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*Speaker: Honourable Ross Wiseman, MHA*

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

**Statements by Members**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today we will have members' statements from the Member for the District of Baie Verte – Springdale; the Member for the District of St. John's Centre; the Member for the District of Cape St. Francis; the Member for the District of Carbonear – Harbour Grace; the Member for the District of Lewisporte, and the Member for the District of Humber Valley.

The hon. the Member for the District of Baie Verte – Springdale.

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

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

From March 5 to March 9, the Baie Verte Peninsula was the place to be. The second annual Shiver Soiree provided lots of winter fun as the residents took advantage of a jam packed fun-filled agenda enabling many communities to get together and enjoy the powdery snow and the natural beautiful landscape that the region offers.

A wide variety of activities ranging from snowshoeing, skating, skiing to Ski-Doo races were all enjoyed by avid winter enthusiasts hailing from all over the peninsula and beyond.

The 2014 Peninsula Shiver Soiree Committee is to be applauded for their stellar work in organizing such a successful event. Members include: Jennifer Whelan, Sandra Shiner, Maud Noble, Molly Mitchell, Jamie Burton, Celia Dicks, Lloyd Hayden, Denis Dupont and Nancy Brown. In addition, local businesses and a strong dedicated group of community minded volunteers are to be commended for their support and leadership.

Founded in 2013 as an initiative of the Dorset Trail Tourism Association, the aim of the

festival was to promote tourism and to bring communities together. Mission accomplished.

Honourable colleagues, please join me in sending congratulations to all involved for such an exciting event.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I am happy to stand in this House to recognize 1 Billion Rising for Justice 2014, an event that took place in my District of St. John's Centre on Thursday, February 12, and what an incredible event it was.

Twenty-two community groups, including women's groups, anti-violence groups and labour groups, along with my office, formed a committee to organize the activities that celebrated and acknowledged the work done to help stop violence against women and to highlight the work that still needs to be done.

We held a community fair with representatives from several NGOs, and we had live entertainment, multicultural food, information booths, dancing and more. It was free and open to the public. Several hundred people participated. It was exhilarating.

One Billion Rising is an international initiative calling for 1 billion people worldwide to rise up, to raise awareness around violence against women, and to push for change. This year's theme, Rise for Justice, invited people everywhere to demonstrate at police stations, courthouses, government buildings, anywhere where women should be able to expect justice. Rise we did, Mr. Speaker. We rose at Confederation Building with speakers and dancers, asking our Premier to reinstate the Family Violence Intervention Court.

Bravo, One Billion Rising St. John's!

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

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

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate a young lady in my district, ten-year-old Emily Hynes, a Grade 5 student at Holy Trinity Elementary in Torbay. Emily won The Telegram Spelling Bee 2014, a competition held at Holy Heart of Mary on February 22.

Emily is one of the youngest ever to win the competition; students from Grade 5 to Grade 8 competed, so Emily still has a few more years yet to compete. The judges said it was one of the most intense spelling bees *The Telegram* has ever taken part in.

Emily practiced up to five pages of words a day preparing for this competition. She won \$2,000, a trophy, and some other prizes for her impressive spelling abilities. Now, Emily qualifies for the Scripps National Spelling Bee to be held near Washington, D.C.

I ask all hon. members in this House to join with me in congratulating Emily and wishing her the best of luck in her future competitions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate three young men from my District of Carbonear – Harbour Grace. They are Anthony Griffin, eleven, Josh Griffin, thirteen, and Andrew Green, fourteen.

Anthony, Josh, and Andrew were chosen as recipients for the WE DAY program, sponsored by Telus, the first teens from this Province to be recognized under the program. WE DAY recognizes youth from thirteen to seventeen years of age who have made a difference to their communities.

Those three young men were rewarded for their efforts through an act of kindness that saw them restore a go-cart belonging to Ben Clarke that had been vandalized. They gathered all the parts and returned the reassembled cart without any desire for reward or recognition.

In September of 2013, the three boys were nominated for an event in Nova Scotia and travelled to Halifax on November 27 to represent Newfoundland and Labrador as part of the WE DAY program.

