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HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Ross Wiseman, MHA

Wednesday

12 March 2014
(Throne Speech)

The House met at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Please be seated.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Mr. Speaker, the Justices of the Supreme Court have arrived.

MR. SPEAKER: Admit the Justices of the Supreme Court.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Administrator has arrived.

MR. SPEAKER: Admit His Honour the Administrator.

SERGEANT-AT ARMS: All rise.

[Mr. Speaker leaves the Chair]

[His Honour the Administrator takes the Chair]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: It is the wish of His Honour the Administrator that all present be seated.

HIS HONOUR THE ADMINISTRATOR
(Chief Justice J. Derek Green):

Learning Lessons of Perseverance

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

On the first of March, young athletes from across Newfoundland and Labrador have converged on Clarenville to put their skills to the test in the spirit of friendship, fair play and pursuit of worthwhile goals at the 2014 Newfoundland and Labrador Winter Games. All of them were keenly aware that, just a few days earlier, a young figure skater from Marystown realized her dream of competing on Olympic ice. Kaetlyn Osmond well earned her place in Sochi among the best athletes in the world. After years of work and perseverance, she stood on the podium alongside her teammates to claim

for Canada the first-ever silver medal in Olympic team figure skating.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HIS HONOUR THE ADMINISTRATOR:

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

Like the Brad Gushue curling team eight years ago, Kaetlyn has taken her place in Olympic history and made our province and our country enormously proud. Our athletes' pursuit of excellence is a clarion call to the best in each of us. It is not luck or magic, but courage and perseverance that takes us from where we happen to be to where we want to be and ought to be. Our athletes serve as role models for all of us in showing us what it means to truly persevere. In 2016, the province's athletes will meet in Conception Bay South for the Newfoundland and Labrador Summer Games. That same year, Newfoundland and Labrador will be proud to support the Special Olympics Canada Winter Games in Corner Brook, the first-ever to be held in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Honouring Our Heroes' Sacrifices

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

The year 2016 will also be the centennial anniversary of the horrific Battle of the Somme at Beaumont-Hamel during the First World War. We shall never forget those sacrifices demanded on that day and in the months and years that followed. In November 2013, our government launch Honour 100, our First World War Commemoration Initiative. Through a series of initiatives, we will remember and honour those heroes, past and present, by encouraging communities and organizations throughout the province to work together and engage our youth in appreciating the legacy they have been given.

Striving for Social Justice

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

Let us never forget that it was largely young people fighting on the fields of Europe and elsewhere who won the freedom we enjoy today to build a more just and equitable society. Young people continue to shape our destiny in profound ways. Indeed, some of the most passionate defenders of our hard-won freedoms and social justice are our youth. When young people challenge us to do more and do better, we need to listen and to actively engage them in making our society everything it can be and ought to be.

To honour the sacrifices of its heroes, Newfoundland and Labrador established a living legacy called Memorial University. Memorial has grown from a small campus to include the Grenfell Campus at Corner Brook, the Marine Institute and other centres. Today, that legacy is also embodied in College of the North Atlantic, which has just celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Nothing promotes social justice more effectively than equitable access to a post-secondary education. Cumulatively, this government has invested more than 230 million dollars since 2005 to freeze tuition fees, making Newfoundland and Labrador's students the envy of the country with some of the lowest tuition fees in the country and the best student aid program in Canada. Our government will continue to support post-secondary students and institutions in the year ahead so young people from communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador can continue to enjoy access to the high-quality advanced education they need to secure the opportunities before them.

Helping people secure opportunities is a fundamental goal of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, launched in 2006. With total investments surpassing 900 million dollars, this strategy in just eight years has helped Newfoundland and Labrador reduce reliance on Income Support to the lowest level in our Province's history. In 2003, we had one of the highest levels of poverty in the country. A decade later, we are tied for second-lowest and celebrated nationally for leading the fight

against poverty. This year, the government will publish the second progress report on the strategy's effectiveness and use those findings, in cooperation with our community partners, to build on the successes we have already achieved. By sharing more fairly the benefits of our newfound prosperity, we can continue to achieve a more equitable balance of opportunities for our people, whatever their particular needs.

The government continues to be concerned about vulnerable populations, and is committed to better understand the challenges they face and the ways we can address them. We will follow through on the government's Blue Book commitment and conclude the study which will help us gain a better understanding of homelessness issues throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. We will announce investments to build on those we have already made to improve access to housing. We will release an Adult Literacy and Essential Skills Strategy that will help people find employment and effectively manage their career choices. We will continue advancing the Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.

Continuing investments in policing will better protect people from crime, while a new penitentiary will better protect correctional officers and the inmates they guard. We will introduce new legislation and procedures to coordinate efforts and resources to locate missing persons.

The government will soon unveil a new Violence Prevention Initiative Action Plan to build on the 2006 Violence Prevention Initiative. The government will address cyber violence, sexual violence and the impacts of social media along with bullying and harassment against our children. We are committed to building safe and caring communities where violence is unacceptable.

Improving the lives of our vulnerable children remains among our highest priorities. The government has commenced the implementation of the remaining two levels of its Continuum of Care Strategy by developing a training program

for level 3 specialized foster homes and evaluating a Request for Proposals for level 4 contracted staffed residential placements. It will soon proclaim the new *Adoption Act*, giving more children the benefit of permanent homes. It will soon proceed with the proposed new child care legislation and regulations to advance its 10-year Child Care Strategy. The budget will also include initiatives to advance early childhood education, building on a host of initiatives in recent years to improve the education of children of all ages. Our government will continue to make investments in the province's K-12 schools, improving existing infrastructure while replacing aging school infrastructure and meeting demands for classroom space in growth areas. Specific details will be provided in this year's budget.

Social justice also means caring more effectively for our seniors and others in need of special care. In 2012, we launched our 10-year long-term care and community support services strategy called Close to Home. Since its launch, we have implemented several new initiatives to advance the strategy. This year, we will launch the Paid Family Caregiving Home Support Option and the Community Rapid Response Teams Pilot Project. We will soon open the new long-term care facility in St. John's to complement other facilities we have already opened in other regions. Other significant advances in health care will be announced in the coming budget. Today in Newfoundland and Labrador, we have more physicians than ever before, 54 per cent more registered nurses per capita than the Canadian average, and among the shortest wait times in the country for benchmark areas of radiation therapy, bypass surgery, hip and knee replacement and cataract surgery. We have moved forward with 35 major health care infrastructure projects throughout the province during the past decade and anticipate completing 12 of those in 2014. In the coming year, we will also see advances in province-wide 911 services and other health and safety initiatives to build on the significant gains we have already made.

Social justice includes public safety. We are cognizant of the fact that this is the anniversary of the tragic crash of Cougar Helicopter Flight

491 five years ago and the loss of 17 lives. Our government has accepted all 29 recommendations provided by the Wells Inquiry and has fully implemented 16 of those. We continue to advocate for the implementation of all 29 recommendations and work with all partners, including the Government of Canada, to make that happen. We also urge the Government of Canada to work with our government in commissioning a comprehensive review of marine safety in waters off Newfoundland and Labrador with a view to ensuring that Canada – arguably the world's greatest coastal state – becomes the global leader in marine safety.

Investing With Oversight to Grow Our Economy

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

Our story of economic growth over the last decade is one of which others can only dream. We have seen growth, significant growth, in major economic indicators, such as capital investment and retail sales. Today, more people are working in our province than ever before and incomes are higher than they have ever been. Our income growth is second only to Alberta's. We are proud of where we have come and will do everything in our power to maintain this momentum. We maintain the lowest personal income tax rates in Atlantic Canada. Through our tax reductions, we have now put nearly \$600 million a year back into the pockets of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. While others have suggested we increase corporate income tax, we instead strive to make our province competitive. We committed last year, and in our 10-year Sustainability Plan, to return to surplus in 2015-2016, and we will maintain that commitment. Over the longer term, we will work to reduce our expenses and reduce our net debt. Our government is committed to continue consultations with stakeholders to ensure the long-term sustainability of our pension plans, recognizing that the liability for pensions and other post-retirement benefits is the main contributor to our province's net debt.

We continue to invest strategically, on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, to grow business opportunities in regions that need them. That is precisely the approach we are taking by securing a brighter future for the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper operation, by installing a third transmission line in Western Labrador to promote mining industry growth, by investing in aquaculture on the south coast, in the cranberry industry in central Newfoundland, in fisheries innovation in coastal communities, in our seal industry, in our ocean technology industry, in our cultural and tourism industries, in our high-tech research and development sectors, and in other sectors where public investments are leveraging private investments, sustaining jobs, creating real opportunities in our communities and growing our province's economy.

Consider why public investments like this make good sense. To date, for example, the province's Research & Development Corporation has committed to invest 17.9 million dollars in 88 Arctic-related harsh-environment R&D projects under the government's Arctic Opportunities initiative. These investments are leveraging three dollars for every dollar invested. In aquaculture, our 25 million dollar investment has leveraged 400 million dollars. We have seen a 75 per cent surge in growth in the past year alone. All governments in Canada make strategic investments like this, including the federal government. In fact, we are proud to be partnering with Ottawa on many initiatives that are helping businesses grow and communities thrive throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Investing to grow makes eminently good sense, and in this year's budget, further specific initiatives will be unveiled to keep us growing forward.

