opinion and other fundamental human rights; and

WHEREAS Bide Arm was bypassed under the Broadband for Rural and Northern Development Initiative, which saw high-speed Internet added to thirty-six communities on the Great Northern Peninsula in 2004; and

WHEREAS nearly a decade later Bide Arm still remains without broadband services, despite being an amalgamated town with Roddickton; and

WHEREAS residents rely on Internet services for education, business, communication, and social activity; and

WHEREAS wireless and wired technologies exist to provide broadband service to rural communities to replace slower dial-up service;

We, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge the government to assist providers to ensure that Bide Arm is in receipt of broadband Internet services in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As in duty, bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by quite a number of residents from the Town of Englee. Actually, I believe, the majority of them, and then in Bide Arm as well.

Bide Arm being an amalgamated town with Roddickton, it creates a social divide when you are trying to build a community and trying to be inclusive when it comes to community events and how you share information, whether it is using social media or through your blog or through their town Web site and how they upload videos or photos of different events and

news stories. For someone to be able to have the slower dial-up Internet services, it is very much unacceptable when it comes to being able to access that level of service.

Bide Arm, for example, has had a number of water problems recently and being able to get the message out to individual households can be shared and towns can get a lot more information out quickly if you have a group or if you are able to access that posting directly from a Web page. In certain areas of my district, a number of them actually do not even have certain radio stations that would be able to broadcast and share that information. It is just not readily available. Beyond public radio, there are no private operators there in the community for Bide Arm and for other communities of the Straits.

Being able to provide Internet is a key area of where we need to be. Having close to 200 communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, it is completely unacceptable in 2013.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS DEMPSTER: 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 humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS until 2013, calcium was applied to provincially owned gravel roads in and around communities to suppress dust; and

WHEREAS dust suppression is very helpful for residents experiencing health conditions like asthma and allergies; and

WHEREAS the cost of administering the calcium budget is very affordable to government; and

WHEREAS dust suppression is an affective way of improving safety for the travelling public;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, beginning in 2014, to reinstate the calcium application program on provincially owned gravel roads in and around communities.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege to stand a number of times and speak to the calcium issue, and I will continue to raise the calcium issue until it is reinstated. Last night, I was visiting a family member at the Miller Centre and there was a gentleman there from St. John's. He said: I heard you last week speaking to calcium. Is it really as bad as that?

Obviously if you live in a city and you have streets of pavement, you really do not understand what it is that these residents in coastal Labrador – the dust that they are living with on a day-to-day basis with gravel roads at best; but, by having calcium on the provincially owned part of the road that ran in the centre of town, it certainly made a huge improvement to the situation that we live with on a day-to-day basis. Because we know that anywhere you have a gravel road, they are giving off dust.

What I am saying is the cost of dust control can more than pay for itself when you look at the health implications, when you look at the cost of people being sent out, emergencies with asthma and allergy reactions and things like that. I am trying to get government to see that this would actually be a good economic decision to reinstate. We know that provincially it only costs \$300,000. I still do not have a figure, but it is much less than that, what it would cost to reinstate the calcium back into communities in southeast.

I will continue to advocate for my constituents, Mr. Speaker, on their behalf to have the calcium reinstated.

Thank you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS cellphone service is essential for business development;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to 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 community of Trout River.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you about Trout River. Trout River is a town of around 600 or 700 people. As you go out to Gros Morne National Park – and you have seen many other places, you have seen Woody Point. Then you take the trip to Trout River. It is around twenty kilometres or so out through Trout River Gulch, on the left-hand side going out. It is absolute rock, it is volcanic rock, and it is blast rock. It looks almost like the face of the moon. On the right side going out to Trout River it is absolutely lush and green, trees, grass, and

fields. It is almost like you can see a split type of geography.

When you get into Trout River, especially if a person is there maybe in the summertime, in the month of July, maybe because there is no highway that runs through it, people still have livestock. It is the type of small community that many of us grew up in that we do not see very much of any more in this Province. Most of the people have gotten away from livestock, they have gotten away from hay fields. Well, Trout River is not like that.

Trout River, there is a large number of people who still maintain a traditional lifestyle. They fish and they hunt, they guide, and they have restaurants. They have places for people to stay. There is now a service station, which was not there for some time.

The Town of Trout River is very self-sufficient. The restaurant is internationally renowned. If you go visit – well, there are several restaurants. Two or three or four in the summertime, but one of them, the Seaside, is internationally renowned. You can visit there for the seafood and you see names of individuals – people like David Suzuki, names of individuals who have visited the area, various actors, entertainers, performers, have written this, and they all have high accolades for the area.

What do they not have in Trout River? They do not have cellphone service. Cellphone service is so basic today; 600 or 700 people, many of them have cellphones. They get cellphones anyway and they accept that they have a cellphone, because when they drive to Corner Brook or Deer Lake or elsewhere, they can phone home to their hardline and let people know where they are. That means they have cellphones for very limited use, because there is no cellphone service.

Mr. Speaker, this is a simple request for government to partner –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the member that his time has expired.

MR. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS ROGERS: 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 the Family Violence Intervention Court provided a comprehensive approach to domestic violence in a court setting that fully understood and dealt with the complex issues of domestic violence; and

WHEREAS domestic violence continues to be one of the most serious issues facing our Province today, and the cost of the impact of domestic violence is great both economically and in human suffering; and

WHEREAS the Family Violence Intervention Court was welcomed and endorsed by all aspects of the justice system including the police, the courts, prosecutors, defence counsel, Child, Youth and Family Services, as well as victims, offenders, community agencies and women's groups; and

WHEREAS the recidivism rate for offenders going through the court was 10 per cent compared to 40 per cent for those who did not; and

WHEREAS the budget for the court was only 0.2 per cent of the entire budget of the Department of Justice;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to reinstate the Family Violence Intervention Court.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege of standing up in this House on several occasions to present this petition. The petitions keep rolling in, and I think because people are very passionate about this issue. We know how large a problem the whole issue of family violence is today. We have just honoured and commemorated December 6, which is a day specifically of remembrance about violence against women but also it is a day about action.

People are aware of the great cost to society of domestic violence. What I would like to do today, Mr. Speaker, is speak a little bit about the offenders and what the court meant for the offenders. For the sake of speaking here today, predominantly the offenders have been male and predominantly the victims have been female, women and then their children.

We know research has shown that intervention as close to the time of offence is the most effective way for intervention in family violence. It is the most crucial time to enact treatment. It is the most important time to assure as much as possible that treatment will be effective.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that, for instance, the John Howard Society had a grant of \$155,000 to provide treatment for offenders. The internal review showed that this treatment was effective. The recidivism rate for men who went through the treatment program was 10 per cent as opposed to 40 per cent for those who had not.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to look at this again.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the member her time has expired.

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

MR. SPEAKER: I will get your district out in a moment.

MR. A. PARSONS: 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 the residents of Burgeo, Ramea, Grey River and François, of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador must use Route 480 on a regular basis for work, medical, educational and social reasons; and

WHEREAS Route 480 is in deplorable condition, such that the shoulders of the road continuously wash away and there are huge potholes on the road; and

WHEREAS the condition of Route 480 poses a safety hazard to residents and visitors to Burgeo, Ramea, Grey River and François; and

WHEREAS the Department of Transportation and Works is responsible for the maintenance and repairs in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS the local division of the Department of Transportation and Works does make periodic repairs to this route but these repairs are only temporary patchwork and this road needs to be resurfaced;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to support the users of Route 480 in their request to have Route 480 resurfaced.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, again, this is an issue I have petitioned on a number of occasions. It is one that, like many roads in this Province, is in deplorable condition. I think there are a number of factors that make this road particularly treacherous. Given the fact that it is such a long road, it is about 150 kilometres; given the fact

there is absolutely no cell coverage on this road, which means that when you do get in trouble because of the condition of this road, you are often stuck there.

This is a road where we had a wash out last year in June that sat until November before it was actually finished. I give the Minister of Transportation credit here, I mentioned this to him, and he looked into it and made sure it was done. I have been bringing it up previously to that. It has been sitting there all summer but the department did not see fit to make this necessary repair.

The other thing is because of that wash out, fixing that, it meant we never had any other work done whatsoever besides the usual patch jobs that have been done. In fact, I am soon going to start sending the pictures that I receive of people who suffer damage to their car on to the department on a regular basis, just so they can see the constant e-mails, calls, Facebook messages, that I get from people.

We know it is not going to be done all at once. We know it is a very sizable road, it is 150 kilometres, but there has to be some kind of regular effort made to maintain this road and to start to work on this road. Not doing the little dribs and drabs that they have been doing, if we are lucky to get that.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to continue entering these. I have a number of petitions here, and I appreciate the opportunity to do so.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. 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 in the past, the Town of Conception Bay South has provided space for the Conception Bay South Public Library but will not be providing public space for the library in its new Town Hall building; and

WHEREAS losing the provincial library means that one of the fastest growing communities in the Province, with a population of 25,000, will no longer have local library service; and

WHEREAS a library is more than just books; it is an open community space for Internet access, online lending, children's reading programs, and community events and services, which improve literacy levels, provide access to information, stimulate creativity and innovation, and foster the development of strong communities; and

WHEREAS the Town of Conception Bay South has expressed interest in cost sharing a new site for the Conception Bay South Public Library;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to provide the necessary resources to retain the public library in Conception Bay South.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this petition on behalf of these people. They are coming from CBS and St. John's as a matter of fact, some signatories, but a lot of them from Conception Bay South again. The word is spreading on this that this is an important issue for the people of CBS, for the people of St. John's, and the rest of the people of the Province as well.

We know what has been happening with the library system in this Province, particularly as it pertains to the last Budget as well. We know the cuts there to librarian staff, for example, are only going to telescope and cause further problems to services that are being rendered by the libraries themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I am quite pleased to have presented this petition today. We know what libraries mean to people. They are a centre of excellence, if you will, for people to meet. They are essential to the operations of some communities. They are central in the minds of some people as well because they are, of course, centres where research can be done. They are also centres where Internet access can be gained by people who cannot afford it.

Mr. Speaker, again, I ask government to consider this. Of course, reading just the last line, there is an opportunity here for government to partner with the Town of Conception Bay South in expanding library services and making these services an integral part of a growing community, as well as an educational community and a centre of excellence for our business community.

Mr. Speaker, I leave this with the House and leave it to government to consider this petition.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I move Motion 1, pursuant to Standing Order 11, that the House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. today, Monday, December 9, 2013.

Further, I move Motion 2, pursuant to Standing Order 11 as well, that the House not adjourn 10:00 p.m. today, Monday, December 9, 2013.

MR. SPEAKER: It is has been moved and seconded that this House do not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, December 9, 2013; and it has been further moved and seconded that the House do not adjourn at 10:00 p.m. on Monday, December 9, 2013.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am going to call from the Order Paper, Order 5, second reading of a bill, An Act To Amend The Schools Act, 1997, Bill 28.

With the Speaker's guidance on this one, we made the motion on Thursday and we are still in debate, so I am not sure if I need a motion again or is it a continuation of second reading.

MR. SPEAKER: This is a continuation of second reading. This is where we finished off on Thursday, the last time we sat.

MR. KING: Okay. So, we will call from the Order Paper, Order 5, Bill 28.

Thank you.