Mr. Speaker, Anthony, Josh, and Andrew have shown that young people can make a difference in their communities just by doing good deeds.

I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating Anthony, Josh, and Andrew on being recognized as a part of the WE DAY program.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Lewisporte.

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

**MR. VERGE:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a young thirteen-year-old student from Lewisporte. Blake Russell is not your typical teenager. Blake has a great love and passion for the traditions, culture, and the music of Newfoundland and Labrador.

You can find Blake playing his button accordion to the joy of residents in seniors' homes, or providing entertainment at local fundraisers and concerts. He loves the traditional music of our Province. Fergus O'Byrne and Mark Hiscock

have become musical idols to Blake. In August of last year, Blake released his first CD of button accordion music at Citadel House in Lewisporte. It was a great success.

When Blake is not playing his accordion, he is usually on the salmon rivers using his own flies and providing tips on casting to other anglers. In winter, Blake is usually in the woods snaring rabbits or trapping fox, mink, and otter. His furs are sent to the North American Fur Trade Auction and some end up in the European markets.

Honourable members, please join with me in recognizing Blake Russell, a young man who is doing more than his part to keep our culture alive and well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

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

I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate the Pasadena Academy Falcons Senior Boys' Basketball team on winning the thirty-seventh Annual Elwood Invitational Basketball Tournament held at Elwood Regional High School in Deer Lake in December of 2013.

The Falcons went undefeated, completing the tournament with a final 93-63 win over Prince of Wales Collegiate. Mitch Snow led the Falcons in the championship game with twenty-six points.

Three players from the Falcons were honoured with individual awards for their play in the tournament. Nick Pilgrim was named Tournament MVP, Corey Manuel was named Team MVP, and Mitch Snow was named to the All-Star Team for the third consecutive year. Since this win in December, the Falcons have won the Templeton Academy Invitational in Meadows and the regional qualifying

tournament for their provincial 3A basketball tournament.

Mr. Speaker, eight members of the Falcons will finish up their studies at Pasadena Academy this year. It is through athletic events, such as these, that lifelong memories are created for these students. I ask all members to join me in extending congratulations to the Pasadena Falcons Boys' Basketball team on their inspiring play and wish them success in their upcoming provincial 3A Boys' Basketball Tournament this weekend at Templeton Academy in Meadows.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

#### Statements by Ministers

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

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

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

It is with sadness today that I rise in this hon. House to express my sincere condolences to the family and friends of the late Ambrose Peddle, who recently passed away at the age of eighty-six. As the Member for Humber East, I am honoured to stand and pay tribute to another son of Corner Brook and Grand Falls.

Ambrose Peddle dedicated his life to public service. He was a municipal leader, he was a Member of this House of Assembly, and he was also a Member of the Parliament of Canada. All of us who were given the opportunity to sit here in this House recognize that to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in public office is a true privilege and it is a great responsibility. Ambrose Peddle accepted this duty with compassion and with integrity, and he indeed set an example for all of us to follow.

His life of public service continued in 1975, when Mr. Peddle had the distinct honour of

being appointed Newfoundland and Labrador's first ombudsmen by then Premier Frank Moores. In his capacity as ombudsman, he acted as an impartial, unbiased advocate for the people of our Province. For fifteen years, he listened to the concerns of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and he worked diligently on their behalf to ensure they were treated fairly by their government.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this House join me in honouring the life and the spirit of Ambrose Peddle. On behalf of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, I want to thank Mr. Peddle for his important and remarkable contribution to our Province and its people. To his family, I hope that at this difficult time they may find solace in his lasting legacy.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I want to thank the Premier for the advance copy of his statement today. As a former municipal leader, MHA, and an MP as the Premier said and eventually the ombudsman for the Province, Mr. Peddle devoted much of his life to public service. As a judge of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador we know his only surviving son, David, continues in his father's footsteps.

In the obituary it was said about Mr. Peddle that he was a private man who was very well known. This gives us some insight into his life and we thank him for the sacrifices that he made. I am sure all members in this House can attest to the sacrifices that are made by members and the sacrifices that are made with their families as they make their commitment to public service when it is your calling.