Investing in infrastructure also grows communities by attracting opportunities. In 2014, the province will reach 95 per cent broadband coverage, with over 400 more communities connected than in 2003. In Labrador, we will make significant progress on the Trans-Labrador Highway. In the coming months, we will begin the development of a

comprehensive transportation strategy. Having listened to the industry, we have already moved to facilitate an early start to road work and Municipal Capital Works so we can maximize our construction season and align with industry needs.

We have clearly demonstrated our commitment to municipal infrastructure through significant investments over the past decade. Since 2008, together with our federal and municipal partners, we have invested over one billion dollars, and we are ready to do more. There are more aspects to strengthening municipalities than infrastructure, however, which is why we have been busy working with municipalities and consulting on a comprehensive review of the provincial-municipal fiscal framework. A final report will be prepared in time to inform the budgetary process a year from now. This year, a new equitable and sustainable formula for Municipal Operating Grants has come into effect for communities with populations of less than 11,000. No town is receiving less than in prior years and approximately 80 per cent are seeing an increase.

Public investments in infrastructure attract private investments in industry, and that means employment and opportunity for our people. Our employment, training and apprenticeship initiatives have prepared many for the 70,000 jobs that have started opening up across our province. This year, the government will release a Workforce Development Strategy as we continue to ensure our people are ready to tap into the opportunities and reap the benefits. Soon, the government will be releasing its Population Growth Strategy, which will provide a roadmap for efforts to encourage people to live, work and build families in communities across Newfoundland and Labrador.

A solid foundation for growth today, just as in the past, is trade. The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with Europe will soon slash tariffs on local fish products in the world's greatest seafood market, driving new growth in our fishing sector. In the meantime, the government is collaborating with processors and the union to ensure the province is ready to

make the most of the opportunities as they open up. The provincial fishery is now ideally positioned to capitalize on unrestricted access to European seafood markets and become more globally competitive with the creation of a 400 million dollar federal-provincial fund to support industry enhancements. CETA will not only increase sales of Newfoundland and Labrador's world-class fish and seafood products into the lucrative EU marketplace, but also create new opportunities for emerging service and knowledge-based industries such as oil and gas and ocean technology. We are also trading throughout the Americas and in Asia. Half a world away, people know who we are and what we have to offer.

Growth in our energy sector is the principal reason Newfoundland and Labrador has gone from straggler to economic leader in Canada. To make the most of every opportunity in the energy sector, this government created Nalcor, a corporation owned solely by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Our energy corporation works in the best interests of its shareholders, who are the people of the province. Its vision is to build a strong economic future for successive generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. In addition to being an active participant in the development of our energy warehouse, Nalcor will make money for the people of the province. Today, the people of the province, through Nalcor, own equity stakes in three offshore oil projects. We operate a world-class fabrication facility at Bull Arm. Just last year, through Nalcor's geoscience program, we announced the discovery of three new offshore basins in the Labrador Sea.

In addition to the new basins, a fourth previously established basin was discovered to be much larger than originally understood. Most recently, the government and Nalcor, on behalf of the people of the province, collaborated with the federal government and the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board in the development of a new land tenure system for our offshore area that will position Newfoundland and Labrador with the leading exploration jurisdictions in the world.

Having predictable scheduled licence rounds marks a change in Newfoundland and Labrador's ability to attract new global exploration investment.

The government's vision for Nalcor is grounded in our province's first-ever comprehensive Energy Plan, which the government launched in 2007. After seven years of steadfast commitment to this plan and a series of strong investments, we are now seeing this vision bear fruit. Nalcor is a strong, multifaceted entity capable of negotiating and, where necessary, competing with other major participants in the energy sector. By channeling our returns from oil development into renewable-energy initiatives like Lower Churchill development at Muskrat Falls, Nalcor will ensure the benefits flow to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians for generations to come, whether we are attracting industries that need power or selling power for revenue. No longer will the province be as exposed to the ebbs and flows of the oil sector, because through Nalcor, the people of the province will have a diversified and resilient energy portfolio.

The Muskrat Falls Project will generate some 25 billion dollars in revenue to the province over the life of the project. That is a strong, strategic energy investment providing long-term returns to the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. But Muskrat Falls also means the island of Newfoundland will no longer be an isolated electrical system. With the Maritime Link and interconnection to the North American grid, we can sell power that is excess to our needs or import power in emergency situations if our supply ever falls short, as it did in January. The government, in its 2007 Energy Plan, recognized how profound a change being connected to the North American electricity grid would be and committed to a thorough review of the implications and the opportunities. We recognize the importance of ensuring strong oversight and governance mechanisms.

Muskrat Falls will come on stream around four years from now. In the meantime, in January of this year, as jurisdictions across North America coped with the coldest winter in memory,

residents of the Island endured electricity supply shortfalls, power outages and rolling blackouts. The disruptions for some were particularly significant. People have a right to know why the outages happened and what we can do to ensure they do not happen again. The Public Utilities Board has commissioned a review of the recent power outages. The government supports this review.

However, the government also has a role to play in order to restore public confidence in the electrical system. To that end, the government will commission a comprehensive independent review of the operation, management and regulation of the electrical system. The government's review will focus less on the specific events related to the recent electricity issues and more broadly on ensuring the Newfoundland and Labrador electricity system has the optimal structure, controls and authorities to ensure an appropriate balance between reliability and affordability, specifically as it transitions to North American interconnection.

Opening Up the Government to the People

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

A government functions best when it is open to the people it serves. Soon after coming to office in 2003, this government enacted the toughest disclosure legislation in our province's history to reform electoral law, public accounting, lobbyist registration, and information access. Our government has always strived to be open. However the people of the province have expressed concerns that we are not open enough and we are listening. We are launching an independent review of our Access to Information and Protection of Privacy legislation even sooner than the date required by law and will place the review in the hands of independent, impartial individuals with in-depth knowledge of governance, law and journalism. We are committed to ensure this legislation reflects the most balanced statutory framework in the country and the world.

We are prepared to do far more than that. We believe much more information should be disclosed to the public, even before it is requested. Government departments and agencies ought to disclose information as a routine way of doing business. To that end, this government is launching an Open Government Initiative, one purpose of which will be to share data and other information that anyone will be able to access freely online.

That is just the start. The Open Government Initiative means even more than the release of data and information after decisions have been finalized. A truly open government engages people in the decision-making process itself. The Open Government Initiative will provide meaningful opportunities for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to do just that. Through a range of activities, the government will ask the people of the province to share their ideas and insights. We are encouraging Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to get involved and help shape the vision for the future of the province.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians should recall a sizeable list of measures this government has already taken to improve governance practices and openness, from giving the Auditor General full access to the House of Assembly to the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*. In addition, the government will bring forward legislation to protect those who report wrongdoing. In the spring session of the legislature, the government will introduce, as its most significant legislation, the province's first whistleblower legislation.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

These are but some of the initiatives the government will undertake in the weeks and months to come. Although one speech cannot define them all, it will become clear through the budget and other announcements that the government's agenda moving forward this year is ambitious. At the helm of the government for approximately five months is a new Premier, the Member for Humber East.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HIS HONOUR THE ADMINISTRATOR:

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

When assuming this responsibility in January, and in the weeks that followed, he listed the principles and goals that he hoped would define his administration. These principles are reflected in the measures I have outlined here today.

To briefly summarize, they are: the principle of perseverance, which is embodied by none better than our athletes; the principle of sacrifice, which was demonstrated best by those who have defended our freedom; the principle of social justice, which means sharing the benefits of our success more fairly and equitably; the principle of investing responsibly, with due diligence and oversight, to grow our economy; and, finally, the principle of opening up the government to the people who own it: the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

With these five principles to guide us, we will build a society in which all of us can feel truly in control of our destiny – each of us individually and all of us together. The Premier and the government are listening to what people have to say and are prepared to act on what they hear. Newfoundland and Labrador deserves no less. Through courage and perseverance, we as a province will continue our journey from where we once were to where we want to be and ought to be.

Estimates of expenditure will be laid before you in due course and you will be asked to grant supply to Her Majesty.

I invoke God's blessing upon you as you commence this new Session.

May Divine Providence guide you in your deliberation.

Thank you.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise.

[His Honour the Administrator, the Vice-Regal Entourage and the Justices of the Supreme Court leave the Assembly Chamber]

[Mr. Speaker returns to the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Please be seated.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting Public Interest And Disclosure, Bill 1.

MR. SPEAKER: Is there leave for the hon. minister to introduce the bill?

AN HON. MEMBER: By leave.

MR. SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation that Bill 1, An Act Respecting Public Interest And Disclosure be now read the first time.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting Public Interest And Disclosure. (Bill 1)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill now has been read a first time.

When shall the bill be read a second time?

MR. KING: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: On tomorrow.