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

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a pleasure to speak to Bill 28, An Act to Amend the Schools Act, 1997. This legislation, Mr. Speaker, would require every school to have a school code of conduct. It will require teachers, principals, school councils, school boards, and directors to promote a safe and caring learning environment. It would allow a board to appoint an associate director. It would increase the maximum number of assistant directors a board may appoint, and allow the minister to issue policy directives related to a safe and caring learning environment.

Mr. Speaker, before going on I would like to say thank you to the staff in the Department of Education for the briefing that they provided on this but, moreover, for all of their hard work on

this and on the Safe and Caring Schools Initiative.

MR. LANE: (Inaudible).

MR. KIRBY: I will get to the minister; just one moment, I say to the Member for Mount Pearl South.

I would like to thank teachers and staff in our schools who have been working on this, all of our school councils who have been working on this, parents and students, but I would particularly like to single out the Minister of Education for being so generous with his time as to meet with me and discuss this; it was quite helpful.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KIRBY: When we talk about bullying in schools, Mr. Speaker, we are essentially talking about a repeated and harmful behaviour that is deliberate and harassing. It is intended to cause or it should be known to cause fear or intimidation, humiliation, distress, or harm to another person. It occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the people involved and it can be significantly intensified by encouragement from a peer group or bystanders.

The participation of others can be a key factor in increasing the negative impact on the victim or victims, and bullying can take many forms, including physical, verbal, or social bullying and can be carried out personally, in person, or electronically. All bullying in schools and playgrounds associated to schooling has a damaging psychological impact.

Of course, physical bullying includes hitting, kicking, punching, pushing, or threatening, stealing, damaging, or destroying someone else's property.

Cyberbullying takes place with the use of technologies. It is facilitated with the use of technology, and includes spreading rumours or making harmful comments, or posting or

circulating pictures or videos without somebody's permission.

As the minister has pointed out, that includes something called sexting, which involves circulating nude or suggestive photographs, and other less dramatic invasions of privacy. Cyberbullying can be particularly destructive because it can spread this information or misinformation to many people very quickly. It can be done anonymously or through impersonation.

The victimized person can be faced daily with hurtful material and often feels that many other people share the views of the perpetrator. It often results in an overwhelming psychological pressure and can have a negative effect on the school climates, school relationships, even when that sort of thing, cyberbullying, occurs off the school property. I will not belabour that.

One recent example in the way that social media can amplify and magnify other problems and problems associated with school violence is demonstrated by a recent Ontario school case. It was described as follows: It was an attack that was described as cowardly, disgusting and revolting, as reported in the *National Post* on June 3, 2011.

Two female students viciously attacked a sixteen-year-old girl at noon hour at Grey Highlands Secondary School in Flesherton, Ontario. Another student filmed the attack and posted the attack, the video, on YouTube. The victim was kicked in the side of the face and the attackers delivered blows to her body. Other students could be heard on the YouTube video giggling and urging the attackers to continue on.

At one point another girl came out of the crowd to try to stop the attack, but another bystander attacked that girl. The police charged six students in total, aged fifteen to seventeen, under the Criminal Code, including the person who filmed the attack. That is one example. According to the Ontario Provincial Police there have been similar attacks in the area that have been filmed and posted online.

Closer to home, Mr. Speaker, there was a physical assault that occurred last year at Crescent Collegiate in Blaketown. It left one school student injured and three other students facing criminal charges. Two girls aged fifteen and thirteen assaulted another thirteen-year-old girl near the school. Police said the two teens pushed the third into a ditch and repeatedly punched her. While that student was beaten, it has been reported that dozens of others cheered while they watched and recorded on cellphones. I understand that at least one of those cellphone videos was posted on Facebook.

When it comes to bullying, Mr. Speaker, and this initiative, this amendment, there is no question that definitions are important. They are important, especially for consistency I would say.

What we are doing here is reminiscent of what happened in the Province of Nova Scotia after the government there, under Darrell Dexter, decided to have a task force on bullying. In that Province, they introduced a regulation that defines bullying. Much like the policy directive here, it still provides a statutory authority to the minister, if you will, who is ultimately responsible or answerable to the House of Assembly. There is legislative authority, much like what was done in Nova Scotia.

In Nova Scotia, the Education Act was amended earlier this year in fact. Under regulations put in place by the minister, section 145 of the Education Act in Nova Scotia says: the minister may make regulations, and it lists a number of regulations. One of the subsections says: "defining 'disruptive behaviour', 'severely disruptive behaviour', 'bullying' and 'cyberbullying'". In effect, it provides the authority to the minister in Nova Scotia to work on and provide that definition, and provide changes to the definition.

Here in this Province, under the Schools Act, 1997, under "Powers of the minister", there are a variety of powers the minister has under section 117 of the Schools Act, 1997. "...may (a) prescribe books, materials, programs and courses of study for schools; (b) issue policy

directives, including policy directives with respect to” – and I will just give a couple of examples – “(iii) transportation of students to and from schools...(v) special education, (vi) student evaluation...”.

Then under this amendment, it would allow the minister to effectively establish a protocol and a definition of bullying. The minister and I had a conversation about this, and I have talked to folks in the school community, if you will, school councils and so on, about this approach. I agree that it provides a sufficient level of flexibility. As the minister said in his initial comments on this, ‘sexting’ was not something that was in our vocabulary until very recently.

People will think back. Back in, let’s say, 2006 Twitter was in its infancy. No one would have ever believed it would be used the way it is now. Facebook was only really coming on the scene then. Changes happen in the Internet virtual environment at a very rapid pace. As the minister has explained, this provides some flexibility through policy directive to change the definition as we go forward, as the Province of Nova Scotia has decided to.

I think one of the important things that need to be raised is a question of resources. I could go through the litany of policy directives that the minister is able to deal with under his responsibility. I will just take, for example, earlier this year when cuts or reductions were made to the teaching allocation for this current school year.

The School Administrators’ Council of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers’ Association pointed out that, “all of us see the reductions to school allocations as having direct and negative impacts on student achievement and adding to an already heavy workload” for school-based administrators. They are seriously concerned that the reductions in personnel will have significant negative implications on their ability to carry out responsibilities and meet their job functions.

Those job functions have been increased, increased and increased in recent years.

Increases in responsibility for the implementation of new policies related to school councils; with respect to healthy and active living initiatives; Safe and Caring Schools; inclusive education; My Gay-Straight Alliance; KinderStart; twenty-first century learning; also instructional technology integration; accounting and controls; electronic report cards; school security; building maintenance in some instances and a number of other areas; increasingly, school staff, teachers, administrators have far more on their plate. We are not going to get more for less here without sufficient new resources.

I want to refer now, Mr. Speaker, to the consultant’s report that was produced when the Safe and Caring Schools Policy was reviewed by Goss Gilroy Incorporated Management Consultants. I am not really sure so maybe later the minister can tell us what this cost because I am always interested in knowing what consultants reports and so on cost. I am not sure that information was ever provided here but it would be interesting to know. They did a significant piece of work on this.

One of the things they talked about moving forward was the need to ensure the dedicated attention to this policy implementation at the district level and across schools geographically in, we say, desperate and vast regions of Newfoundland and Labrador. It cannot be just an initiative to which staff attributes a small portion of their time. This is very time consuming stuff; also depending on the size of the school, the number of seniors administrators who are there. Teachers talked about that.

They also talked about training. One of the teachers who were interviewed by the Goss Gilroy Consultants said, “To create the culture at a school level – to create a safe and caring environment, than you must have people trained and in-serviced at the school level.” That is a very important point. Professional development is one of the few ways we can ensure teachers who have the required training can carry out what it is the Minister of Education is asking them to do through the policy directive.

“Another issue raised was in relation to the number of professional development days available to school staff in light of the many and varied issues requiring planning for SCS Policy implementation. As one school informant stated, given the depth of issues and the need to effectively engage the entire school community and the broader community, more time is needed for in-school planning around engagement and designing activities.” So, I think that is an important message.

There are a variety of different factors that have been hindering and will continue to hinder the implementation of policies around Safe and Caring Schools. I think one of the things that we need to have is leadership at all levels, not just at the ministerial level but within the Department of Education. At the board level now there are just two boards, so I guess that is a little bit easier. Although, one of those boards is massive. Leadership at the school level is considered to be critical, critical for the buy-in that is needed for effective implementation of the Safe and Caring Schools Policy and also for monitoring the outcomes.

Personnel changes are a problem. There are always changes at the school level from year to year, whether that is people retiring, people transferring, and so on. That can really constrain efforts at the school level and can impact leadership at the school level as well. Sometimes folks leave one principal or assistant principal position to go to another school.

Again the lack of relevant training is a significant obstacle, and there are social realities that Goss Gilroy pointed out, societal realities. Students’ home lives can be contextualized and often are defined by poverty, lack of respect and communication, parents who are in conflict situations, violence, domestic violence, parental disinterest, and a general disconnect from a child’s school that is really predicated on all the things that I just said. That can come into conflict. Students can receive contradictory messages with respect to Safe and Caring Schools, anti-violence, respect for one another, and care for others in school.

There are a variety of mental health and addictions issues that intervene, and that brings me to an important point: the need for more on-site staff, not teachers, other school staff to help with this situation, guidance staff, in particular. We all know that guidance staff are basically stretched to the limit. As the School Administrators’ Council has said you stretch and you stretch and you stretch the band and then it breaks. School guidance is at a breaking point, to some extent.

School guidance counsellors are expected to deal with a variety of health issues, personal issues, mental health issues – and on top of all that, they are supposed to somehow mentor and guide our young people on their way to a trade, a job, to college, to university, the military, or where they are going to end up after they leave school. So, they are excessively burdened. We are going to add another layer now onto them that is certainly going to cause significant problems.

I have talked about the impact of social media, and again, another area where significant professional development, I believe, would really, really help. Student absenteeism is also a significant problem. I have mentioned to the minister here in the House of Assembly a number of times about undocumented absenteeism that often occurs in the situation that children with special education needs find themselves in.

That also leads to a disconnect from the school community, and can add, as the Goss Gilroy report has pointed out, to other negative pursuits. What are they doing when they are out of school? For repeat offenders, suspension is really of little value for children who are in that very, very difficult situation. They simply stay home, wander the mall, wander the streets, and then their school work suffers further. So, when it comes to consequences for bullying, I think we really have to consider different ways to resolve it.

I have a lot more to say, but I think my time is coming to a close. I just wanted to point out that in the task force on anti-bullying in Nova Scotia,

they talked about developing a protocol whereby issues of bullying and cyberbullying in schools could be referred to the Human Rights Commission, and they could be handled through complaint mechanisms such as mediation, restorative justice, and other alternatives.

As the minister already knows, Dr. Dorothy Vaandering in the Faculty of Education at MUN is an expert in this area of restorative justice, and I think that if she has not already been engaged, she is another expert who would certainly be interested in helping with this initiative.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Littlejohn): The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I welcome an opportunity to discuss this bill. This bill is An Act to Amend the Schools Act, and even though I will be speaking in support of the bill, the bill plays some interesting games. It plays some interesting games in that it seems to combine two issues; one is the Safe and Caring Schools Policy, which really does not need an act; and, it also rolls into it provisions to amend the Schools Act in order to be able to consolidate the school boards, which government ought to have done, I would say, in the first place.

In looking at it there is no doubt that Safe and Caring Schools is important. When you look at the legislation it says, “Every student shall (a) promote a safe and caring learning environment; (b) comply with the school code of conduct, school discipline and the rules of the school; and (c) carry out the learning activities within the prescribed curriculum.” It says to “promote a safe and caring learning environment”.