It is only fitting today that I stand here and pay tribute to Mr. Peddle in this House of Assembly

where he advocated for the people of the Province and his district.

We do extend our condolences to his wife, Bessie, and his surviving son, David, and the extended family; but, more than that, we celebrate his eighty-six years of public service and the life of a remarkable man, Mr. Ambrose Peddle.

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.

I, too, thank the Premier for an advance copy of his statement. It is a privilege to join with him and the Leader of the Official Opposition in offering my condolences to the family of the late Ambrose Peddle. I did not know Mr. Peddle myself but certainly his life is known to everybody. Of his many accomplishments, I think he may be best remembered as the Province's first ombudsman.

He was a pioneer in this Province of helping people fight unfair bureaucratic decisions and advocate on behalf of those who perhaps could not for themselves. He gave of himself for others.

I encourage the government – very sincerely actually, Mr. Speaker, as I say this – to bring in the whistle-blower legislation in his honour, in his memory. I think it is legislation that he would certainly support, and let us do that in the memory of Mr. Ambrose Peddle.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

I rise today in this hon. House to highlight March as national Nutrition Month. The month's theme, Simply Cook and Enjoy! aims to inspire individuals to get back to cooking basics and to involve children and youth in food preparation.

Healthy eating is fundamental to overall health and well-being, and with today's busy lifestyles there is a growing concern that food preparation skills are not being passed down to our children and grandchildren. Evidence shows that children who are involved in meal preparation with their families enjoy healthier food, which promotes healthy weights.

Mr. Speaker, our government partners with several organizations to provide programs and services which focus on healthy eating and wellness. These include the Kids Eat Smart Foundation, which sponsors nutritious breakfast and snack programs for school-aged children; the Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador, which promotes community-based solutions to increase access to adequate healthy food for residents; and, the Eat Great and Participate program, which aims to increase access to healthy food and beverage options for children and youth participating in events at recreation, sport, and community facilities.

Nutrition Month is an initiative of Dietitians of Canada, the association that represents registered dietitians across the country, with more than 100 members in this Province. By visiting the organization's Web site at [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca) people can access healthy eating tips and fact sheets to help them plan, shop, and cook. To supplement the promotion of Nutrition Month, our government is tweeting messages on nutrition and simple cooking ideas.

Mr. Speaker, Nutrition Month is an important opportunity to promote the benefits of healthy eating and to create awareness of the importance of passing these skills on to our children and youth. We encourage and remind residents to take an active role in their overall health and well-being through healthy eating and physical

activity. Our government is working to provide supportive environments to help families make the healthiest choices possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. We here in the Opposition certainly think it is great to see government acknowledging the value of healthy eating and we also commend the Dietitians of Canada for this great initiative. We are pleased to see government programs that partner to deliver healthy eating and wellness.

Many children are going to school hungry and, obviously, this has to affect their learning ability. The Canadian Institute of Health Information released their 2013 report on health outcomes, and we here in Newfoundland and Labrador have the lowest rate of fruit and vegetable consumption in Canada; 44 per cent of Canadians are consuming five plus servings a day and only 30 per cent of us here in Newfoundland and Labrador are consuming the same.

We also have the highest rate of obesity in all of the country; 63.4 per cent of our population is obese compared to the national average of 51 per cent. Obviously we know we have huge barriers to overcome in this Province when it comes to food security, cost and transportation; but, working together, we can get past these barriers.

Government needs to be proactive in trying to ensure we have healthy populations and a failure to do this will lead to more health issues in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. It is certainly important to support Nutrition Month. Young people do need better nutrition to offset the trends in obesity and diabetes. Certainly educating them about how to prepare foods is important and educational materials are useful, but many low-income families, those on minimum wage or receiving Income Support, increasingly cannot afford to feed their children nutritionally. Increases in Income Support and the minimum wage are needed to allow this to happen.

I would like to see more government investment to provide nutritional meals in all schools across the Province and provide hands-on food preparation training in all our schools.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral Questions.