On motion, bill 1 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

Notices of Motion

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

MS JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply to consider a resolution for the granting of Interim Supply to Her Majesty, Bill 2.

MR. SPEAKER: His Honour the Administrator has delivered a Speech from the Throne, and it will take a few moments now for the Pages to distribute copies of those speeches.

[The Pages distribute the Speech to all members]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for the District of Port au Port.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CORNETT: It is a privilege to stand in the hon. House of Assembly as MHA for the District of Port au Port. I want to take this opportunity to thank them for their ongoing support. I want to thank His Honour the Administrator for delivering the Speech from the Throne. This Speech has clearly outlined the mandate of our government for the upcoming year and our priorities as we move forward.

I would also like to take this time to remember the victims of Cougar Flight 491 and their families and friends on the fifth anniversary of this tragedy. Our government will continue to make offshore safety a priority and ensure the health and safety of the men and women who work in the industry.

Over the past eleven years, our government has worked diligently to create an environment in this Province that makes Newfoundland and

Labrador the best place to live and work. We have worked to cultivate a culture where it is a viable and welcoming place for people to raise families, earn a top-notch education, enter into a career with a future, or retire. These principles have guided us since 2003 when we first came into government. We were inspired early on with a desire to improve the lives of every person in Newfoundland and Labrador regardless of where they live. The Speech from the Throne reflects this ongoing mission and our government continues to develop policies and programs with the people of this Province in mind.

As our Premier noted in his speech at Government House when he was sworn in as the eleventh Premier of the Province, this government under his leadership, will continue to fulfill the mandate that we were given from Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in the 2011 general election to foster growth and strengthen communities, and to meet the needs of our people.

A primary directive of this government is to take care of the people who elected us. We believe that a responsible government that listens to people and delivers well-thought-out programs that nurture and care for the people as well as provide direction for positive growth is a government with its people in mind.

Developing a comprehensive plan that meets the needs of all citizens is never easy, but we have worked hard to be an inclusive government. Whether you are a senior or a post-secondary student, there are programs and services to help.

As we all know, a significant portion of the population in Newfoundland and Labrador are seniors and their demographic continues to grow. Our government has worked hard to recognize their needs. We work hard to make their dollars stretch further by providing such measures as an increase to the Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors' Benefit and a refundable tax credit for low-income seniors that 42,000 seniors in our Province benefitted from last year. We created a Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework to help us address the needs of

seniors and enable us to respond to them more effectively now and into the future.

As part of this program, in 2010 we announced Age-Friendly Newfoundland and Labrador Grants Program that has supported ninety-one communities and seniors groups throughout the Province. We have built six new long-term care facilities in the last several years in Clarenville, Corner Brook, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and Lewisporte, and another facility is under construction in Carbonear. The most recent facility will open in St. John's in the fall of this year. In addition, protective care residences have also been announced in four communities, with residences open in Corner Brook and Lewisporte and two under construction in Clarenville and Bonavista.

Another segment of our population that we are helping to take advantage of new opportunities is our students. Our government is determined to make education accessible to anyone who wants to learn and we continue to lead the way in making post-secondary education one of the most affordable and accessible in Canada, ensuring more students than ever before are completing their post-secondary education in Newfoundland and Labrador, ultimately contributing to a vibrant economy. Students in Newfoundland and Labrador continue to have some of the lowest tuition fees in the country, and I am pleased to say that more students are attending post-secondary institutions in Newfoundland and Labrador than ever before, ultimately contributing to a vibrant economy.

Success is apparent in our high schools students as well, as in the 2012-2013 school year, which saw this Province record its best-ever high school graduation rate, with over 94 per cent of eligible graduates earning a diploma.

We will continue to govern responsibly so we do nothing to compromise the unparalleled growth that has changed the face of Newfoundland and Labrador over the past decade. We have made investments in infrastructure to benefit everyone. Since 2004, more than \$1.6 billion has been invested to upgrade more than 25 per

cent of total roads and highways in this Province.

For our families, communities, and Province, health centres provide essential services that impact all of our lives. We know that health care infrastructure is more than just bricks and mortar, and to that end since 2004 the provincial government has invested in many areas such as for the provision of dialysis services throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, providing a new home support option that expands the definition of family members who can provide care to their loved ones, or creating awareness and promoting understanding within our communities around mental illness by employing 900 people who work to support individuals with mental health and addictions.

We are replacing the Waterford Hospital with a new, modern, state-of-the-art facility to address mental health and addiction services in Newfoundland and Labrador. This will further complement three other mental health and addictions infrastructure projects currently under development in the Province: a youth treatment centre for addictions in Grand Falls-Windsor, a youth treatment centre for complex mental health conditions in Paradise, and an adult addiction centre in Harbour Grace.

There are people in our communities who need extra supports as we continue our work to improve the lives of our citizens who struggle against poverty. The Premier noted in his inaugural speech that to ensure the fight against poverty and inequality intensifies in our Province we never forget the needs of those who are aged, who have disabilities, who are infirmed, and who live on fixed and low incomes.

I am proud to say that this government is committed to supporting important social programs, strong communities, and the health and well-being of children, families, and seniors. Our Poverty Reduction Strategy was introduced in 2006 to set hard goals to reduce poverty and help those who are struggling. We have worked hard. We have worked with community groups. We have listened to their suggestions and

incorporated their ideas into our policies. This work is seeing results. Our poverty rate is below the national average, but we know there is still work to do.

We will continue to help those who need assistance and take a long-term inclusive approach that helps children who live in poverty, people on income support, or people with disabilities to live with dignity and overcome obstacles.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CORNECT: As we continue to grow and prosper as a Province, our government will strive to ensure we all benefit through careful, planned policies. Our government is determined to make the best choices to see everyone benefit, whether it is through our development of Muskrat Falls to put clean, reliable power in place, investments in our fishery that allow us to develop a sustainable and competitive industry, or investments in innovation and research.

We are grateful to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians for the trust they have placed in us and commit to them that we will continue to govern with compassion and responsibility.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CORNECT: To conclude, I move that a Select Committee be appointed to draft an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is my pleasure to rise in this House today to second the motion that a Select Committee be appointed to draft an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank His Honour, the Administrator, for delivering the Throne Speech to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador today.

Before I get into my remarks, I will take this opportunity to commemorate this anniversary of Cougar Flight 491, and the tragedy that occurred off the shores of our Province five years ago on March 12, 2009. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to the seventeen lives lost and to send our thoughts and prayers to those left behind.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend my thanks to the people of the District of Port de Grave who have placed their trust in me to be their voice in the House of Assembly. I am proud and honoured to be their representative in this House.

Mr. Speaker, this year's Throne Speech demonstrates how closely we are listening to the people of our Province. It outlines our priority to put the people of Newfoundland and Labrador first and to serve them better. We are delivering better public services which are focused on getting better results for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The key initiatives outlined in the Speech emphasize our obligation to safeguard and strengthen the important economic gains we have achieved since 2003. It outlines our obligation to maintain this economic growth for future generations.

The voice of every Newfoundlander and Labradorian is important to us, Mr. Speaker. We want to ensure every voice in this Province is heard. Through our new open government initiative, we will increase information and knowledge exchange, enhance our connection to the people of the Province, and strengthen the efficiency of our government. In the months to come, we will bring forward other measures to demonstrate our commitment to openness. We encourage the public to give us their ideas and insights to elevate innovation and economic productivity in our Province.

Mr. Speaker, enabling everyone to share the wealth from our resources is important to us. The sound financial management of this government has enabled us to invest

strategically in areas that matter most to the future of our Province. We believe our children and our young families are the cornerstone for our future; therefore, we will continue to invest in initiatives to strengthen our child care services, our early literacy programs, and promote our anti-bullying campaigns, as well as our Safe and Caring Schools programs. We will also continue to support many other important initiatives which focus on the safety and well-being of our children, including our commitment to support affordable housing requirements for those families who are most in need.

Mr. Speaker, ensuring that seniors have the quality of care and life they so richly deserve has been a priority of this government from day one. The seniors of our Province, our parents and our grandparents, represent a vital element of our society. They are the people who cared for us, nurtured us, and guided us through life to become who we are today.

Since we came to government, we have invested heavily in our health care system. We remain committed to identifying and implementing better ways to improve the health and well-being of our seniors and all people of our Province. Our investments include a variety of initiatives in the area of family caregiving and long-term care. These initiatives will allow our seniors the flexibility to remain with their families or in their own homes longer. An important initiative that will be implemented in 2014 is the Paid Family Caregiving Option which will increase a new home support client's flexibility and choice for care by making it easier for adults to hire a family member.

Mr. Speaker, major investments are continuing in health care and long-term care infrastructure. Our government will continue to build a more competitive economy by supporting policies to encourage businesses to invest and grow, thus supporting job growth and providing opportunities to the people of our Province right here at home.

Mr. Speaker, in my own district, the fishery continues to be the economic engine of the region. Through recent announcements by our

government, there is optimism in my district for the fishery of the future.