It goes on to say under the new section 26.1(1), “Every school shall have a school code of conduct which shall include (a) standards of appropriate and inappropriate behaviours; and (b) proactive and reactive strategies.”

Mr. Speaker, this appears that the government is downloading the obligation and the responsibility on the students in the schools to put into place a Safe and Caring Schools Policy. Would it not make more sense that government formulated and determined what precisely was the definition in the Safe and Caring Schools environment, to prescribe what it ought to be, instead of saying to each and every school you come up with your own Safe and Caring Schools Policy?

It appears to give autonomy to schools in this respect. In fact, I would say that schools do not need autonomy and should not have autonomy in this respect. In this case, there should be one law for everybody, there should be one rule for everybody, instead of different schools making different rules.

Mr. Speaker, the issue before with the Safe and Caring Schools Policy – there is nothing wrong with the old Safe and Caring Schools Policy. The Goss Gilroy report said that the former Safe and Caring Schools Policy was fine, but it was not implemented. It was not implemented, and it was not properly funded. They said that every school district should have a champion for this particular issue.

What they also said is that resources should be allocated. If globally you assign or grant a certain amount of resources to a school area, then there will be other pressing areas of need for these resources to be spent, for the cash resources to be spent, and for the personnel to be hired. Are you going to hire someone for special education and not have that person for Safe and Caring Schools? Are you going to hire someone for mathematics and not have someone for guidance?

The Goss Gilroy report was pretty clear in that the Safe and Caring Schools Policy, as it existed up until now, should work fine but it actually needed proper implementation and proper follow-up and more regular follow-up. That was the shortcoming; it did not need another piece of legislation.

Having said that, there being another piece of legislation, I do not really have any reason not to support it; it is better to have this conduct legislated. Mr. Speaker, you can legislate authority, but you cannot legislate responsibility. Responsibility cannot be assigned; only authority can be assigned. This is giving authority, but the responsibility still rests with the department to make sure that the results are the appropriate results.

Then if you go on to the other half – if you buy one, you get one free. So, if you like one, what do you do with the other one? The second half is the implementation piece to consolidate school boards. Why on earth in a piece of legislation for Safe and Caring Schools would you need a piece of legislation that says that school board shall – and I am certain that the minister and the drafters know the difference between shall and may; is it permissive or is it mandatory?

It says, “A board shall, subject to the prior written approval of the minister, appoint” – so that means you have to do it, but the minister has to sign off on it – “(a) one director; (b) one associate director; and (c) no more than 7 assistant directors.”

Then it goes on to say: Notwithstanding – and I kind of really do not like notwithstanding, because notwithstanding means that is a way to wiggle out of whatever it was you said you were going to do in the first place. The lawyers put in notwithstanding – even in sections of the Constitution, a province invokes a notwithstanding clause. That means it does not matter what else we just said, we are still going to do it our way.

It says, “Notwithstanding subsection (1),” – and that says were we get no more than seven assistant directors, “the minister may approve a larger number of assistant directors.” We were told within the last six months or so that if we consolidate the school boards, we save all this money because we do not have this duplication. Then we have a piece of legislation and the piece of legislation says that oh, by the way, now you have to hire back all of these people.

Did we need the people in the first place or did we not need the people in the first place? I suspect we may have and we may have needed them otherwise applied than they were.

The legislation goes on to say, “Notwithstanding” – that notwithstanding word again – “that a board may employ a director, an associate director or an assistant director under this section, a contract of employment between a board and a director, an associate director or an assistant director shall not be entered into without the prior written approval of that contract by the minister, and a contract of employment entered into without that approval shall be void.”

Mr. Speaker, this has the appearance of the minister granting all of this autonomy to the new singular English board, and the French board has gone untouched – and it seems to be working well from what I can see, that we have this new legislation. It says that you have to appoint this number of people, and oh by the way, you may appoint some more of these people if you want to, but I have to approve it. Yes, you can enter into a contract with them, but the minister has to sign off on the employment contracts, basically, of all of the decision makers in the board, at the board level.

Isn't this consolidating absolute power and absolute discretion into the hands of the minister? I agree the minister has absolute power but if the boards are supposed to be instruments that permit a certain level of discretion, a certain amount of professionalism, and a certain amount of decision making to go to the board level, then why does the minister need to have absolute discretion even in hiring contracts?

This seems to say that we have now appointed one school board and we have collapsed board after board after board and now we are down to one board. Yet, the minister will have all of the decision making power.

Really, this part of the legislation is designed to fix up the Schools Act to actually accommodate the consolidation that happened a few months

ago. Back then the minister was asked, and I asked the minister in Question Period, if he had a legal opinion as to whether the school boards could be consolidated without a change in the legislation. I was assured: Oh, yes, we have that legal opinion. Oh yes, the minister agreed to provide the legal opinion, and never did.

One of his colleagues who is not with us, does not sit any more in this Legislature, with legal training, was concerned, by my observation, that we should not be giving such a legal opinion; but the minister said you can have the legal opinion which says that we can consolidate the boards without changing the legislation.

Now, we have this new bill, Bill 28, which is An Act to Amend the Schools Act, and it is framed in a way to look like it is for the Safe and Caring Schools Policy, which is a good policy, but it was not implemented and it was not funded. There is no funding made available. The minister said no special funding or individual assigned funding for the new Safe and Caring Schools Policy to be implemented, yet on the back end of it we have sections of the bill which say, basically, we want to clean up all the things we really needed to do to have one English school board that we did not do some months ago.

I say the Safe and Caring Schools portion of this bill really is the smokescreen the government is using so they can pass legislation necessary to implement the consolidation of the boards; however, on balance, to see that the government is making some efforts to advancing Safe and Caring Schools, it is better to support it than not support it.

I do not see that it does a whole lot, unless we get the actual implementation put in place and unless it is properly funded and properly followed up. Safe and Caring Schools, clearly, is critically important to society generally and certainly it is important for the learning atmosphere our children are entitled to and that they need.

Those are my comments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. the Minister of Education speaks now, he will close the debate.

The hon. the Member for The Straits – White Bay North.

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity, and the minister, to speak to this piece of legislation, An Act to Amend the Schools Act, 1997. It is certainly a positive and progressive piece of legislation. We recognize our schools, with society, are becoming more complex spaces. To ensure we have legislation where we can make our schools a safe and caring environment for all students and staff, I think, is something all of us in this House of Assembly would strive to achieve. It is nice to see the minister has been advancing and moving forward on such initiatives.

When we talk about what this is doing when it comes to addressing the issue of bullying within schools and the ability to enforce protection against it, a number of other members have talked about different forms of bullying, whether it is physical, whether it is emotional, or whether it is looking at cyberbullying.

Over the weekend I had the opportunity while I was on my own Facebook, and you see in the newsfeed, there was a video that was playing out. It was talking about educating to prevent against bullying. These two individuals had basically on a campus or in a public area started engaging acts of bullying to see how the general public would react, and they videotaped these and then they posted them. As they were walking through, some people sat and they did nothing. Some people watched those acts of bullying and did not react. Others walked away from that and left the scene of the act that was coming on, the violent act.

Then there were others who took out their phones and started recording. When they were asked, what are you doing? They were like, well, you are bullying this person and I am recording it so that we have some evidence now, and you have to stop this. Then there were others who certainly did not know these individuals who were being bullied who were

really stepping to action, men and women who were standing up against others in this video.

I found it very interesting. It was a great form of education because it was showing people in certain situations as to how they would react and how it makes you feel. As a society, I think we need to see more educational material as to if we are encountered as individuals, whether we are out of school or whether we are in a public space. How would we, as individuals, react to make sure that what we are doing as a Province and as a society, we make sure that we have a safe environment for all citizens of this Province?

These are mechanisms we need to do. I would like to know what the rollout is going to be. This legislation has been questioned in the House of Assembly around the resources that will be attached to it. Some of the documentation, some of the materials as to how we can educate people can be a relatively low cost. We can use the social media in a very positive forum as other individuals currently are already doing. We do not need to reinvent the wheel but we certainly do need to get our message out there. I think we can all do that.

Many of us here in this House of Assembly use the social media. It is the intent of using the social media for the common good to get a message out there. Sometimes the social media becomes very, very problematic when you are looking at bullying and the words that are put there.

Everyone needs to be cognizant that once you put something out there, whether it is on Twitter or Facebook, or in any public forum, that it is there for life. It does not just go away when you delete it or whatnot. That is something we have to recognize when you are taking photos and different activities. Be very cognizant about when it is posted, do you want the whole world to see it? That is something that needs to be considered.

Looking at the legislation and seeing this is going to increase the number of directors from three to seven, allowing the board to elect an

associate director, and the definition of bullying will be left out of the legislation to keep flexibility of the idea and concept of bullying. We saw that, as well, with earlier legislation when it came to gender expression and gender identity. It was left out of the legislation, but it would take the definitions of the Human Rights Commission to allow for the changing scope.

As other members have stated, words such as 'sexting' was not in the public realm. It was not a common word used and it was not something that most people were knowledgeable about. We are seeing that bullying and cyberbullying is evolving to different forums. So we do have to have that ability and that recognition to have flexibility in a definition.

Some revisions or some considerations, just for the minister, the three months' written notice for termination and report of dismissal should have an appeal period for those subject to dismissal. I just wonder about the fact of an appeal and that whole process. Maybe that could be further clarified by the minister when he gets up to speak to close debate.

I would like more around the campaign strategy being conducted to bring the message of this act to the public and to the school. That clearly needs to be outlined. There are lots of great ideas. There are lots of great public engagements that can be done through the Office of Public Engagement, through other Web sites, through other means. It can also be, in many cases, part of the education system and student initiated as well, so they have that peer to peer learning. It can also be driven, as well, from ordinary citizens and parents, and others, because having a safe and caring school environment is important to everyone.

When giving Royal Assent to the act, which will come into place by September, 2014, will this time frame prove sufficient to select seven assistant directors and appoint one director of business and finance? Just to reiterate, I would like to see from the minister what the added cost will be. They must be accounted for, these newly appointed director positions in the legislation of the School Act.

The cost of having seven assistant directors and the duties they will fulfill may not necessarily be contributing to having a safe and caring school environment in staffs and schools. I would just like some further clarification around that, because I guess overall it was not ideally clear in the legislation around that piece and that particular matter.

I will be supporting the legislation. I think it is a good piece of legislation and I think the minister has done a good job in presenting this topic. I know there is a lot more work to do. I think we are all willing to step up as members of the House of Assembly, I know I am, in working with the minister to try in any way look at combating and reducing matters of bullying that is happening in our school system in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I thank the minister for putting forward this piece of legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. the Minister of Education speaks now he will close debate.

The hon. the Minister of Education.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I kind of felt like starting off with God bless us, every one, Mr. Speaker.

It has been a wonderful debate here this afternoon, and on Thursday about this. I am almost tempted to go without any of the notes that I have here because we have been enthralled in this for a while, but I know there is one person watching who, if I do not use some of the notes, she will say that I missed them. So I am going to have to cede to doing that.

Mr. Speaker, just a couple of points that have been raised. It was raised by the Leader of the Third Party on Thursday past and by the

Member for St. Barbe today by also attempting to slip stuff in, another agenda as it pertains, in particular, to the school board. Mr. Speaker, that is the furthest from the truth. This is a decision we made based on – you look at in Roman figures, since 2004, the last reorganization of the school board, our population has gone down by 17 per cent.