The minister did not stand; so, is it okay to go back to ministerial statements?

**MR. BALL:** Yes.

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

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

Thanks to you and the Leader of the Opposition for your co-operation. I, too, was anticipating Question Period. I was so excited, especially when I see all those smiling faces across the House.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House today to update hon. members on the work of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, we have been undertaking work to help support the community sector in our Province. Last month, through the Office of Public Engagement, the provincial government held its third Community Summit,

which I am proud to say, was our most successful summit to date.

Mr. Speaker, this year's summit was unique in that it connected community leaders Province-wide in four locations through a Web-based engagement process called Interactive Rooms. Sector representatives in St. John's, Grand Falls – Windsor, Corner Brook, and Happy Valley – Goose Bay worked together in real time through a combination of Webcast and other Internet applications, including audience response remote-polling software. In addition, there was a virtual Web-based discussion table option for those who could not attend any of the physical sites.

Using this innovative approach to facilitate constructive relationships within the community sector, we engaged over 200 people all across regions of the Province – an all-time high for the Community Summit. I participated from the St. John's location and was pleased to be joined by my hon. colleagues in their respective regions.

Mr. Speaker, later this spring, we will be releasing a "What We Heard" document, based on the feedback of summit participants. The information gathered will help us advance government's commitment to communities, which includes providing innovative training tools, research opportunities, and promoting social enterprise. I can tell you that the feedback received was very positive and very constructive, and it highlighted the importance of continuing networking opportunities between government and the community sector.

As our Premier stated in his first address in this House last week, "We need to engage people in building a better province for all, which means reaching out to where they live in their communities...it means engaging them, not just for show but for real."

Mr. Speaker, in the coming days, the provincial government will bring forward even more public engagement activities and create new dialogue opportunities through our Open Government Initiative. By building partnerships with community and stakeholders groups, and by

connecting and engaging with residents in innovative ways – just like we did with the Community Summit – the people of the Province will have a greater say in the decisions that make a difference in their lives, no matter where they live.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

The Office of Public Engagement was created by the former Premier seventeen months ago to convince people that they were doing a good job. The budget last year was a little over \$7 million.

The current Premier, when he was former Minister of Justice, created the family violence court. That ran successfully and it cost \$500,000. We could have fourteen family violence courts – we do not even have fourteen judicial districts in the Province. We could have fourteen family violence courts for the cost of the Office of Public Engagement.

I would ask if the current Premier would instruct the current Minister of Public Engagement to shave his budget by \$500,000. He could still keep his little plaything to keep people informed about how well they are doing and we could have our family violence court back.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I too thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Although the new Web-based engagement process – of remote polling process

government is using for public consultation is truly interesting, I question whether it allows community advocates for full, real, meaningful comprehensive dialogue that really challenges existing structures and comes up with solutions.

These community agencies are doing vital work. Work that government depends on and that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador depend on. Working with seniors and youth, on violence against women, mental health, recreation and sport, community economic development, many of these groups had their funding cut back in last year's Budget and they could ill afford to absorb these cuts. If they suffer through any more cuts this year it will make a serious challenge even worse. I suggest that government really listen with the intent to hear their expertise and their concerns.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

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

Nalcor has twice issued energy conservation requests so far in 2014, and government has said that energy conservation is key to preventing more rolling blackouts. However, this government on this issue is all talk and no action because there is no provincial energy conservation program that targets all ratepayers in our Province.

I ask the Premier: Why are you limiting energy efficiency programs instead of including all ratepayers in our Province?

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

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



**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, there is no question that any time – and when we look at future development and opportunities in this Province and the role that Nalcor is playing in developing our electrical power system into the future, an important key part of that as it has always been and a key message that comes from our utilities, both Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and Newfoundland Power is around the issue of conservation.

I think everybody in the Province would be aware of the importance of conservation and conservation methods upfront in terms of turning off the switch, turning off the heaters, watching your hot water heaters and so on. These kinds of things are standard and we continue to promote these.