We will continue to support important social programs under our Poverty Reduction Strategy. We will continue to identify and implement strong community initiatives and constantly improve the health and well-being of children, families, and seniors. These are the issues that truly matter to the residents of the Province that we represent.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a privilege for me to be here today and I do so with the support, as other members have mentioned, of my own district, that being Humber Valley. I also want to thank His Honour Chief Justice Green for gracing us with his presence today and also acknowledge our hon. Premier Marshall as he sits here today in his new role in this Legislature. He is the eleventh Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, and it is an historic day for our Province. I have noticed in the three years that I have been here now, he has moved from this chair to this chair to this chair, so the hon. House Leader better be careful.

All of us were very proud of Kaetlyn Osmond and the silver medal performance from Sochi that we all watched. Kaetlyn, of course, was an inspiration to many young athletes around the Province and this inspiration was very obvious for all of us who had the privilege to attend the ceremonies in Clarenville and watched our young athletics as they competed. What a great job Clarenville did as host of the 2014 Winter Games!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BALL: I want to thank Clarenville and the volunteers for hosting and doing such a magnificent job.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to mention that today is a solemn day for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Five years ago today, seventeen lives were lost offshore when, as we know, Cougar 491 crashed into the Atlantic Ocean and there was just one survivor. Tonight, I will be attending the memorial service which will be held here in St. John's, along with other members of the Official Opposition caucus.

The importance of safety for all our offshore workers is top of mind for us each and every day, but even more so today as we stand with the families who lost loved ones and the communities that are still mourning.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne has outlined government's vision for the upcoming session of the House of Assembly. As Leader of the Official Opposition, it is my duty to the people of the Province and to their House of Assembly that I offer my thoughts as we collectively work together to secure a brighter and prosperous future.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are tired of being told one thing, only to realize that this government will do something very different. Just recently I spoke to a woman in Stephenville, and she has been around a long time. Mr. Speaker, this woman felt compelled to tell me her thoughts about the current government and its situation. In fact, after eleven years of hearing some of the same messages coming from many of the same people, this long-time resident of Stephenville told me that it was time to change the story. Yet, she made it clear that it may prove to be a difficult challenge.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is like the old saying: a leopard does not change his spots. Mr. Speaker, this is a tired government and no longer listens to the people of this Province. In fact, this government has paid little heed to its own series of pre-Budget consultations which they limited to just nine locations around the Province,

cutting that down from eleven just last year. The Premier even admitted publicly that he has heard much of this or he has heard a lot of this before.

In fact, the Premier has delivered so many Budgets that he revealed to *The Telegram* that the people who attended the pre-Budget consultations, the Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who took their own time, in many cases spent their own money to travel distances for a brief five-minute presentation, that they were there to lobby for their pet projects. Perhaps they were there to make a compelling argument, but this government has heard all of that before.

Mr. Speaker, it is my view that a Throne Speech is like a promise to the people, and we all know the best way to judge the reliability of a promise is to look at the history of the promises made before. So, were they kept or were they not? I think if we go back and take a look at last year's Throne Speech, last year's promises to our people, we will get a very good gauge of how much stock we should put in to this year's.

As an example, in 2013 the Throne Speech claimed that critical infrastructure had been repaired or replaced, and we are continuing to improve strategic infrastructure. Yet if we go back to 2004, government announced an eight-year plan that called for 234 bridge projects. Ten years later, 58 per cent have been addressed. According to the Auditor General in 2014, the number of bridges in poor overall condition has increased by 93 per cent since 2003. A total of 154 bridges still have an overall poor rating. You call that a strategy; I call it failing our communities.

Last year government left the seven larger communities out of the MOG formula, yet the further funding remains uncertain for those communities. In fact, Mr. Speaker, according to last year's Throne Speech, this government said they "are running the government the way a sound business is run – in accordance with effective management principles." Just weeks ago it was revealed publicly that this government cannot even implement effective

oversight on the Muskrat Falls Project, neglecting to review a report by the sole independent engineer who was hired to ensure the project comes in on time and on budget.

Now, incredibly, government admitted that nobody in the Department of Natural Resources is doing detailed oversight on the Muskrat Falls Project. It was not necessary, they said; Nalcor has the experts to do that. Now, Nalcor, a Crown Corporation that only reports once a year, not quarterly, like many large corporations do and that has a board of directors, including their chairperson, that in reality – and this is not about the individuals, I want to make this quite clear, but there is no expertise on that board, neither technical nor otherwise, to manage a project of this size. Yet this government is satisfied that the board of directors at Nalcor provides sufficient oversight on a project that will cost the taxpayers and ratepayers of our Province at least \$6.9 billion, and that is without any significant overruns.

Now, Mr. Speaker, does that sound like a good business practice to you or to anyone? I cannot help but shake my head at the sheer irresponsibility of not providing this oversight.

Mr. Speaker, the list can go on and on, but I will use one more example. In last year's Speech from the Throne, this government was adamant in saying that we cannot borrow for day-to-day spending and send the bill to whom? To our children down the line. Yet ten months later, government said that they would likely need to go to the bond market to pay for day-to-day government operations, borrowing more money during our golden age.

Mr. Speaker, where are those concerns for our children now? Instead this government cannot undo the mess that has already been created. As a result it will be our children and our children's children who will pay the price.

Mr. Speaker, this government has no clear vision for the future of Newfoundland and Labrador. This government will soon deliver their eleventh Budget –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible) surpluses.

MR. BALL: We will get to the surpluses.

An effective and responsible government should focus on adding certainty to the budgeting process. Government's defence for the inaccurate Budget predictions has always been: Well, it is the oil prices or it is oil production. So why not just remove those revenues from general budgeting? Real leadership in government should include being collaborative and open to suggestions on how to better manage our physical realities.

A smart, visionary government would separate volatile natural resource revenues from stable revenues like tax revenue. A strategic government would understand that natural resource revenue should be reserved for one-time spending while accounting for stable revenues for long-term planning and spending commitments. It is a simple solution with some legitimacy to the budgeting process, a solution that would result in actual effective fiscal management.

Mr. Speaker, government likes to claim it is addressing the critical shortage of skilled workers – and we heard that today – that is currently facing our Province, yet in just six short years industry will be in desperate need for 70,000 workers, the majority because of retirements. Government has done little to prepare our workforce to meet those demands. In fact, instead of working with college graduates in apprenticeship programs to obtain journeyperson certification, we still are hearing accounts of credentials not being recognized right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Repeatedly we hear that trained Labradorians and Aboriginals are not being given priority on resource-based jobs in their own backyard. Mr. Speaker, this government is satisfied with minimum benefits instead of reaching for maximum benefits, and it shows. By that I mean there is a threshold that is created within the benefits agreement. It seems to me they are satisfied to say, well, we are meeting the

threshold, when what we should be doing is maximizing on those opportunities.

Last year I sat in this House and listened to the same government claim that it had the best student aid program in the country – it was said again today – a promise that even today the government keeps insisting. Yet today there are post-secondary students across the Province wondering if they will see an increase in tuition fees. So today I challenge the government to make the commitment and reassure those students that there will remain a tuition freeze. In your Throne Speech today it mentions 2004. Well, let us go back a few years because it was a Liberal Administration that introduced that. As a matter of fact, they even rolled it back.

These students are the workforce that will drive the provincial economy. They are the same ratepayers who will pay for the megaprojects. They are the skilled workers who will attract future business to our Province and who will drive the potential for economic development. Mr. Speaker, post-secondary students have potential to influence population growth and reverse population decline.

The Conference Board of Canada predicts that the population will decline by 45,000 by 2035. Statistics Canada revealed just last month that Newfoundland and Labrador is the only province to see three years of negative natural increase, more deaths than births. Now, Mr. Speaker, I have to ask: What plan does this government have to reverse that trend? It is not the Population Growth Strategy, which has yet to produce any results. It is not the Provincial Nominee Program or increased immigration, as government slashed the budget for the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism just last year.

So let us be clear, when it comes to jobs, however, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians should get first priority. The economic outlook for our Province should be good. We should have a sustainable economic plan that will grow wealth based on the sound investments. Instead, this government is intent on mere self-promotion. I will tell you why.

Just recently, my office asked government what I thought was really a simple question: how much money they spent on marketing and advertising. It seemed to be a very simple question. This is the answer: It is going to cost you \$1,600 and four weeks to gather what would be basic budgetary line items. Now do you wonder why there is no oversight at Muskrat Falls? How many millions of taxpayer's money is actually spent on marketing if it will take weeks to calculate it? For every dollar spent on government propaganda there is one less dollar for health care, for community groups, for education, and for all the things that people need to succeed.

There is an old saying that says self-praise is no praise at all. What is the point of making a strategic plan for the future of a government if there is no strategic action? Mr. Speaker, after ten years of more money than any other government in our history, they have broken the bank and will have to borrow to make ends meet.