We have 67,000 students in this Province, and we had sixty trustees representing those 67,000. You consider that we had those sixty trustees – and before I even go down that road a little further, I want to thank them because the work they do on behalf of the students of this Province they are to be commended for; but, at the same time, we had to take a look at where the numbers were, and the expense that is incurred with having sixty people travel around the Province is a reality.

Then if you look the structure of the boards, we had four English speaking boards and one French. The Francophone board remains intact. We had a director and then we had three assistant directors. Where we have gone right now is from a staff of directors at the present board, having gone from seventeen down to nine. When we took a look at this and looked at the numbers and the decline in population, it was decided this is the way we have gone.

So, the one addition is the assistant director. We have the director, Mr. Darrin Pike, and we have the assistant director, Mr. Jeff Thompson. This gentleman, Mr. Thompson, as associate director, he is the individual that board office people will report to when it comes to programming. We wanted to make sure that programming was under the purview of a particular individual and it is, in fact, Mr. Thompson, and, of course, everything under the director, Mr. Darrin Pike.

The Member for St. John's North asked the question as to what was the cost of the Gilroy report. That report was \$70,000, Mr. Speaker. I contend that the work that was done, it is extremely good work. One of the things that Goss Gilroy did say is that the Safe and Caring Schools Policy was a good policy. It had a good philosophy, but there was some additional work

that was needed. Through the consultations the one thing that was asked is that they wanted more direction. Mr. Speaker, that is what this document has provided.

We went out and we consulted – Goss Gilroy consulted with students, teachers, administrators, district personnel, government and community partners; and then the department went out and carried out further consultations and met with the Federation of School Councils, the NLTA, the law enforcement agencies. We met with Egale Canada, the Human Rights Commission that was mentioned here, and the most important group that we met with were the students. There were some 1,300 people who were involved in the consultations. The one thing that came back was that we needed it structured more – it needed more direction.

I will also say that we put in \$665,000 annually to implement the Safe and Caring Schools Policy. The question has been raised here around resourcing and teacher workload. One of the things that we have to recognize that this is not a completely new policy; we have to remember that teachers, students, and school councils have been working on this issue for years, especially since the Safe and Caring Schools Policy was implemented initially.

All you have to do is go into a school and you will recognize that anti-bullying messages are there everywhere. Respect for fellow students, respect for your surroundings, and respect for your school buildings are all around. Of course, that is because of the policy that was brought in.

I suppose, to clarify, one of the things we are asking teachers and administrators to do is what they are doing now, but to do it a little bit differently. Let no one be mistaken that if an incident of bullying takes place or if an incident of assault happens in a school there is nothing happening. Teachers will report. They will write a report on it. Guidance counsellors will get involved. Administrators will be involved. Work is carried out on these things now. All we are doing now is asking them to do this a little bit differently. The important thing is that we are giving them the tools.

I do not know if the couple of members opposite who have been critical of it have taken a look at the document, but I am telling you I am extremely proud of this document. When I opened it up to the documentation form, what we are going to have is an electronic means by which teachers can go in and click off this is the type of incident, this is where it happened, this is the time of the incident, and this is the target.

Someone mentioned the other day about teachers. Well, the target: Was it the administrator who was the target of the incident, teacher, bus driver, personal property, or school property? Then bullying: What type of bullying is it, electronic, physical, social, or verbal? The list goes on. What we will have is a document that can be electronically recorded and then it is on file. It is there.

Again, I go back to the point that teachers and administrators are recording now. What we are doing is asking them to do things a little differently. That said, this implementation will be ongoing. We still have the \$665,000 annually that we will use to implement it and we will assess, as things emerge, what it is that we need.

In terms of resourcing, I would certainly like to point out that on the ground in our regional offices, when we talk about resourcing with individuals, there is an individual at that regional office whose duty is to deal with Safe and Caring Schools. As well, we have an individual at the department. These people, of course, have been working with schools and will continue to work with schools.

The Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair on Thursday asked about why we need different plans at different schools. Why can't the department roll out one plan and that is it for all schools? Well, Mr. Speaker, anybody who has been in the system knows that is not the way it works. That is just not the way it works. What we can provide is a template, and those templates have to be adapted and adjusted to fit the school's need.

For example, you are not going to have the same code of conduct for a primary school as you would have a high school, and you would have a different one for a school with a population of 700 compared to a school with a student population of sixty. So, common sense has to prevail here, and we do provide that autonomy to schools. Once you get a school buying into the autonomy that they have and then using the templates, that is where we want to get them.

One member opposite – I believe for St. John's South – spoke to the need for consequences and actions taken for certain behaviours. Now, oftentimes, the consequence that people want is that punitive action.

I was very pleased today to hear the Member for St. John's North speak about suspensions do not always work. So we have them out of school, how is that a solution? Because if you suspend someone who is in Grade 6 or Grade 8, they are not going to remain suspended forever and a day. They are going to come back to the school system; therefore, having proactive strategies is the way to go, rather than always in a reactive mode.

That is why it is important that we develop that electronic database, which would include the action that has been taken, because if it is not working, if the behaviour continues, then we clearly have to bring forward a different approach.

The policy also gives the school flexibility to deal with these issues. That is what Goss Gilroy indicated. It indicated there was more work to be done, but specifically they sought direction. There is a consistent policy and there are codes of conducts that schools are expected to develop and follow. That is an important piece of it.

One member asked about school staff authority off school property. We all know that bullying happens on and off school property. Students tell us today that – they are saying to us, and I have said this here on Thursday, of 400 students given a question of where they think the majority of bullying takes place, 75 per cent of them said online. So now we know that.

Frankly, for any time inappropriate student behaviour affects the safe and caring learning environment, the school has an obligation to respond to that behaviour.

The policy does apply off school property, certainly on a school bus, school-sponsored events and extracurricular. I am willing to bet that if students arrive back in the school on Monday and there is discussion about an incident that occurred somewhere outside of the school, it becomes a topic for discussion in school. It does not go unnoticed. Would that become a part of this? If it is from a student who was involved in previous incidents, I contend there would be a record of it because it is something that adds to it.

One of the important factors here, and I have said this. As it pertains to everything from obesity, as it pertains to bullying, as it pertains to drug use, anything involving a child, the one important factor we have to have and we have to get onside is the role of the parent. It is as simple as that. The school will not and cannot be the solution to all. The parent has to be an integral part of this. This is one of the things certainly that has to be a focus.

I would hope the Federation of School Councils can play a role in that. They are a group that is supposed to represent the interests of parents through school councils. I am doing a little bit of investigation myself. They have an annual general meeting that comes up. I was at their event last year. There was not a huge turnout there.

I think we need to find out what is the best way for us to access the parent. Let's ask ourselves if the Federation of School Councils is the means by which we can get our message more directly to parents. If that is the best venue first, then we look to work with that body. If it is not, well we need to look at other avenues because getting to that parent is critical.

I have said it time and time again, I have five children. From the time they get out of Grade 6 and moving onward, you kind of have to stay on top of them. We are in a different type of world

today. The type of world that we are in with our children, the pace of it is changing so fast.

I will just go back to the definition of bullying and why we did not enshrine it in the legislation as opposed to putting it in there and the minister having the authority to call for changes in it. If I had mentioned the work 'sexting' to people in this House of Assembly three years ago, in all likelihood no one would have known what it was. Today, it is an activity that is carried on via the social media and we have to be more than aware of it. In two years time we do not know what else may pop up, therefore if the definition requires change, then we will certainly look toward that.

Another member asked, what about the protection of the teacher's right? Well, with respect to protecting teachers, inappropriate behaviour towards teachers is simply unacceptable. It is simply unacceptable. As I indicated in this document when it spoke to recording who the target of bullying is. Well, inappropriate student behaviour documentation form – and before I get into this one, we are not only talking about bullying. We are talking about inappropriate behaviours which would be listed here. Who is the target? Is it the administrator? Is it the teacher? Is it the bus driver? Is it personal property?

It is certainly looked at in that particular act. If we go to the code of conduct, the statement is here. "Standards of Behaviour apply to all members of the school community, including students, parents and guardians, school staff, volunteers and visitors when: 4.1.1. On school property. 4.1.2. Traveling on a school bus...4.1.4. Participating in off-site...4.1.5. Engaging in an activity which will have an impact on the school climate", and so on and so forth. If we look on down through this, the inappropriate behaviours are identified and they are simply not acceptable.

Also, teachers –

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order, the hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am just wondering if the minister will be tabling the document he has just read from?

MR. SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MS MICHAEL: (Inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: I understood the member was standing on a point of order.

MS MICHAEL: The minister has spoken from a document, and usually if you speak from a document it is being tabled. I am asking if it is going to be tabled.

MR. SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The minister can respond if he wishes.

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. JACKMAN: I have no problem responding, Mr. Speaker. It is on our Web site and it has been there for a number of months. It is on our Web site. Certainly, after I am finished speaking here, I have absolutely no problem in passing it along to her, absolutely no problem at all.

I would encourage anybody to go in on the Web site and take a look at it. It is a document that our department has put much time into. It is a well developed document, developed in consultation with many stakeholders. As I said, some 1,300 people were spoken to on this. I would be more than glad to provide it to her.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing is teachers also have specific protection through their collective agreements at the NLTA and also under the Criminal Code.

I know my time is winding down. I was hoping to get to a few more questions, but what we will do is follow up with that in Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the said bill be now read the second time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Schools Act, 1997. (Bill 28)

MR. SPEAKER: The bill has now been read the second time.

When shall the bill be referred to the Committee of the Whole?

MS SHEA: Now, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Schools Act, 1997", read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 28)

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

MS SHEA: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that this House resolve itself into the Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 28.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into the Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 28.

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

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, Mr. Speaker left the Chair.

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Verge): Order, please!

The Committee of the Whole is now considering Bill 28.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Schools Act, 1997". (Bill 28)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Yes, Mr. Chair, this bill, in section 8, says, "Section 79 of the Act is repealed and the following substituted: 79.(1) A board shall, subject to the prior approval of the minister, appoint (a) one director; (b) one associate director; and (c) no more than 7 assistant directors."

I would like to ask the Minister of Education: Under the prior legislation, did the existing school boards require the minister's prior written approval to appoint members basically to manage the board, to run the board? That is one director, one associate director, and no more than seven assistant directors.

Also, in the second subsection of new 79.(2) it says, "Notwithstanding subsection (1), the minister may approve a larger number of assistant directors."

I would like to ask the minister: How many assistant directors were employed by the four English school boards prior to the change in the Schools Act and prior to the consolidation of the school boards?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

CHAIR: Order, please!

MR. BENNETT: How many is the maximum number of assistant directors that he would anticipate being appointed subsequent to this legislation being passed?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Chair, the same authorities of the minister in this revision would be as is before, the difference being that previously you had the English boards that had the authority to one director and then three assistant directors. So, four times three conceivably would have been twelve and four would be sixteen. I believe previously it was seventeen.

What we have had to do here is to make the amendment. Now what it does is gives us the authority for the new board to have one director, the assistant director, which is a new position, and then seven others. Basically what we have gone is from seventeen down to nine. The authorities of the minister are the same beyond that as they are now, and as they were before.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Yes, Mr. Chair, the minister did not answer the second part of the question which was section 79.(2) which said "...the minister may approve a larger number...". I was asking how many is the maximum that would be appointed? How many would he expect to be appointed in addition to the nine we have already identified?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Chair, allowing some special circumstance, I see it remaining at seven.