As well, during the recent issues around utilities and power supply, it was obvious that the general public, both in the residential as well as industrial customers, complied with that, Mr. Speaker, and we had success.

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

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

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

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

Well, my point was there is no inclusive energy efficiency program for all ratepayers. We know that these are standard things, and in other provinces we have had a lot of success.

Government says that energy conservation is important, but has placed the energy conservation program in the hands of the people who are supplying the energy. So there is no independent energy efficiency program in our Province, and no clear targets.

So I ask the Premier: Why have you allowed a private energy company that makes its money by selling electricity, let them take control of the program, and how does that make sense?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this government has offered a program through Newfoundland and Labrador Housing for low-income home owners to be able to do some refits for their house to make them more energy efficient. Under that program, some 4,500 households have been made more energy efficient. So we do provide funding in that area.

Further to that, under the Green Fund, there has been a number of different buildings and organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador that have benefited from energy efficient refits. That would include the Glacier in Mount Pearl, the Corner Brook Pepsi Centre, Stella Burry, and Ronald McDonald House. We also have some of our new schools in Paradise and Torbay that have also benefited from funding to become more energy efficient.

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

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

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

Well, we know that this government has had some problems in communication, and just to address the comments from the minister, what we were talking about is a program that affects all ratepayers. When I speak to communications I say that government has admitted, by the minister himself, that the energy conservation is a low priority, and even cut the only program in half last year. The minister said that other priorities rank higher than energy efficiency.

So I ask the Premier: How can your government say that energy conservation is a low priority when we still risk rolling blackouts?

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

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, energy efficiency, along with energy conservation, remain priorities. At times these priorities become competing demands on a fiscal budget that we have to announce. In saying that, we also have our Climate Change Office, we have the Take Back the Tide public awareness campaign, so that all people in Newfoundland and Labrador can understand that they have a part to play as well.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, many non-profit organizations have benefited from the Green Fund to become more energy efficient in their operations, and 4,500 households in this Province have also benefited from funding to help them become more energy efficient as well.

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

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

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

Just weeks after saying that no additional oversight was needed on the Muskrat Falls Project, government is now setting up a committee of bureaucrats for the Muskrat Falls to provide this oversight. The Premier would like this committee to report to Cabinet, which means the information would become a Cabinet document and blocked by Bill 29.

Mr. Speaker, the findings should be public, so I ask the Premier: Why are you setting up an oversight committee to report and the report would be kept in secret?

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

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

**PREMIER MARSHALL:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the Leader of the Opposition, I believe that our interpretation of the legislation differs. He is referring to the fact where there is a third-party request for information. There is nothing in the ATIPP legislation that prevents

government, with the exception of some privacy information, from voluntarily releasing information that comes – we release reports all the time. The midwifery report, I think, and the busing report, those reports were released and we will continue to do so.

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

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

**MR. BALL:** Well, just three weeks ago the Minister of Natural Resources said that government did not need oversight in the Muskrat Falls Project because Nalcor had the expertise to do that.

I ask the minister: Are you now setting up this oversight committee because you have lost faith in the experts at Nalcor?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** No, Mr. Speaker, I have not lost faith in the experts at Nalcor. What I will acknowledge is that it was certainly not one of my better interviews.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** We need to understand that this is one of the largest projects ever built in Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to say that this project is being built by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I can assure the people watching today that this project will benefit generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, through this whole process pre-sanction, sanction, loan guarantee, there is a need for oversight and we are absolutely committed to the oversight that is needed.

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

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

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

I want to thank the minister by saying that it was not one of his best interviews. The second part was not much better either, Mr. Speaker.

Government is crafting this committee to report in secret, when information on Muskrat Falls should be made public. This is the largest expenditure in the history of the Province and it is time for the Auditor General to take a look at Nalcor's books.

I ask the Premier: Under section 16 of the AG Act, will you now request the AG to inquire into and report publicly into what is going on at Nalcor?

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

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

**PREMIER MARSHALL:** I want to thank the leader for that question. It is a good question. The Auditor General is an independent officer of this House of Assembly. He does not work for the government. The Auditor General, under that legislation, could go into Nalcor or anywhere else in government any time he wishes to do so. We invite him to do so any time he considers it appropriate.