Poor planning has been really a hallmark of this government, and it appears that it is only getting worse. This winter, thousands across the Province faced a very real crisis – you can call it a disruption, an inconvenience or whatever – when blackouts lasted for days. In my opinion that was a crisis. It left young and old in the dark without heat and light. There was millions and millions of damage done to both public and private property. Businesses lost money, people lost wages, and on the coldest days of the year 190,000 people were left in the dark. We had seniors who were left without heat, and everyone was questioning the reliability of our energy system; a crisis which we have since learned continues to threaten residents right here in Newfoundland and Labrador, in a Province that commonly has freezing temperatures and unpredictable weather conditions. People of the Province were given two hours of warning, but we know that others knew well in advance. Mr. Speaker, this tells me, when you accept those scenarios, that this government has lost its way.

This brings me of course to the infamous Bill 29. I guess you have heard from today's Throne

Speech the government has had an awakening of sorts. It is under review; almost two years have passed since we led the record filibuster on this piece of draconian legislation. Since then we have had hon. members opposite zealously defend it, their belief that Bill 29 is the best way to ensure reasonable protection of privacy and access to information.

In last year's Throne Speech they even claimed that Bill 29 is what? It is the proper balance that preserves a right to know while protecting privacy and personal information. Mr. Speaker, if Bill 29 is wrong now and requires a review, as this government is now saying, it had to be wrong before.

What are we to believe? That the government was powerless to make a stand while the former Premier was in office, or no one had the courage to step up? Mr. Speaker, there is really no need to review Bill 29, just bury it. That is what we would do.

Allow me to tell you something else about Bill 29. It does not say government cannot release information to which people are entitled. It does not say that. It simply says they do not have to. If government is serious about its new found respect for our people, they should do the right thing, do it now, do it today, and repeal Bill 29, unless, of course, this review is nothing more than just an attempt to sweep away their history of ignoring the will of the people.

Mr. Speaker, the impact of the decisions being made by this government extends just beyond public confidence. The lack of transparency and accountability is also influencing how business views government. Confidence and trust in government are vital to encouraging growth and sustaining prosperity into the future.

This government seems unaware of the fiscal realities of the Province and appears oblivious to the possibility of long-term projections. How can government effectively manage the financial future when they cannot even keep track of their own numbers? Yet, the fact that there is no longer any confidence in government to manage our fiscal bottom line, government has failed to

diversify the provincial economy and our Province still has the highest unemployment rate in the country.

Industries which have provided for the Province in the past, such as the fishery, the forestry, and small and medium-size businesses have been left to fend for themselves. These have traditionally been areas which have pumped economic development into rural areas in our Province; however, they feel abandoned.

Not only are they not investing in rural economic development, they are removing any potential for growth in many rural areas. The economic drivers that have been in place for decades are disappearing and frontline programs and services are being cut.

Just before Christmas, we learned that government failed to deliver on programs and services it had committed to in last year's Budget. In fact, a realized savings of \$280 million is because government did not get the money out the door to invest in promised infrastructure programs and services; that was in the mid-year update.

Mr. Speaker, this government has forgotten, maybe ignored the first principle of government and that is to serve the people. It is that principle that guides the Official Opposition. There are better ways of running our Province. In the months ahead our caucus will share our plans as we invite input into those plans. We will listen to people.

Everything we do will be predicated on one of our core principles on this side of the House. The one that I personally hold to the highest possible regard and which I hope will define our government should we have the honour and privilege to be chosen to lead is this: people matter, what they care about matters, how they feel about things matter, what inspires them and disappoints them matter, what they believe matters, and their vision for their own communities matter.

This government has worked very hard to move away from our people. A government that we

would lead would bring our people close again. That is the way it should be in a democracy. We need to draw on the ideas from people. We want their input and we need to give them the opportunity to share their views to those who are elected to serve them.

We know there are challenges ahead but since when have Newfoundlanders and Labradorians been afraid of challenges? We have been facing them for over 500 years. It was always better when we faced those challenges together and when we faced them as a community. We need to get back to that. Under our government, any government that I would lead, we will. Not only is that the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do. That is how we build a smarter economy. That is how we develop creative solutions for our towns, our cities, and our municipalities. We talk about harnessing the vast energy resources of our Province, but our greatest resource is our people. Let us build on that resource. Together we can accomplish anything and we can face those challenges.

I will give you an example of what this means about working together. If you practice including people – and the example I will share is last summer I hosted a health care round table. We brought in health care professionals from over thirty groups in this Province. They said it was the first time since the mid-1990s that they had been brought together for this kind of consultation. The common theme was that we can do much better in health care and, get this, they were not there lobbying for their own projects or for a pet project, or they were not looking for more money to be pumped in to the system. They said the money was already in the system; all we had to do was a smarter job spending it. They all said that they could do more under a right plan. That is what can happen when you reach out to people instead of shutting them out.

My colleagues and I are in the process of developing such a plan. It is a very aggressive health care strategy that will also include input from front-line workers. Front-line workers, well, they know the system, they work in the system, and they know how to help fix it.

Working together we can do this. Health care consultations are just the beginning of our plan to work with people.

In today's world of social media and instant communication there is no excuse for not including people in the process of government, but you must want to do it and you must be ready to do it because today if you do not listen you cannot lead. We will listen, Mr. Speaker, and we will lead. We will lead a Province-wide conversation on a host of other issues affecting the people of our Province including job creation strategies in our rural communities that will include a plan for youth employment because we know more and more that many of our young people are deciding they want to stay home. They want to live in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We need a sensible plan for improving our infrastructure, our bridges and roads, which are becoming a threat to safety. We need to develop a new energy plan that looks at all the energy resources including offshore natural gas, wind power, small hydro, and all the other alternatives. We need a sound and sensible energy conservation plan. If this government had such a plan in place this winter, dark NL, as it has now become known, would never have happened.

We need to look at exploration off Labrador, the North Coast of Newfoundland, and of course from the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Our energy plan should reflect changes in our energy markets and address energy security, reliability, and conservation. All of this is key to building a smart economy for the next generation. We can do this together. I can tell you that is not a slogan; that is a commitment from the Official Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, today's Speech from the Throne has given the people of Newfoundland and Labrador a lot to think about. They will again seek answers from a government that has failed repeatedly to provide any for over a decade. The people of our Province want hope and they want a government they can put their trust in, a government that puts people at the core of its

policies. We have not seen this and unfortunately we have not heard this in today's Speech from the Throne.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

It is an honour for me today to stand and once again respond to the Speech from the Throne. Before doing that I do want to congratulate Premier Marshall on his new role in the House of Assembly. It is an honour to be here with him and with my colleagues as we take time to reflect on what has been presented to us today.

I have listened to the Speech, I have listened to the response from the Leader of the Official Opposition, and in listening to the Speech I kept wanting to find new things. I wanted to hear something that was going to give some concrete hope to people in the Province. Unfortunately, I did not hear that much new. I heard a lot of words and they are words I have been listening to now since 2006 when I first came to this House of Assembly. What I keep looking for is more action.

During the month of February, I spent several weeks actually, until last week, going around the Province to the communities, listening to people in the Province, listening to what they had to say. What I want to do today is reflect some of what I heard. One of the things I promised them when I held meetings and sat and listened to them was that I would say back to the government what they said to me. I think this is probably my first opportunity to do that, and so that is what I am going to do.

What did people in the Province say to me as I went around? The government says they want to hear what people are thinking and they want to hear what people are saying, so what did they say to me? I feed it back to the government.

One of the things everywhere I went, it did not matter where it was – Labrador, Central Newfoundland, the Bonavista Peninsula, the Burin Peninsula, and the Avalon Peninsula – everywhere I went people talked to me about homelessness. They talked to me about the difficulty to get adequate housing in the Province and the difficulties with regard to rental properties. Whether you are talking about being able to buy a home or being able to rent, in all our major centres now in this Province we have a major issue with regard to homelessness.

I know the Speech from the Throne talks about the report that is being done with regard to vulnerable people. Well, I think the vulnerable people are much larger than what the government is envisioning in that report. We heard about that report in the last Speech from the Throne, and this Speech from the Throne is telling us it is still coming. We are going to get it. Well, I am waiting to see if that report that comes is going to deal with the fact that we have young students couch surfing everywhere around the Province because they cannot pay for rent, that we have low-income seniors couch surfing because they cannot pay for rent, and that we have poverty in the Province because we have Income Support that is inadequate and because we have a minimum wage that is inadequate.

I want to tell a story, one story that was told to me. I will not tell them all, but this one because it was so stark and so shocking. A volunteer from a food bank in Carbonear who came out to a town hall I had in that town talked about the devastation she felt when she went to a senior's home with some food one day. That senior woman had not had food for two days and was eating ice cubes to take care of the hunger pang because the chewing fools the stomach and the stomach thinks it is getting food. It may be taking care of the hunger pang, but it is not nourishing the physical needs, psychological needs, and emotional needs of that senior person who is doing that. The person from the food bank told me that was not the first time she had heard of people doing that.

We have an inadequate Income Support in the Province. The Speech from the Throne talks about listening to people, that people are going to be brought into the decision-making process and the open government initiatives, that they are going to get information, and that they are going to be listened to. Well, we had a report with regard to minimum wage and the report with regard to minimum wage gave some very concrete ways in which we could raise people who were making low wages above the poverty line. The government ignored all the recommendations that are in that report.