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Chair, I just wanted to ask the Minister of Education: Considering all the activity that took place in Nova Scotia over the past year and the previous years on the issue of

school bullying and anti-bullying measures, I am wondering if the minister consulted with the Nova Scotia Department of Education, he or his officials, or any of the members of the task force that did all of that work over the course of a number of months in Nova Scotia, consulting with teachers, administrators, experts and students who are obviously experts themselves. Was there any back and forth with the folks in Nova Scotia in the process of developing these changes?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Chair, there was a jurisdictional scan done and our deputy minister did speak with the Ministry of Nova Scotia. So, yes, there was discussions with the Nova Scotia Department of Education.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Chair, the minister has said that the previous legislation said that up to sixteen directors and assistant directors could be employed and the new legislation provides generally for seven. So, I ask the minister: How many are there now; and if this legislation is required to provide authority to hire the ones who are now running the school board, what legislative authority is in place today to facilitate the operation of the board, given that we have only board instead of four English boards?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Chair, I do not know if I am off the wall here or not, but the legislative authority is what we are doing right now. We are bringing in amendments to the Schools Act, 1997 to give that authority for this new board to operate.

We have gone from a structure whereby a board – and I will use as an example. We had an Eastern board, we had Central Nova, we had Western, and we had the Labrador board. Those boards had a director and they could have up to three assistant directors. Now, through these amendments, we have gone from that structure to one director, an associate director, and seven

others. Barring some unusual circumstances, I see it remaining at that.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Yes, Mr. Chair.

I take from the minister's response that if we are passing the legislative authority for the boards to operate now, and it is December 9, and schools have been operating and the boards have been operating since, for sure, early September, does that mean they have been operating without legislative authority? It seems like they have been operating without the old Schools Act being adequate and the new Schools Act being required. That sounds to me like they have been operating for the last three months without any legislative authority.

I ask the minister, then: If they need this legislative authority and they have not had it, by what lawful authority have they actually even been operating?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Education.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Chair, the decision was made to move with the one board. I am taking questions, but I certainly do want to put a plug in for all those, especially the staff at the new board, who have made this transition. I would say to you, I know they face challenges. In any school year when we open up we face challenges, but they have done a commendable job. Most people on the ground may not even notice we have gone with one board.

Mr. Chair, the member is right. This new board became effective as of September 1. It was well known throughout the Province, once we moved with this then we had to make amendments to the Schools Act, 1997 to put this in place. That is what we are doing here right now.

Mr. Chair, the member, I suppose, can phrase it anyhow he wants to, but we are here with the legislation now and I will speak to further questions that he has on it.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Chair, section 8.(7) says, "Notwithstanding that a board may employ a director, an associate director or an assistant director under this section, a contract of employment between a board and a director, an associate director or an assistant director shall not be entered into without the prior written approval of that contract by the minister, and a contract of employment entered into without that approval shall be void."

Mr. Chair, it sounds like the minister is allowing for political interference in the appointment of these high-staffing positions.

I ask the minister: Why is it necessary that these appointments at the director level be taken away, even from the board? It looks like the minister is politicizing these decisions. Does this mean he wants to be sure that he puts the people in place he wants without respecting any autonomy for the board?

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Chair, we, and I as minister, will do the final sign off, but I can assure you one thing, there is no political interference here. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chair, we brought in an independent individual who led the boards once we consolidated it down to the number of people that we had prior to August. These people conducted interviews. The department human resources were involved. For all of the other positions, Mr. Chair, it went through an interview process, as did the director's position.

Mr. Chair, we do not want political interference in education. Why would you want this? You want to hire the best people that you possibly can, and in this particular case, Mr. Chair, I think we have them.

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

MR. KIRBY: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I want to first reference a memo that was sent out. I guess it was provided to the media around the time of this year's Budget. It is from the School Administrators' Council that some 592 school administrators – just to contextualize my question, it said.

“The recent decision to once again reduce administrative time at the school level has broken the band. It is regressive and will have direct negative effects on schools as safe, healthy, inclusive environments focused on student learning and achievement.

“Reductions mean not having the resources available to support students in their formative years. It means not having the ability to support healthy and active living programs – nutrition monitoring, breakfast and lunch programs, and inviting and varied programs in support of a more active lifestyle.

“Reductions mean not having the resources to implement and support appropriate security routines and procedures. It means not having the personnel to find solutions to problems presented in teacher, student, and parent population. It means not having personnel available to deal with student conflicts and fights and it means not having the personnel available to secure a school and children that may be under threat.”

These are, like I said, the School Administrators' Council of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, nearly 600 administrators in our schools. That is the group this was authored for and by, if you will. Having said all of that, it calls into question the amount of resources we now have in the kindergarten to Grade 12 school system to be able to provide just even a secure environment, let alone a safe and caring environment.

I would say the first part of the question would be how does the minister reconcile this legislation, this Bill 28, with all of that? Because I think that is a pretty weighty statement and these are authorities on school administrations across Newfoundland and Labrador who put that in print.

The other thing is, were there discussions with the school administrative council on this? Because they clearly are the ones who are closest to the floor and know the resources that would be needed to move beyond these sort of basic security questions to a place where we can ensure that this legislation is implemented to the fullest extent, the policy directive is followed and all of those protocols, and I believe they are good ones that the minister has put forward, that all of that can be accomplished in the context of all of those concerns that they have pointed out.

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Chair, I spoke to the resourcing issue just a few minutes ago. We have dedicated \$665,000 annually to use and implement, and to do some in servicing and whatnot in terms of bringing the Safe and Caring Schools policy forward. Each region of the Province has an individual who is dedicated to working with teachers in the Safe and Caring Schools policy, plus an itinerate position at the Department of Education.

We will work our way through this resourcing. One of the things I just said a minute ago is that teachers, administrators and guidance counsellors are now doing certain activities around tracking and recording. What we are asking in this, and what we are in fact providing is an instrument that they can use to more effectively record, track, et cetera.

In the end, as we move through this, we will stay in touch with who we need to be, and then we make assessments at that particular time around the need for further resourcing, or that the plan has rolled out with the supports that we have provided are working quite effectively now.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

MR. BENNETT: Mr. Chair, I would like to ask questions about the school board itself and the school board elections. Currently we have an appointed school board –

MR. JACKMAN: We do not.

MR. BENNETT: We do not?

MR. JACKMAN: No.

MR. BENNETT: The minister said we do not have an appointed school board. I have not noticed any school board elections in the last little while. Will the minister commit to have regular school board elections? Will the minister also commit to having the school board elections consistent with the timing of the municipal elections?

It is not easy to have school board elections, get the word out, and to attract people who are interested and capable of providing the direction school boards offer or ought to offer. If so, then the most recent municipal elections have just passed so that may mean a special election between now and sometime into the future, and then regular school board elections thereafter.

In the case of democratically operated school boards, will some of the previous boards – Eastern, for example, was heavily weighted. It was done by geography which means that people in St. John's were underrepresented with the number of trustees, whereas people outside of St. John's were overrepresented by population but underrepresented by geography.

I would ask the minister: What does he see for the type of representation that the new English board will have or ought to have? Will there be more than one trustee for Labrador? Will geography be a big component, or will population be a bigger component?

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Chair, I will say that he made an accusation that the board was appointed. That in fact is not the case. The people who served on the board, when we initially set up the group, we had an independent Chair and we had two from each of the previous English boards. These were people who had

been elected. Therefore, they are elected board members.

About holding an election, we have said that we believe in elected boards. At this particular point, I have not changed my mind. Consistency with municipal elections, whether we hold them at that time, I think our interest is in getting as many people out and involved in education as we can. We know the turnout for school board elections are generally quite low. What we will do is we will investigate so that the most people that we feel we can get out participating in board elections – that is the route we will take.

We have filled the complement of the board right now. We do have the fifteen board members in place. We recognize that there are demographics and certainly, the numbers, there is geography.

Mr. Chair, the structure that we have in place right now may be the one that we will continue with, but that is why we have elected trustees. They come back with recommendations. So we will let that work continue as it is ongoing right now.

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

MR. KIRBY: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

As I was getting towards the end of my time and debate on second reading, I referenced this recommendation 23 from the Nova Scotia Task Force on Bullying and Cyberbullying.

Again, to give you a full sense of what they were saying, "It is recommended that the Nova Scotia Department of Education and the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission work together to develop a protocol whereby issues of bullying and cyberbullying in schools can, where appropriate, be referred to the Human Rights Commission, to be handled as matters of human rights. Whether these issues should be handled through the complaint mechanism, mediation, restorative approaches or educational initiatives and what factors should determine the mode of

disposition should form part of the jointly developed protocol.”

My question for the minister would be: Has there been any consideration of finding opportunities to refer these sorts of incidents, depending on their nature, to the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission? Has there been consideration – because I know there are sort of proactive and reactive strategies that are included in the proposed protocol. Do those strategies, the proactive ones or the reactive ones, include any alternative dispute mechanisms or anything that comes out of the idea or theory of practice behind restorative justice?

As I had pointed out when I was speaking, sometimes that will not work with children and students because of their family situation, their home situation, whether there are problems associated with persistent absenteeism, drug and alcohol use. There are all kinds of situations where, if you will, a standard approach will not work because of the extraordinary circumstances of the student or the extraordinary weighty circumstances of the incident. Sometimes they can be quite violent and then, in the case of cyberbullying, they can be quite pervasive and coercive.

I am just wondering: Has there been any consideration of dealing with this under the auspices of the Human Rights Commission; and then, are there measures such as alternative dispute resolution that are in the protocol or that the minister or his staff are considering putting in there?

Thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Chair, I contend to you that any of the incidents that come forward, there really can never be a standard of how you respond to them. The tracking and reporting mechanisms can be standard, but the interventions are often not standard. You can come up with proactive strategies that might

work here and would work there and would work over there; reactive strategies, likewise.

Attempting to find one solution to every problem, it is usually not there, but I will say that I was very pleased at the launch of our Safe and Caring Schools Policy 2013. There were representatives there from the Human Rights Commission. Our staff had been speaking to them. In fact, I spoke to two members of the Human Rights Commission who were very much interested in what we were doing.

Mr. Chair, I will commit to the member that I do not know the extent and the details of the discussion, but it is something that I will commit to extending that conversation. Because any time we can come up with different approaches to deal with these particular types of issues, we are more than open for it.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye’.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay’.

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Clauses 2 to 16 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall clauses 2 to 16 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye’.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay’.

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 16 carried.

CLERK: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows.

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Schools Act, 1997.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the bill without amendment, carried.

CHAIR: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

MS SHEA: I move, Mr. Chair, that the Committee rise and report Bill 28.

CHAIR: The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 28 carried without amendment.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again, Mr. Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Littlejohn): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Lewisporte and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

MR. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and they have directed me to report Bill 28 carried without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 28 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MR. KING: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the said bill be read the third time?

MR. KING: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted. Bill ordered read a third time on tomorrow.

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

MR. KING: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I call from the Order Paper, Order 1, Address in Reply.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Before I get into my comments about the Address in Reply, I just want to recognize a special event that is happening today. The special event happened on December 9, 1932 when my father was born. Today he is eighty-one years old. He is a former member of this House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: I remember, Mr. Speaker, always trying to stretch to reach his footsteps when we would go in the Owl Hill Pond troutling or we would go somewhere. I was always chasing him. Eventually I got to be a little bigger than him. Maybe my placement here in this House or just that part of wanting to do this is another way of following in his footsteps, pardon the pun.