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

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

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

Under section 16 of that act, the Lieutenant Governor in Council can actually make that request.

I ask the Premier: Will you make that request to the AG?

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

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

**PREMIER MARSHALL:** Mr. Speaker, the Muskrat Falls Project is a project that is owned by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, therefore it is imperative that the proper oversight be provided. Proper oversight, as the minister indicated, has been provided from the time of sanction, to the financing, and now as we go into construction.

The government has announced additional oversight because the people of the Province have indicated they have a concern, and the Auditor General is a key part of that, but we do not order the Auditor General. We do have the legislative authority to do so, but the Auditor General will conduct whatever reports he considers necessary to do when he considers it appropriate, not when we order him to.

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

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

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

Nalcor has confirmed that dirty fuel was purchased and used at Holyrood last year, resulting in over \$1 million in damage.

I ask the Minister of Natural Resources: You claimed that Nalcor has all the experts, so how did these so-called experts sign a contract for dirty fuel that cost taxpayers over \$1 million?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday a former Liberal MHA, a Liberal candidate in the leadership, and a likely, I believe, Liberal candidate in the upcoming election called a news conference and made a conclusion that there was dirty fuel used and also concluded that the fuel caused the power outages in January.

Mr. Speaker, Nalcor has come out very clearly. The engineers of Nalcor who are running the system very clearly say the fuel that is used in no way had any effect or impact on the outage. That is clear. As well, they made a number of comments to explain the issue of fuel usage at the Holyrood facility.

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

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

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

Maybe the minister will listen to the question that I have asked, because I did not talk about blackouts. His officials at Nalcor have confirmed that dirty fuel was purchased and dirty fuel was used. You claim that they are the experts. How did those experts sign that contract to purchase dirty fuel that cost the taxpayers of this Province over \$1 million?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, the explanation is clear. They tendered a new fuel supplier in 2012. They received new shipments of fuel. It is tested at the load port. It is also tested when it is received. It met the specs that are required.

Mr. Speaker, through this whole process it was recognized there was an increased level of aluminum and silicon which had a negative impact on the actual functioning of some of the system. That was rectified. They addressed this issue with the supplier. They have also made the Public Utilities Board aware of it.

There is no cover-up here or anything, Mr. Speaker. It has all been rectified and it has been addressed.

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

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, even after Nalcor discovered that the fuel was dirty, they willingly ordered more of it.

What additional toxins were pumped into the air as a result of the continued use of this dirty fuel?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the member opposite to check his facts. Obviously, yesterday in the hastily-called news conference it presented some information. It was ill-informed and poor quality work, what we are seeing again today to jump to this conclusion.

The fuel was ordered, Mr. Speaker. It was recognized to be a problem. They consulted with the supplier. Future supplies address the concern that the people of Nalcor had in the operations of the system. Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely wrong to make that conclusion.

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

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, the 600 foot *John I* was adrift for thirty hours before the Canadian Coast Guard arrived on the scene with the icebreaker *Earl Grey*. It subsequently ran aground near Rose Blanche. When the *Earl Grey* did arrive she was helpless in providing any meaningful assistance, while more capable Coast Guard vessels like the *Sir Wilfred Grenfell* that remains tied up in St. John's, could have been available.

I ask the minister: What measures have you taken with the federal government to ensure that they have more adequate response resources patrolling our waters to ensure marine safety?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, the Coast Guard and the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre in Halifax responded in a timely fashion to the vessel that was run aground off our shores.

We have nineteen Coast Guard vessels dedicated to Newfoundland and Labrador. We, at every opportunity, raise this issue with the federal government. We need more resources dedicated to the Coast Guard. We need more resources dedicated to search and rescue to protect those at sea in our Province.

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

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, that is a contradiction; they responded in a timely fashion but we need more resources.

Mr. Speaker, both the Eastern Canada Response Corporation and the Coast Guard, can each respond to oil spills in this Province but have very limited capacity. There are more and more bulk carriers navigating our waters, carrying oil far in capacity of what the ECRC and Coast Guard can jointly respond to.