We also had some years ago a report that this government received with regard to Income Support. Again, the government ignored one of the most basic things in that Income Support report. One of the things it said was that, yes, every year the Income Support should go up according to the cost of living. Government did that, but what they did not do was the most important thing that was in the report: that the Income Support had to be brought up first to a level where people would be above the poverty line. From then on you would then raise it each year according to the cost of living. They forgot that first recommendation.

When I hear the government talking about how people are going to be involved, they are going to be listened to, and they are going to be involved in decision making, I say you have not done it yet. You are going to have to do something to really prove to people that their voice means something, because they are not being listened to.

Seniors are out there not able to make ends meet, as I have just said. They cannot pay both for their drugs as well as food, as well as heat, when they have electricity as their heating source, for example. It is absolutely impossible for people who have no other income but the various Income Support mechanisms of our system to live lives that are lives where they feel they live in a community that understands what social justice is. The community that I am experiencing is not a community of social justice.

I do not have a lot of time, so I am just going to hit some main points. Another message that I have received – I meet with town councils, I meet with chambers of commerce. In both cases I heard them say to me, we are really losing when it comes to economic development. Not everywhere. I am not saying everywhere I went is saying that, but some key places are. What they said to me is that it is the loss of the infrastructure that used to be there to help with economic development that they are recognizing as a major loss.

They are talking about the loss of the Rural Economic Development Boards. This government got rid of the RED Boards without an analysis of things that were going well with those RED Boards. Maybe there some that was not being that active, or some that were not doing that well, but an awful lot were the backbone of the economic development that was going on in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. What some of the town councils and chambers of commerce said to me is, we have got to have a new infrastructure put back in place to really help us or we are going to lose more and more communities. That is something that I have heard, again, from town councils, and from chambers of commerce.

What I have heard from people is that we have such an inadequate infrastructure when it comes to social programs. We have bits and pieces, but we do not have complete programs that are really meeting people's needs, the need for an early childhood education and child care plan that is put in place, not just words that continually are thrown out to us, but nothing being done about it. They are tired of nothing being done.

We need a publicly-funded regulated and administered home care program. The little bit that government is doing when it talks about the funding for family caregivers is such a small part of what a home care program needs to be. There is probably a place for that in a full program. This government does not have a plan. This is the ongoing problem I have, is the lack of plans.

Once again we have a Speech from the Throne that talks about strategies in three, four, or five places. We are going to have strategies thrown at us again. My question is will those strategies once again be only words that do not have concrete plans attached to them?

When we talk about home care, I have to talk about that in relationship to long-term care. They are different. You can have long-term care that is done in home care, but home care is one whole program itself. Our long-term care needs are in a mess. I know government can throw out as it did here this afternoon in response to the Speech from the Throne some of the examples of long-term care facilities that are being created, but there has been no analysis of are those long-term care facilities meeting our needs? We know they are not. We know the one in Corner Brook is not. We are in a mess with the numbers of people who are in acute care beds in a hospital out there. The same way in Gander, that small hospital in Gander has over twenty-five people in acute care beds. Yet, there is no plan for taking care of that.

The new facility that is going up here in St. John's in my own district, the new Hoyles Escasoni, is already not going to meet the needs of the people in this district, in this whole area, this region. What is this government talking about? Where is its plan for getting rid of the about 250 people who are on a waiting list for long-term care as we increase in numbers when it comes to an aging population needing care? I do not see it. I do not see the plan and this is what really bothers me.

In Labrador, there are 20,000 people or more. It does not even have a long-term care facility. They cannot even hope to go to a long-term care facility even in the Big Land. We know how difficult it is in Labrador for people to get around. They do not have a long-term care facility. In Labrador City right now with the hospital there we know there are people in that hospital. What are the plans for the people in the old hospital when the new one operates? I am told there is not a plan. That was presented to me by people in Labrador City and in Wabush, Mr. Speaker. I put those things out to

the government. The government wants to hear. This is what I have been hearing and this is what I present to them.

We need a government that understands what the true diversification of economy means. Government talks about that in the Speech from the Throne once again. True diversification is not continuing to throw money totally into huge development projects. That is not the only way. Unless we are starting to look at diversification that looks at creative ways to come up with new initiatives in our fishery, for example, creative ways to make money in something that is different from huge developments where we have to put in so much money, such as Muskrat Falls, then we are not going to develop as a Province. We are not going to be able to look down the road and say we are going to be secure in twenty-five years' time when it comes to an economy that can no longer depend totally on the income from oil and gas, for example.

If we continue to put our eggs in the basket of huge development, then we are going to continue to letting people down. The fear of not being able to maintain what is in our economy will always be there. I think that is what is holding us back. If we start putting our social programs in place that I think need to be there, then we have to be sure we have an economy that can sustain that infrastructure. If we continue with an economic plan that is based solely or principally - I will not say solely, it is not solely, I take that back but principally - on putting money into huge developments, then we are going to be in trouble in trying to even improve our infrastructure with regard to social programs and keeping it in place.

We have an aging population and we are not doing anything about it. We are not seriously putting in place a plan that is going to keep our population vital and alive. We have to have a plan that looks at all of the pieces, the economic pieces and the social pieces. All of these have to go together in ensuring that we are going to have a society and an economy that can sustain itself.

There is nothing wrong with staying as a small group of people. We may stay at 520,000, but as

long as we have new life coming into that 520,000, as long as we have ideas for how we do that, then we have a problem, but if we can maintain ourselves as a small population, making sure there is new life coming in, making sure that we can take care of people as they live longer, if we can do that then that is fine, but I do not see a plan for that and that is what really upsets me.

I want to name two or three specific things from the Speech from the Throne. The section in the Speech from the Throne that deals with violence, I found very interesting. I was glad to see the recognition of the need for violence prevention, et cetera; but I cannot let that rest without pointing out that this very same government, in the Budget of the fiscal year that we are ending, closed down the Family Violence Intervention Court, yet they come now and give us a Speech from the Throne talking about their great concern around violence and they talk about children.

The Family Violence Intervention Court was a family violence intervention court and children were made safer because of that court. If this government is serious, then I am calling upon them to bring that court back in. People in this Province want that court put back in place, and not just a court here in St. John's but that court which was a pilot project to be put around the Province so that women and children will be safe.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, that I want to bring up – and maybe the Premier will be happy that I am pointing out something I am happy with – is the whistle-blower legislation. I would like to point out that it was in 2007, during the campaign for that year's election, that the then Premier of this government responded to a call from me with regard to the need for whistle-blower legislation by saying that he did not have any problems with it. He does not see why we would not do it. He personally was strongly in favour of it and had no objection whatsoever and promised that in the next session of the House, in response to my call for it, that it would be brought in.

Now, it has taken almost seven years, but it is happening. I very much thank the government for finally doing that because our workers need that protection. They need to be able to talk about things that are going wrong and know that they are safe and that their jobs are safe, so I am glad of that.

With regard to another point that is in the Speech from the Throne, it has to do with the independent review that the government is talking about with regard to access to information. If they had not brought in Bill 29, they would not be doing the review. They are saying they are doing a review that is called for legislatively earlier than it is called for – look how good we are. They are doing it because they made such a mess by bringing in Bill 29 and have created such a response in this Province to it that they know they better do something to take care of it.

They know there is an election coming up; we all know that. So I am not missing the point about what this is all about here. All they have to do is get rid of the bill that they brought in and go back to the legislation that we had, which was good legislation – a couple of things needed to be improved in it. That is all they need to do, but now they are masking it by this independent review.

The next point I would like to make – and it is probably my final point, Mr. Speaker – has to do with what is referred to under the piece on the recognition of Cougar and the disaster that we had five years ago. I, too, want to recognize that disaster here today, and recognize the families and the one person who did survive. I am sure that many of us are going to be at the remembrance service tonight.

The government talks about that they want to “urge the Government of Canada to work with our government in commissioning a comprehensive review of marine safety in waters off Newfoundland and Labrador with a view to ensuring that Canada... becomes the global leader in marine safety.” I would like to suggest that the recommendation from Commissioner Wells about having an

independent safety authority to deal with the offshore is what would do what they are talking about. It is not a review that we need. We need that recommendation from Commissioner Wells to be followed. This government has said it believes in that recommendation. I see this as a backing back from pushing for that recommendation with the federal government. I think they have to publicly be continuing to push with the federal government the recommendation from Commissioner Wells, which he still stands by, and which exists in other countries. The countries that have it are the countries who are the leaders when it comes to safety in their offshore.

So, Mr. Speaker, these are the main points; there will be many more that I will make over the months of debate that we will have, both on this Speech and legislation. One thing that struck me – and I say this with a bit of humour – one of the principles that the Speech is based on, I want to pick out: the principle of perseverance. I wish the government well in their perseverance. All I can say is that is the principle that is going to guide me as well, and seeing the whistle-blower legislation shows me that perseverance pays off. I will keep up on the issues that I have been raising in the House, some of which I raised here this afternoon.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER MARSHALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Before I begin, please allow me to express my heartfelt condolences to those who lost loved ones on this day five years ago. The loss of Cougar 491 flight is a tragedy that all of us felt in the Province. Our seafaring history has taught us the toll of sorrow that the sea demands, and today we all stand in remembrance of those who lost their lives on Cougar Flight 491. We know that for the family and friends the grief is a daily

companion. So, on behalf of all of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, I extend our heartfelt condolences.