The chair that you sit in, he sat from 1982 to 1985 as Deputy Chair of Committees. When I sat a couple of times last year during the filibuster before Christmas, I was sitting in a chair that he occupied. I was sharing it with our Assistant Clerk who sat there with my father. She said you have his eyes. I just want, for a moment, to let everybody know I am very proud of that gentleman – and today, happy birthday, dad.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: Mr. Speaker, it is great to be in this House of Assembly. It is an honour and a privilege. It is an honour and privilege to stand today to speak to this Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I had another little preamble that I was going to lead into this. I threw my notes together several weeks ago when we thought we would be

speaking to this. I did have at that occasion a note here to welcome the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair and to welcome her to this House. I guess by now she has had a chance to make her mark. Everybody can see what she is made of.

My comment then would have been that we need to challenge each other. When you challenge each other across the floor of this House as you rise to certain occasions, you also bring everybody on the other side up at times or down at times, depending on the decorum. It is like in any match where you have – sometimes you play to the level of your competition. In this case we have to keep the competition at that high road level so that we can enjoy the sparring across here. For all members on the other side I would say that it is great.

I also had here just a quick note that I did want to recognize some movement in the life of the Members for Mount Pearl North and St. John's West. In fact, they have taken another step in their political life. I wish them well on that. I will do what I can in my power to support the efforts that they take.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: Mr. Speaker, now I go back to the Speech from the Throne. The opening comment, I was again very taken by the opening comment in this year's Speech from the Throne. The Lieutenant-Governor said in this little three-sentence comment, "Since 2003, My Government has taken a series of deliberate actions to raise Newfoundland and Labrador, step by step, from underperformance toward the full measure of its potential. The journey has not been easy, and the work is not yet done, but how far we have come!"

That is what I sort of want to focus my comments on: the idea that we have come a great way. If we look at the legacy of this Island out in the North Atlantic and the great land, the Big Land, the rock that we are placed beside, the teamwork that we have done over the years to survive in the harshest of climates and the harshest of times, we have that ability to look at

ourselves and see what we have weathered and we can look back and say together how far have we come – how far have we come.

We stand at this precipice, Mr. Speaker, in time where we are lucky to be able to stand here and to claim that there are more people employed here in this Province than at any other time in our history. How far have we come? Can you believe it, Mr. Speaker? Long Harbour, Hebron and Bull Arm, Muskrat Falls, and these other projects that will take us in employment and take us with what we are creating there in to our future, a future that is economically sound, Mr. Speaker. It is sound, it has a great base, and we are just poised to step out into that future and to take whatever opportunity is offered and we can be there.

Muskkrat Falls, Mr. Speaker, just talking about that one project alone, it was a big day just a year ago when we sanctioned that project. We still look at it and we are still debating it. We still have opinions that maybe are not clear about this, but what is clear is this is a project that is going to turn the tide for us. It is going to create Newfoundland and Labrador as this major source of power for this continent, and for the world.

Our national government looks at this project, Mr. Speaker, as something that the whole country is proud of. So, this is not just a provincial project; this is a national project that is taking place that all of this country is so proud of, as we move ahead.

What is in it for our Province, Mr. Speaker? We have \$1.9 billion in income to Newfoundland and Labrador businesses through this project. That is economic benefits through the project. Even though the project cost us billions of dollars, there is almost \$2 billion in economic spinoffs in labour and business that we are going to benefit through this project.

Also, out of the income that comes from this \$1.9 billion, our coffers and our provincial revenues are going to see income in the form of taxes, sales taxes, and all of these things that are going to benefit us, Mr. Speaker. Just look at

there are going to be 1,500 direct jobs per year on average created through the life of this project across more than seventy occupations. That is awesome – awesome.

There will be an average of 3,100 direct jobs at peak employment in 2015, just two years from now – an average of 3,100 direct jobs – heavy equipment jobs, construction jobs, and cement finisher jobs. We are now having courses created in our public and private institutions to meet some of the challenges of creating the workers of the future for these projects.

There will be 9,100 person years of direct income for employment, and 5,800 of these for Labradorians. It is Labradorians first in these and we are fitting that, Mr. Speaker, as we go. Tens of thousands of more jobs, we have heard our ministers proclaim, over the life of this project in the next five to ten years, with not just this project but the projects that are coming beyond, the other potential that is in that Big Land of Labrador and the rest of this rock that we live on. If you combine all that together, there is more opportunity in megaprojects, mining, and whatever that makes this the most valuable piece of real estate on this planet.

I would just like to say, Mr. Speaker, that a lot of these little comments we are making as we go through are almost like ‘did you’s’. Did you know this? Well, did you know we are earning a higher average income now than we ever had before? I say, did you know that? Could you ever have thought that in this little place we live?

Did you know this government leaves more money in the hands of all taxpayers than ever before? Five hundred million dollars in reduced taxes remains in the pockets of ordinary Newfoundlanders and Labradorians this year because of the taxation plan this government has for the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: We have paid down nearly 30 per cent of the public debt, Mr. Speaker. Did you know that? Amazing! This aggressive debt

reduction, what does that get for us, Mr. Speaker, other than the fact that the debt is reducing?

AN HON. MEMBER: Save money through interest.

MR. CROSS: Well, people are singing out we save money in interest. We get better opinions from the lenders and financial institutions. We get a lot better opinion from those people because we have taken that aggressive plan to pay down this debt. It gives us that better credit rating and it allows us higher limits of credit when we do need them, Mr. Speaker. In years that we might find ourselves in a less financial situation then we would really be able to borrow at better rates, so we would get back on our feet at better times. This little place that we call Newfoundland and Labrador is considered a very, very safe risk for the financial community.

Did you know, Mr. Speaker, more people are coming back home to work? Our net in- and out-migration in this last year is a fact that our population is growing. It is because of the attractiveness of this little place and it is the attractiveness of bringing people back to work. We would love to bring everybody back to work, but I do not know. We have created that many people probably at one point our biggest export was the fact that we were creating children. We were creating them quite fast and they were aggressive in what they want in their life, so we sent them all out into the world.

I do not know, Mr. Speaker. No matter how fabulous this wealth is and this opportunity we have here, I do not know if they all decided they want to come back all at once. If we would have room, we would bring them all in here. We will have a come home year.

Did you know we have led the country with balanced budgets in the last ten years with a plan to be back in that black by 2015? Did you know we experience one of the best credit ratings in the country, if not the developed world? Did you know our Province will be leading the country in economic output for the foreseeable future?

Did you know in health care, Mr. Speaker, there are more doctors and nurses here than ever before and shorter wait times in most of the critical areas of care than we have experienced in the past? Did you know, and I am sure our Minister of Health has said this several times, we have spent nearly forty cents of every dollar on health care in last year's Budget? I was joined by our minister in New-Wes-Valley earlier during the summer when there was an announcement made of some \$400,000 for a Brookfield/Bonnews Health Care Centre to allow for some specialized emergency lighting and some specialized flooring for safety for the staff and for the brightness of the environment in which they work.

In education, Mr. Speaker, did you know we have the best pupil-teacher ratio in our history? We probably have the best pupil-teacher ratio in the country at this point. We have the lowest tuition rates for post-secondary and the best student aid package, all of these 'did you knows'.

Connected somewhat to our education as well, Mr. Speaker, 87 per cent of the Island and 95 per cent in Labrador now have access to broadband and more is coming from an announcement in the last few days by our wonderful minister.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: The work is continuing because we just had third reading on the Safe and Caring Schools act, I always refer to it as, the Schools Act, 1997, the amendment, to allow for some improvements there, some major improvements on changing behaviour. I spoke on Thursday about that, Mr. Speaker, and I could have kept on going at the time, but there is a vast world of improvement we want to see better for our children and for our future there.

We are recognized as this great place to do business. We are investing in sustainable and diversified economy for the future of all of our residents. It is true the wise actions of this government bring us here at this point in our history. It is from that astute and principled

leadership of the leader of the Province who is leading the country at this time.

SOME HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: As she says, the best is yet to come.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: I would like to refer a bit more while I have some time to Bonavista North, Mr. Speaker, a great place that is just up the Northeast Coast of our Province. As Buddy Wasiname says, in Wesleyville the wind blows right vicious. Well, it is getting almost to that time of the year, Mr. Speaker, and it is a hardy people who live in Bonavista North from Trinity in the South to Gander Bay in the North.

Did you know that through the last few months this government has invested in you in Bonavista North? There are four JCP projects to the value of about \$300,000, so over \$250,000 for these connections to employment for people to bring the connections, to make a strong connection, and to make them more employable for future years.

Also, in twelve projects this year there has been about \$250,000 in community enhancement that helps and spreads the wealth for some of the residents in our area. There has been in excess of a couple of million dollars in transportation with a section of highway and a bridge in Main Point. Right now in the Terra Nova district there is an investment that is taking place at Traverse Brook that is travelled daily by about half of the residents of Bonavista North. That bridge there is an investment of about \$3 million or more that really, really helps the travellers of Bonavista North.

I mentioned a little earlier about the \$400,000 in health care improvements for emergency room lighting and flooring for Brookfield/Bonnews. There is also in excess of \$1.5 million in capital works in two or three communities this year. There is in excess of \$25,000 in recreational grants, playgrounds, beach volleyball courts, and green spaces in parks.

Just this past week, Mr. Speaker, there was a special announcement at the Barbour Living Heritage Village, if I could take a moment to speak about it, whereby this lady originally from Badger's Quay went away to America to work some fifty to sixty years ago. Rita Spurrell from that area married while she was in the States.

What she did is she became fairly wealthy. Her life took a turn for the better, shall we say, while she was living down there. When she passed away she wanted to send something back to her home area, to her hometown. There were several endowments. I know right now the fire department is using Jaws of Life that was purchased through a special endowment from the Rita Love fund.

The Pearson Park: \$20,000 of that last year when they were building the park was from an endowment from Rita Love. Also, there was some money she sent back home to her church. There was also a call to the Barbour Living Heritage Village where they had a \$20,000 endowment from this lady who sent it back to her hometown. The group at the Cape Freels Heritage Trust at the Barbour Living Heritage Village leveraged some money from the federal government and also from the Department of IBRD because of that investment and what she sent back.

Now there is going to be a special viewing kitchen displayed at the Barbour Living Heritage Village. It is probably a piece in the puzzle that will help make that a sustainable cultural institution in our area. There is going to be a place there where people will be able to come and watch jams, pastries, tarts, and things being created. They will pay for the experience to be there. There is an investment from our government to help with that project. That was just announced. The Member for Mount Pearl South, in his duties as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of IBRD, was in Newtown on Friday and made that special announcement.

Also, Mr. Speaker, there has been in excess of \$10,000 in Special Assistance Grants for docking and support for fish enterprise storage and safety in 2012, just a year or so ago. In

2013 they saw delivered a new fire truck at Musgrave Harbour.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: A new fire truck will be delivered in three or four months at New-Wes-Valley, and also one in about eight or nine months at Greenspond. It is a new – I forget the name of it now; the minister might remind me – skid truck and it is an \$110,000 value. The minister was down and the minister gave us that during the summer.