As an aside – I probably should not say this but since I am only going to be doing this once – I always note that in the Speech from the Throne that after we have the flowery language in the Speech from the Throne and the Lieutenant Governor or the Administrator leaves, the military leave, and the police leave because they know what the debate is going to like afterwards, but I have to commend the clergy, they are prepared to stay and listen (inaudible) because they know God is on their side.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER MARSHALL: I want to join other people in expressing my thanks to the Administrator, the Chief Justice of Newfoundland and Labrador, Derek Green, for stepping in on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor to deliver the Speech from the Throne. I do not think that happens very often. It is a rare occasion when someone in the Province other than the Lieutenant Governor delivers a Throne Speech, but I think in this case it is an appropriate coincidence.

Chief Justice Green recommended whistle-blower legislation to the House of Assembly when the government called upon him to overhaul the operations of the House. We implemented that recommendation, this House of Assembly did that previously, and today one of the most significant initiatives that we are announcing in this year's Speech from the Throne is the whistle-blower legislation for the public service.

Let me also thank those who attended today's ceremony: the justices and the judges of our courts, civic leaders, leaders from business, labour, academia, the church, the community, cultural leaders, and indeed citizens from all walks of life.

What brings people here today is not the pomp and circumstance, but it is the fact that this is the people's house. What we are addressing here is

the governance and the future of the Province that we all share, our dreams, our aspirations, and objectives, as well as actions – as the Leader of the Third Party said, she talked about speech but it is about actions – to chart a sound course forward. Considering the important message in the Speech from the Throne about open government, it is very reassuring to see the people come together and demonstrate an interest in participating in the governance of our wonderful Province.

Let me also thank the mover and the seconder of the motion that a select committee be appointed to draft an Address in Reply to the speech, the Members for Port au Port and Port de Grave. I thank them for their thoughtful words and for their service. I thank all members of the caucus for their service also.

For a period of about five months I will have the privilege of leading this caucus while our party undertakes a leadership process. It is as caucus leader that I have truly come to appreciate the people with whom I serve. We are doing important work here for the people of the Province and it is quite literally not possible for us to do any of those things without your valuable participation and support.

Let me also thank the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Third Party for your words. I may not agree with everything you say. I guarantee you I do not agree with everything you said today. I acknowledge and respect your constitutional responsibility to challenge the government. This is how our system of government works. Ours is a parliamentary democracy where the challenges are necessary and challenges should be welcomed.

I believe that governments do better when our feet are held to the fire. Sometimes we can even change or adjust our approach, or even reverse our decisions in the light of the challenges that we hear. Perfection is not a human quality. For that reason perfection cannot be a quality of the institutions we form to govern ourselves.

We bring our best to the table and we strive to do our best with every challenge we face. From

time to time people do err and so do the governments. What is important is that we constantly listen, we constantly review, we constantly learn, and we constantly adjust to changing circumstances so we can all continually progress towards the goals that we share

The five themes of this year's Throne Speech can be summarized in five words: perseverance, sacrifice, justice, oversight and openness. With respect to perseverance, I had a wonderful privilege as Premier of opening, on behalf of the people of the Province, the Newfoundland and Labrador Winter Games in Clarenville a while ago. If you want to feel confident in the future of this Province, if you want to feel confident in the future of Newfoundland and Labrador, attend one of these gatherings of our Province's young people. One after another they told me that they are excited about the Province and the opportunities that are opening up around us. They have worked hard to get where they are as athletes, and they are willing to work just as hard to become educated and to build a future for themselves.

We need to engage them in building a better Province for all of us. That is one of the reasons that I am very pleased about the initiative for open government which the Minister Responsible for the Office of Public Engagement will soon launch. It means reaching out to people where they are in their communities, in their schools, and in virtual space thorough social media. It means engaging them, not for show but for real.

Modern technology gives us vehicles to let people take an active role in decision-making, an active role in governing. Just as there are young people who dedicate themselves to excellence in sport, there are youth who pursue excellence in science and in math, excellence in law and public affairs, excellence in art and in business and entrepreneurship. Not just young people, citizens of all ages, including seniors, are passionate about making a difference in their communities and in their Province. We need to tap into that passion and give people a way to channel their energy and pushing forward as we

continue the wonderful transformation that is happening in our Province.

With respect to sacrifice, I had the opportunity to join young people in visiting the sites of battles in Europe where 100 years ago young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians made enormous sacrifices for their country and their values that defines us like freedom, democracy, and justice.

It is terrible the price that so many had to pay to wrestle the world back from the brink of insanity. It is hard to believe the evil that humans are capable of doing. Thankfully that evil is balanced and so often outweighed by the good that people are capable of doing, and are so often prepared to do at great sacrifice to themselves. I am proud we are bringing more of our young people to Europe to feel what I and others have felt in standing there, standing where once they stood.

I am proud of the way that these young pilgrims interact with aged veterans and make genuine connections despite the years that separate them. Young people recognize very quickly the soldiers they honour were in many cases their own age, teenagers, when they were called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice. The magnitude of that sacrifice weighs heavily on all who go there. You come home forever changed and strongly motivated to do something meaningful with the gift of freedom that those soldiers purchased for us at so great a cost. You never take your freedom for granted again and that is how it should be.

I am going to tell a story that I said in this House but not to MHAs, it was to the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Parliament here a short time ago. My father was a commanding officer at one point of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment. As a young man, as a Canadian infantry officer cadet he landed on the beaches of Normandy in 1944 on D-Day. When he would tell me about those stories he would always say we did not care what someone's religion was, we did not care what the colour of one's skin was, we did not care about their cultural background. He said all we cared about is whether they had on

their shoulder a patch that said one word and the one word was Canada.

Many years later when I came here, Premier Danny Williams, knowing about my father's involvement with the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, asked me to head the delegation that the Newfoundland government send every year to Beaumont Hamel where we follow the Trail of the Caribou. At least that year there were four teenage girls who went. They had won competitions in poetry, playwriting, and essay writing. There were four elderly veterans, there were some members of the legion, and there were some government officials.

We went around and followed the Trail of the Caribou. Every place in Northern France and Belgium where there is a statue of the Caribou there, not just the one at Beaumont Hamel or the one here. It was amazing to see the group bond together, and how as we went around the teenagers would look after the elderly veterans and the elderly veterans would look after the teenagers.

Finally we ended up on July 1 at Beaumont Hamel for the big ceremony. There were hundreds if not over 1,000 people there, and there was the flag party and there were the bands; because at Beaumont Hamel on July 1 it was not just the Newfoundland Regiment that went in; there were other regiments as well – earlier, and in battles later – so there were people from all over Europe there in addition to us.

It rained that morning and then the sun was starting to come through. The band played the French national anthem *La Marseillaise*, a very stirring national anthem as you know. Then the French ambassador, or the French prefect, I should say, spoke and then got into her limousine and drove away. The band played *O Canada*, and the Canadian ambassador came and he spoke. Then our little group of four teenagers, four veterans, a couple of legionnaires, and some government officials did not have the band to do this, but we sang at the top of our voices the Ode. You can imagine standing there singing the Ode, “where once

they stood...”, standing right there. I do not mind telling you, the tears flowed.

As we left and the ceremony ended, what I remember is that I was trying to clear my eyes. The sun was shining in my eyes and it was the shine reflecting off medals of Canadian soldiers, sailors, and air force people, young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are serving in the Canadian Forces and who came up to Beaumont Hamel that day to be with us on that very special day. They were young, they were wearing their uniforms, they had their medals on, and the sun was reflecting off the medals.

They started telling us that many of them were related to people who had lost their lives, their great-grandfathers at Beaumont Hamel many, many years before. They are proud of that heritage, but they were also proud to be in the Canadian Forces. They were also proud to wear the patch on their arm that said one word: Canada. That moment will live with me forever. It was a profound effect on me and it will stay with me as long as I live.

So God guard thee, Newfoundland and Labrador, and vive le Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER MARSHALL: When I was sworn in as the Province’s eleventh Premier, I quoted a line in Deuteronomy that the prophet Moses used to set the highest standards for all who would serve in public office. He said: Justice shall you pursue.

For me, and I think for most people in this Chamber today, justice means social justice. Surely that is a goal worth uniting to achieve.

Social justice means sharing the beliefs that our new-found prosperity more fairly and equitably be distributed so that none are excluded. Sharing effectively means listening to people about the way this prosperity is distributed. It means discovering the reality that people face in this Province when they are aged, infirmed, on

fixed or low incomes, when they have disabilities, or face particular challenges.

The traditional statue representing justice is blindfolded, because justice must be impartial and it must put aside prejudice, but fundamental justice requires open eyes, open ears, and open hearts, so you can truly understand people whose circumstances are different from your own. Empathy is a great driver of social change. You act because you care, you care because you see, and you see because you take time to pay attention.

The Throne Speech outlined some of the specific actions we will take to promote social justice; others will be laid out in the Budget. These will include such initiatives as poverty reduction, violence prevention, and child protection for the most vulnerable in our midst. Social justice also means quality health care, community care, and long-term care for those who need it, as we all will from time to time. Of course, it means education that is accessible, affordable, and accessible to all, even for those who come from the poorest of backgrounds.

We are proud of the efforts that government has taken over the past eight years to freeze tuition and to reform our Student Aid program to make university and college more affordable than virtually anywhere else in this country. Many young people today can scarcely imagine what graduates faced a decade ago when their debt burdens were the size of mortgages, but those who have compared stories with their counterparts across the country realize how different things are here because of the public policy decisions that the Newfoundland and Labrador government has made.

When I was at Grenfell Campus of Memorial University last week to help officially open the new student residence, students came to me and they said thanks to the government and to the taxpayers for making accessible education a priority in this Province. It is not only the students who benefit; all of us will benefit from a well-educated workforce. With a solid education, marketable skills, and healthier bank accounts, these graduates are in a better position

to begin their careers, to start businesses if they so choose, and to seize some of the 70,000 job opportunities that are going to open up, and settle down to build and grow our communities.

With respect to oversight, the natural driver of economic growth is the business sector. Businesses with the capital investments build enterprises that can produce goods and services to sell. Their profits pay salaries, they pay taxes to the government, they generate activity, and they generate wealth, but governments have a role to play as well. We do not leave everything to the private sector.

In all countries of the world, governments play a critical role in setting fiscal policy, economic policy, and trade policy, providing incentives, investment, and support mechanisms. In some of our industries, the government is directly involved, operating state owned enterprises – Norway is a great example – and public utilities, and holding equity or ownership shares in the development projects. Whenever a government is involved, there must be proper oversight to ensure the people's interests are well served.

What Nalcor, the people's energy company owned by all of the people of this Province, is accomplishing now and what they are going to accomplish in the future for Newfoundland and Labrador and the people of this Province is quite phenomenal. As an equity partner in offshore projects, as sponsor of geoscience research, and in developing Muskrat Falls, Nalcor will fuel growth and renewable revenues for the people of the Province that government will take and use for future wealth of the people of the Province of the future.

The Energy Plan vision on which it is grounded is good public policy. Nalcor were told what to do. The plan was given to Nalcor in 2007 and the course that it is now taking is sound. We know this because at every juncture government will be requiring that Nalcor subject its work to scrutiny. The Muskrat Falls Project is the most intensely studied project of our history, and so it ought to be because it is the largest project of our history and because so much is depending for all of us on its success. Its work has stood

up under great scrutiny and oversight that we have brought to bear in its operations thus far and we will continue to provide oversight and additional oversight at every step along the way.

Obviously Nalcor is competing with private and other public sector corporate entities. We have to ensure we do not compromise their competitiveness and cost the company its edge because as Nalcor's owners it is the people of the Province who would bear the adverse consequences. Rather we impose oversight without compromising the security of the information the company provides. We will retain Nalcor's competitive edge while continuing to ensure there is proper external oversight of all the company's work that meets the highest standard of good corporate governance in this country.

Also, due diligence is indispensable for any government. When we allocate business attraction funds or research and development grants we subject applications to analysis to make sure the people's money is well invested. With our mining companies in Labrador West, when they said they needed additional power, we did not rush to do it right away. We took our time. We did our due diligence before approving the third transmission line to the region.

When we were in Wabush meeting with people there about the mine, about the future, people thanked us for making the right decision to promote future mining industry growth in their region because it opens up a new door of opportunity.

When Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, their unions, and their workforce settled on a plan to move the industry forward, past certain challenges to renewed profitability and sustainability, we did our due diligence; we took time to do it, in determining the role that government could play in strengthening this industry and benefiting the many thousands who depend on it.

We invested millions in aquaculture and we understand the enormous private sector funding

our investments were leveraging and the growth that came out of that. We have invested in the sealing industry. Last week I met with the Mayor of Fleur de Lys – a few days ago – and I got a very good lesson in why this was an excellent investment, for I have never met anyone more passionate or buoyant about the industry, or more assertive in seeking buyers in Asia for the seal products that we make right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We have invested, with the co-operation of the federal government, in a fishing renewable fund. Having done our due diligence confirms that it is going to position the industry to seize emerging opportunities in the European marketplace after CETA takes effect. We have been diligent about making investments in agriculture and agrifoods, in tourism, and in other sectors.

Good governance means we have to use our best judgement to make the right choices, with the greatest prospect of success and proper oversight and due diligence to enable us to make those judgements on the basis of hard facts.

Nalcor will be announcing new corporate government measures to increase its oversight of the Muskrat Falls Project and government, during this session, will make available a new oversight protocol that government will enter into with Nalcor to ensure additional oversight that the people of the Province want to see.

With respect to openness, it is a government that functions best when it functions openly and transparently. Soon after coming to office in 2003, government opened the House of Assembly to the Auditor General who had been denied access to here. We enacted the toughest transparency legislation in the Province's history: the Transparency and Accountability Act and the Lobbyist Registration Act. We proclaimed the first Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and we are the only government to work under that legislation.

This access to information and protection of privacy legislation includes a provision requiring a review every five years. It was the first of these five-year reviews that led to Bill 29 in

2012. Even after Bill 29 was passed, the ATIPP Act is among the strongest in the country according to certain agencies. People have told us we are third best in the country, but people are demanding more openness. That is what we are hearing; they are wanting more openness than was provided by ATIPP and Bill 29.

The government functions to serve the people. When the people demand greater openness, then greater openness is what this government is going to deliver. We will commission an independent review of the ATIPP legislation and we will place the review in the hands of independent impartial people with in-depth knowledge of governance, privacy, and access to information law and journalism. Furthermore, the government commits to act on the advice it is given by amending the law, as appropriate, to make ours the most open jurisdiction in this country, if not in the world.

The review is not of Bill 29. The review is of the whole access to information and protection of privacy legislation. That independent committee is only one part of our response. Additionally, the open government initiative will be launched by the Minister Responsible for the Office of Public Engagement. It will be another step forward to release much more information. The release of data will now be routine and people can access when they wish.

Technology enables us to put more information than ever in people's hands. We intend to harness that power. Not just let people see the information that interests them, but also to let them participate more directly in making decisions. We will engage with the people of the Province because if they feel that government is not communicating well enough with them, we will find out from them suggestions and recommendations of how they want government to communicate with them.

We will actively engage people in decision making. We will hear more voices and end up with better decisions that more people are comfortable supporting. People have a greater sense of ownership of policies and programs that they have a hand in developing. There was once

a time in this House of Assembly when the proceedings were not even broadcast, there was no Hansard, and few knew what was happening in the Legislature. How refreshing it is that changed.

Now we have the technology to open things up even more broadly and to bring people into the process even more meaningfully. I think we can all be very excited about this and so are many of the people of whom I have spoken. I especially want our young people to embrace this new approach, just as they are embracing social media in their daily lives, so they grow up feeling more in control of the factors that do affect their lives. The government will listen, people are talking, and we are adjusting course according to what we are hearing. This is what good governance is all about.

There are many initiatives coming this year that are not mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. I asked that the Speech from the Throne be made a little shorter than it had been in the past. Of course if you do not mention certain things, then you are criticized for not mentioning something. So, some of these involve Aboriginal people and I would like to highlight them now.

The government continues to strengthen its relationships with Aboriginal peoples, including through the development of model guidelines that are going to supplement the Aboriginal Consultation Policy. The model guidelines will provide practical, step-by-step guidance to regulators, to industry, to investors and to Aboriginal organizations on how consultations are conducted during regulatory processes such as environment assessments and post-environmental assessment permitting.

This year to strengthen our relationship with Aboriginal peoples the government will release an Aboriginal foundational document which will outline the Province's vision for a principles-based relationship with Aboriginal people built on respect, on honour, and on trust. Also in 2014, government will continue to work on an implementation policy for land claims and self-government agreements.

I could say more but I think, after hearing five speakers before I rose to my feet, you are probably anxious to get to your own feet. So, in any event, it is not about words; it is about actions, the actions that you are going to see during this session. Although my time as Premier of the Province will be brief, I can tell you that the energy level of my government is high and our agenda for action is full.

The House of Assembly is open, the MHAs are back in their seats, so let's all get back to work for the benefit of the people who elected us and let's continue the task of growing opportunities and transferring Newfoundland and Labrador to everything that this wonderful place is capable of becoming.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that a Select Committee be struck to draft an Address of Thanks to be presented to His Honour the Administrator, in reply to the gracious Speech from the Throne with which he has been pleased to open this session of the House.

The members of the Select Committee shall be the Member for the District of Port at Port, the Member for the District of Port de Grave, and the Member for the District of St. John's South.

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'.

Motion carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Given that we are nearing the end of the proceedings, I move, seconded by the Minister

of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the House do now adjourn.

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

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Motion carried.

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

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