Mr. Speaker, I am getting close to the end of my time, but everything you have heard from me today, from this Speech from the Throne and my reactions, I thank my lucky stars, not only standing in this House and being a part of this great team, but to share in the vision, the prosperity, and the sustainability for this great Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: We demonstrate this once more, Mr. Speaker. I have more notes here than I care to need, but I want to go right back to the quote I started with. The journey has not been easy, the work is not yet done, but how far have we come?

Thank you very much for your time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Exploits.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is certainly a pleasure to have the opportunity again to get up and comment on the Speech from the Throne. While my colleague from Bonavista North was on his feet he mentioned his father's birthday. I certainly would like to wish him all the best because Wesleyville – and I will say Wesleyville, but Bonavista North area and

Badger's Quay, or New-Wes-Valley it is called now – actually turned out some very good educators down there, Mr. Speaker –

MR. LANE: Great politicians, too.

MR. FORSEY: – as well as politicians, as the Member for Mount Pearl South.

We were very fortunate in Leading Ticks, where I was born and grew up, to have the Member for Bonavista North's father teach in Leading Ticks.

MR. CROSS: He found his wife there.

MR. FORSEY: He found his wife there; that is correct. We have certainly a lot of interest and we really appreciate the fact that George spent some time in Leading Ticks as a teacher. As well, there were a couple of other teachers from Wesleyville area, from Bonavista North area. As a matter of fact, one of them remained in Leading Ticks, married a girl from there, settled in, and actually retired in Leading Ticks. Yes, we are very familiar with Bonavista North and that area up on the Northeast Coast. I do wish George a very good and happy birthday today.

The Member for St. John's North also mentioned Fire and Emergency Services and I would like to get into it if I have time, Mr. Speaker. I may not because this government has made so many tremendous investments and had so many initiatives since 2003 you really need to make notes just to remind people of actually what this government has really done. I may not get into fire and emergency.

There are a couple of things really I think should be out in front and some interesting and important facts, Mr. Speaker. This Province is building an economy that is the envy of the rest of the country. Newfoundland and Labrador is expected to lead the country in GDP growth for 2013 and is expected to lead the provinces with investment growth. That is an amazing piece of news and good news for this Province and across the country, really, to show

Newfoundland and Labrador is leading the country.

Mr. Speaker, for the first eight months of this year our retail sales ranked second, with a 4.9 per cent increase. It is just amazing, the economy of this Province, and how it is growing. This government with the leadership of our Premier has reduced the debt by 28 per cent since 2004-2005. The debt per capita is reduced from \$22,976 in 2004-2005 to \$18,520 in 2013-2014. We no longer have the highest net debt per capita in the country. We are now ahead of Ontario and Quebec.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: Mr. Speaker, we have made some great strides in our debt and trying to eliminate the debt. It is not easy, of course. It takes some good investments. It takes some good moves, good management, and good fiscal management, Mr. Speaker. That is what this government has done under our leadership and the Premier. We are keeping moving this Province forward.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Bonavista North did mention Muskrat Falls and the benefits of Muskrat Falls. Part of the reason is the value of mineral shipments from the Province has grown by approximately 460 per cent from 2004 to 2012, with 2012 shipments exceeding \$3.8 billion. That is just an amazing stat.

AN HON. MEMBER: Did you know?

MR. FORSEY: As the member, my colleague says, yes: Did you know?

The overall growth in the mining industry and the increased mineral prices are largely due to increased demand for minerals from developing countries such as China and India.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to work in Lab West in the early and mid-1970s with the Iron Ore Company of Canada. At that particular time, it was a booming area and a booming town. You actually could not even get a place to

rent or a place to live. I was very fortunate when I was there. They were just developing, with the company's support, of course, a new trailer park there and I was very fortunate to be able to avail of one of the new mobile homes that were put in during that development. I think that was in 1975. I was very fortunate to be able to get the accommodations.

It seemed like there was a downturn in the late 1980s, mid-1980s, and early 1990s, but since then it has turned around and is growing again, Mr. Speaker. The same problem down there now is housing, of course, and trying to accommodate the workers, the employees, the people in the service sector, and everything else. That is attributed to the economic growth in the Labrador region.

Mining is very important to this Province. As well, we have mining on the Island. Right now across we have two or three mines that are operating, doing very well, and being very productive, as is Rambler on the Baie Verte Peninsula and as is Duck Pond. It has made a difference to the economic growth in the region. It has made a difference to people working. Our unemployment rate is down. It is all due to mining, Mr. Speaker, this particular piece of it is anyway. That is just amazing what the mining sector is doing for us.

If I did get a chance to get into that as well regarding Muskrat Falls and give the reasons why we need that power then you know there are all kinds of reasons there for it. I know my colleague from Bonavista North touched on it earlier.

Mr. Speaker, the revenue to the Province is also growing with the provincial mining tax exceeding \$317 million for 2012 – from mining tax.

AN HON. MEMBER: Chump change.

MR. FORSEY: No, it is not. It is certainly not chump change.

Mr. Speaker, I actually wanted to speak about some of the investments in Transportation and

Works. I would certainly like to get into investments in health care. I know the time is probably not going to be there today but there have been so many, what this government has done and the strides they have made.

I recall when I came on in 2005, I think our budget was less than \$5 billion, Mr. Speaker, and now it is over \$8 billion. That is just amazing. A lot of that is due to, of course, the economic growth and having the government and the leader who can attract industry that is going to be good for the Province, Mr. Speaker.

Under Transportation and Works, Mr. Speaker, for 2013 – and I am mentioning this for probably a selfish reason as well – \$59 million for provincial road construction projects; \$43.1 million to complete the last full season of pavement on Phase I and commence widening and paving sections of Phase II and III of the Trans-Labrador Highway.

MR. RUSSELL: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: I knew my colleague from Lake Melville would, as soon as I mentioned Phase II and Phase III, he would be ready there to applaud it, of course.

Also, \$26.5 million to support several major Trans-Canada Highway rehabilitation projects, including work near Stephenville and Gander; \$20.6 million for the first year of construction of the Placentia lift bridge. Of course, my colleague from Placentia certainly appreciated that announcement; \$10.4 million to finish the Conception Bay South Bypass. This is the one where I was getting to, Mr. Speaker, \$12.3 million to begin construction of the replacement of the Sir Robert Bond Bridge in the District of Exploits in Bishop's Falls on the Trans-Canada Highway.

We have come a long way from when – and I still hear some of the local people joke about how Mr. Hampton had the barge there and took people across the river back in the early 1950s and the 1940s when Abitibi came in there and started up the hydro dam and also a pulp mill. Actually, in Bishop's Falls, Mr. Speaker, there

was a pulp mill. It is right next door to where I live. I can look out my back window and I can look at the hydro dam. There was a pulp plant there. Pulp was made in Bishop's and then transported or basically shipped up to the mill in Grand Falls for paper.

It is just amazing the industry and how it started out, and I guess some of the obstacles they had to overcome as well. Imagine, going across the Exploit's River on a barge and bringing equipment over there and people, and whatever else that they had to. Then, of course, the Sir Robert Bond Bridge was built, and may I say, it was built with very good engineering technology. Somebody can correct me, but I think it was around 1957 that bridge was built. So it is quite a long time, but it has weathered many storms, especially the flood of 1983.

Mr. Speaker, I recall standing on my back bridge, because I am very close to where the dam was washed out, and I just kept looking down towards the flood. There were two big boxcars there, sixty ton I think was the weight, and they just went down on the top of the water like that. It was just like toothpicks, two sixty-ton boxcars.

When they went down there, they either hit the bridge or they went through the bridge. They were not found. I do not know what happened to them, but there was a lot of debris, and may I say sadly, some houses went down there. All of this stuff hit the bridge in 1983, thirty years ago. There was a lot of damage to the bridge, a lot of damage that you could see structurally. It weathered that storm as well, and many ice storms, so that bridge itself was certainly structurally built and sound, with very good engineering technology.

For me, and not only for me but the people in the area, the people in the local area, all of the motoring public who travel across the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, especially across the Island, who are using the highway, using the Trans-Canada, and using the bridge, all of the transport people who transport all the freight, food, and supplies across the Island from Port aux Basques to St. John's, I keep listening

to the statements that: Oh my goodness, you have to go down and go into the bridge, and the bridge is not as good as it once was, of course. It was narrow, it was this, and it was that.

Well, anyway, we are under construction out there now, Mr. Speaker. There was a contract that was awarded these past few months to a construction company to actually do the approaches going into the new bridge. Actually, I think they are just clueing up out there now. That was a major piece of work. All of the approaches on both sides had to be reconfigured so we will have a much safer drive coming off the bridge going to Botwood, going all the way west, or going into Bishop's Falls.

The overpass that is there is going to be moved. That is going to be torn down. It is going to be moved over. So the bridge itself is going to be certainly a welcome sight to everyone in the Province, Mr. Speaker.

The fact that it is being done and being replaced is also another piece of work that is good for the economy of the Province and the economy in the local area. I think the total cost or expenditure to this bridge is approximately \$24 million. That in itself is going to be a lot of money spent in the Exploits district and in that area, so it is certainly going to be great for the economy.

I will probably never get into all of it today, Mr. Speaker, but I do appreciate the little bit of time I did have. The investments in health care are phenomenal, actually. There are a couple of reasons that personally affect me as well. I know a couple of days ago I brought in a private member's motion on the seniors' benefits this government provides for seniors. I will state again right now it is \$971, Mr. Speaker. Just for the information of the general public out there and actually for the information of some of the people here in the House, I would say.

There have been some major investments in health care. Just this year, Mr. Speaker, \$138 million for the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program which includes a further \$5.1 million to allow for the funding of twelve new drug therapies, eight of which will

assist in treatment of various forms of cancer. It is very important to the people of this Province, very important to the members of this House of Assembly, and especially this government.

Approximately \$30 million for dialysis services to support the existing fourteen sites, seven of which have been added since 2004. I know I have stated this again, but I am so pleased with our investment in health care, and there are so many diagnostic services that we require. Dialysis certainly rates up there. We have increased the sites by seven. We have gone from seven to fourteen, Mr. Speaker. I am sure there are other services in health care that I, along with my colleagues, are looking for in the other services that we are doing but would certainly like to improve on it.

In the dialysis I recall I think it was about eighteen years ago, Mr. Speaker, when I had to take my brother-in-law to Halifax for a kidney transplant. He was on dialysis at the time before he got his transplant. Living in a small community like Leading Tickles is not somewhere close to services that you can just have a ten or fifteen minute drive and get to the services you require. That is not that long ago. Eighteen years is a long time, but eighteen years does not be long going either.

At that time, Mr. Speaker, when he was on dialysis, there were not a lot of choices. We had to leave Leading Tickles and either go to Corner Brook or go to St. John's for dialysis. Can you just imagine? The people who are going on dialysis today do not have a five- or six-hour drive to get to dialysis, not today. We have sites in St. Anthony, Clarenville. There was not one in Grand Falls-Windsor at the time, Mr. Speaker, but there is now. There is one in Gander. Harbour Breton is being set up as we speak, and it may be even running now, I am not sure.

So, that is amazing. Harbour Breton is going to take the little bit of strain off the one in Grand Falls-Windsor, Mr. Speaker. This is major; this is going to make people's lives that much easier. These are the kinds of things that this government is doing, Mr. Speaker. We have

done a lot of it, and we are going to continue to do a lot of it.

Yes, our economy is growing and our revenue is up, and our revenue is continuing to grow, but we want to continue taking that revenue and investing it wisely, with good fiscal management, Mr. Speaker, and I hope to have to some other time to talk on these special investments.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. JOYCE: Can I stand on a point of order, please?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bay of Islands, on a point of order.

MR. JOYCE: I did not want to interrupt the Member for Exploits on his speech, but in today's Hansard the Minister of Health and Community Services committed to table a document, and I read from Hansard, "I am just as anxious to table material here in the House of Assembly. Mr. Speaker, I will be tabling here right now the PET scanner, CT scanner now operating...".

I asked the Pages for a copy; it has not been tabled.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. JOYCE: So I ask: If it has not been tabled, will the minister table it, as committed in Hansard?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Member for Kilbride.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Bay of Islands, on a point of order.

MR. JOYCE: Can the Speaker instruct the Pages to get me the document that was tabled here today, because it cannot be found?

MR. SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

The hon. the Member for Kilbride.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DINN: Is great, Mr. Speaker, to get a bit of exercise; I got up two or three times there. Thanks. The Member for Bay of Islands is trying to get me active, are you?

Mr. Speaker, it is an opportunity now for me to continue on a trend that has been ongoing here for the last few days talking about education. I want to take this opportunity to make a few comments on our present education system.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. DINN: The fact is, Mr. Speaker, I think, myself, that our education system is at its best level ever in our history.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DINN: Now, I can base this assessment on my fifty-plus years of experience as a student; and, believe it or not, I went to school one time. When I went to school, it was a time that some of you probably heard about or read about in history when people might have brought a stick of wood to school to put in the fire. I was just around that time – that era was kind of dying out. I was involved with it at the near end. I was also a teacher for twenty-nine years and I also can base my assessment on my time as a politician.

A statement, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make is that over 95 per cent of our students are top

notch. The teachers we have in our system are highly trained, competent, and qualified.

SOME HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!

MR. DINN: Our school structures, for the most part, are much better now than they were ten or twelve years ago; but, rarely, do we hear about all of the good things that are going on in our schools. Most of the time, we hear about negativity.

We hear in the House of Assembly sometimes there is bullying incidents going on and there is this going on or that going on. The media plays up on the negative aspect of what is going on and sometimes we get the feeling that there is nothing very good going on in our schools, but let me tell you this, the truth is there are many, many, many and many more good things going on in our schools.

Most students care for each other and for other people in their school community. An incident of bullying gets more attention than a school that collects \$3,000 and sends it to a small mission in Africa. I mention this because I have seen it done. Also, a school club collects \$1,200 or \$1,500 to help needy families at Christmas time and that gets no attention, because it is not negative.

The students in our schools organize and collect for food banks. They constantly support shoe box programs that help the poor in other countries. They help organize and participate wholeheartedly in Remembrance Day ceremonies. As a matter of fact, many of the ceremonies that go off in schools on Remembrance Day, or prior to it, are organized by the students. They do a great job there.

Students shave for the brave. They hold seniors' days when grandparents and other seniors are invited to the school to interact with the students and learn from each other. They support community programs and activities such as parades and carnivals. If you go to Santa Claus parades or if you go to any kind of tree-lighting ceremony at this time of the year, you would find the people involved very often are young

people. I was at the Goulds Santa Claus parade a couple of weeks ago and I would say most of participants in it were high school students. It was a very good thing to see.

Students also help each other with peer tutoring and peer counselling. They are involved in many school sports teams and clubs, playing in various tournaments and leagues, playing softball, soccer, rugby, basketball, hockey, or baseball. You name it and they are at it. Schools have archery clubs, debating clubs, video game clubs, art clubs, and drama clubs. There are many good school bands and choirs in our schools. As a matter of fact, if you go to a concert sometimes you will see school choirs and bands playing there.

Most of our prominent entertainers got their start in schools. I can name a few. I think a lot of us know Allan Hawco, or you heard about him. If you did not, there is something wrong. You should probably come out of your closet or come out of something. Allan Hawco got his start at St. Kevin's in the Goulds. He had a drama teacher –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. DINN: From the Goulds. That is right.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. DINN: No, he came to the Goulds to learn something. Yes, he was a lucky boy.

Alan Doyle is a student of St. Kevin's. You have all heard of Alan Doyle. David Pomeroy is a student from St. Kevin's. David is the second-best opera singer in Canada. On Saturday night, I was a concert. St. Kevin's Parish had a Christmas gala and his father sung there. It was the first time I heard his father sing. I can understand where David got his voice. It was a very good performance his father put on.

Many of our local athletes got their starts in school systems. Some of the hockey players who played in the NHL came out of our systems. They probably played high school

hockey and learned a good bit from their coaches there.

Some of us here are Toronto Maple Leafs fans. One of the reasons why Toronto has not done well in fifty or 100 years is because they have not had any Newfoundlanders playing on their team for many years. Montreal Canadiens, my team, had Terry Ryan one time. They drafted him and he played for a while with them and Michael Ryder was drafted by Montreal.

AN HON. MEMBER: What about Harold Druken?

MR. DINN: Harold Druken is another guy who played, that is right – all products of our school systems.

Today, one of the top names in Canada and in the world is a young softball player from the Goulds.

AN HON. MEMBER: Who is that?

MR. DINN: You know who he is. Tell me. His father was one of the better softball players.

AN HON. MEMBER: Young Boland.

MR. DINN: Young Boland, yes, exactly. He is one of the top in the world, not only in Canada but in the world. I think myself –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. DINN: No, better than the crowd from Placentia, a step above actually.

I think the top Canadian softball team or one of the top teams in the world this year that played in the States and all over the world had six members from Newfoundland. Six of the top twelve players in the world might be from Newfoundland, so that will tell you. All of these guys came from schools – not only the Goulds, but all over this Province.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. DINN: That is right. It was never that good – not bad, but not that good.

Last month, I had the honour of attending the high school graduation at St. Kevin's High School. It was a bit special in that in my years of teaching I have attended graduations where my students graduated, where my own children graduated, but this was a bit different. I was on the stage, I was able to speak, and my oldest granddaughter was among the graduating class, so that is a bit special.

At that graduation, there were ninety-six students receiving graduation certificates; twenty-six of these graduated with honours; thirty-seven students graduated or received scholarship awards and prizes; one student, Stephen Connors, had twelve different awards given to him. The student valedictorian, Steven Thomas, walked off with seven awards, including the Governor General's Medal for Excellence.

Next week, I am going to attend – that is if everything goes well – the graduation exercises at Bishops College. Bishops College is a school where a lot of the kids from the Kilbride district go to high school. I am sure when I go to that graduation I will hear about all the good things that are going on at Bishops College.

Last month, here in the House of Assembly, the Minister of Education announced that the high school graduating classes of 2012 and 2013 attained the highest passing marks ever in this Province, of 94.5 per cent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DINN: To me, that is really good news.

AN HON. MEMBER: That is success.

MR. DINN: It is success, very good. That is a good comment on what students are doing in our schools.

Mr. Speaker, I have a suggestion for those who think our education system is not that good. Go visit the schools, talk to the children, talk to the

teachers, and if you are not satisfied phone some of the parents and you will find out that there is a lot of good stuff going on. Do not just depend on the Member for St. Barbe to tell us what is going on in our schools, because I do not think you will get the full picture.

Mr. Speaker, the students from my district go to eleven different schools. Over the past seven years, \$12 million to \$15 million has been spent on these schools to do upgrades, repairs, extensions, and improvements.

I mentioned that I went to school myself for fifteen years. I was really stunned; it took me eight years to get out of Grade 6. I went to school and (inaudible) university for fifteen years. In those days, it was only Grade 11. You did not have it as today, you had Level I, II, and III. You had Grade 11. When we went to school in Grade 11, you had public exams in June. You were tested on everything you learned from September until June and that was the only mark that counted.

AN HON. MEMBER: One hundred per cent.

MR. DINN: Right, 100 per cent, or a zero per cent, or 50 per cent, or whatever came between, that is what you got. After I left school, I taught for twenty-nine years. Over these years I have seen many changes.

When I went to school, one of the biggest struggles my family had was getting enough money for mom or dad – and there were a lot of us – to buy school books for us. There were twelve in my family. Very often you would have seven or eight going to school at the same time. It took a lot of money to buy books, especially in those days. We had to pick berries and work summer jobs in order to get the money to buy our books.

I can remember when I was teaching a few years ago, I had families in Grade 9 – I taught Grade 9 a lot of times. I had children from families attending Grade 9. Sometimes there was more than one child in the higher grades from the one family, Grade 9, 10, or 11. One of the biggest difficulties the families had was to get money or

to get books for these students. I can remember times when the year was half over before some of those kids had their school books for the year. There were times that I myself went to second-hand stores and bought books for them. Today, it is very different.

Today, kids from K to 12 do not have that issue any more. Our government has introduced a free textbook policy for all K to 12 students. School fees have been eliminated. Per capita investment for a student has gone from \$7,400 to \$12,600 a year. We have built new schools and started others, including a new high school for the West End of St. John's which is badly needed. We have renovated, extended, redeveloped, upgraded and improved many others. We have invested in new curriculum, new technology and skilled trades. We have invested many millions to upgrade and buy new Phys Ed equipment, lab equipment, cafeteria equipment.

In spite of falling enrolments, we have maintained enough teachers to allow us to have the lowest student-teacher ratio in Canada. I think one of my colleagues mentioned that today. When I was teaching, it was not unusual for me to have forty-plus students. Many years I had thirty-five, thirty-six, thirty-eight students. One year I had forty-eight students, boys in Grades 7 and 8, half of which would rather be in the woods rabbit hunting or trout fishing or cutting wood. You can imagine the challenges we had at those times.

Believe it or not, bullying was around then. Bullying is not a new concept by any means. Some people might think it is. Bullying was around. When I went to school, I can remember one recess time having three fights in fifteen minutes. That is true.

AN HON. MEMBER: Did you (inaudible) anything?

MR. DINN: No, I fought with other people.

There was actually a gang in the school at the time that kind of picked on certain people, but they picked on the wrong fellow that day. There

was bullying when I taught school, there is bullying today, and there will probably be bullying in the future, but we are trying to do something about it. The only thing is today the bullying is not like it was when I went to school and when I taught school.

AN HON. MEMBER: A different forum.

MR. DINN: It is a much different forum, yes.

My answer to it all would be to do away with all modern technology. Go back to pen and paper. Go back to pen and paper, your problems with 70 per cent of cyberbullying would be gone. You would have to have more effort in order to do bullying then.

As a government, we have eliminated the interest on the provincial portion of student loans. I can recall one time, the second year I was here or the third year; I did a private member's motion one day on us helping students with the interest on student loans. We were calling on the federal government at the time to do away with the federal interest on their part of the loan. That was never done, but we, as a government, did eliminate the interest on the provincial portion of student loans, which is a big benefit to a lot of people.

We have kept tuition fees down for post-secondary students. For several years we have done this. Our investments in education, you could go on and on for hours, I am sure, if you had all the information here. We have made great investments with great results.

Mr. Speaker, I have a little bit of time, but I am going to clue up because I ran out of paper. To conclude, I am going to go back to what my opening statement was. Our education system today is probably the best it ever was. It is very good. We are very proud of the improvements we have made over the years. We know, and we are very aware that there is more work to be done. We are very aware of that, but, do you know something? We are going to keep at trying to improve the system.

I thank you very much for the time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Given the hour of the day, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that the House do now adjourn.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that the House do now adjourn.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

This House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

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