I ask the minister: What additional response measures are in place to deal with a potentially catastrophic oil spill in a timely manner and prevent an environmental disaster in the waters off our shores?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to those who are working at sea, safety is paramount. It is a top priority for this government. At every single opportunity we have raised questions related to improved safety standards. We have raised questions regarding having an increased search and rescue presence

in Newfoundland and Labrador to protect those at sea.

Safety is a top priority for this government. We will continue to press the federal government for more resources to help those who are working at sea in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** If the minister would read something other than his briefing notes, I asked about oil spill response, not safety. My first question was on safety.

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

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** What additional resources, Mr. Speaker, are in place to ensure the environmental integrity of our coastal waters, protecting fishermen, protecting our tourism, protecting the people of this Province from a catastrophic oil spill?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, protecting our oceans and protecting the people who work on those oceans is a top priority for this government. It is an issue we have raised at every single opportunity. We want to see more resources in place.

We have raised questions related to environmental protection. We have raised questions related to safety standards. We have raised questions continuously about search and rescue response time and resources that are dedicated to Newfoundland and Labrador. Protecting those at sea is a high priority for this Administration.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

**MR. LANE:** Mr. Speaker, last fall the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador was asked why so many parking lots still do not conform to blue zone regulations implemented two years ago. The minister claimed the regulations are being enforced; however, parking accessibility still remains an issue for persons with disabilities.

I ask the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador: Obviously, enforcement is lacking, what is your plan to ensure commercial properties are in compliance with blue zone regulations?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, society today demands that we have accessible buildings, that we have everything in our society today accessible for people who need to be included in our day-to-day work, in our day-to-day lives. We take that responsibility very seriously as a government.

Mr. Speaker, since the new legislation came in, in 2012, we have had almost 1,000 regular inspections since April, 2012. So to say we are not doing our job, Mr. Speaker, is not true. We are working with municipalities. We are working with organizations out there that are looking at where the issues are and lie. We realize there are some compliance issues but we are ready to do our work and we will continue to do our work.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

**MR. LANE:** Mr. Speaker, I suggest the minister take a drive down through any commercial

corridor in the St. John's area and he will find non-compliance all over the place.

Mr. Speaker, some of government's own buildings are failing to comply with provincial blue zone regulations. Even our hospitals are lacking appropriate vertical signage.

I ask the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador: How can you expect businesses to comply with blue zone regulations when government is failing to lead by example?

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

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

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the compliance issues at the Health Sciences Centre, in the new parking lot they have. We have directed them and issued orders to get fully up to speed in terms of what the regulations dictate, what needs to be done in that parking lot at the Health Sciences Centre. We have given them a little bit of time while the snow clears to do the compliance and get up to speed.

Mr. Speaker, we are working with Eastern Health and the Health Sciences, as well as other organizations, to make sure we address these types of complaints.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Local apprentices are telling us that Corner Brook Pulp and Paper mill are not hiring apprentices and have not employed apprentices for decades. The mill just received a government loan of up to \$110 million, not to mention another \$100 million of taxpayers' money invested in the mill since 2004.

I ask the minister: Given the log-jam of apprentices in the Province unable to secure work, did you include a provision in this loan guarantee that the mill hires apprentices?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this government is aware of the need for people to receive their journeyman status to support us as a Province, to be able to take part in the mega projects that are happening in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, under the Department of Advanced Education and Skills there is an Apprenticeship Wage Subsidy that any employer would be able to avail of. They would be able to apply through our regional offices throughout the Province. Basically, that program is a wage subsidy where, depending on the year the apprentice is in training, we could pay a significant portion of their salary.

Mr. Speaker, whether it is Corner Brook Pulp and Paper or any other employer in this Province, this government is more than willing to work with them to ensure that our apprentices get the opportunity they deserve right here in this Province.

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

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

**MS DEMPSTER:** Mr. Speaker, John Noseworthy pointed out this government's many failures in getting apprentices through their plans of training and addressing the skilled trade shortage now upon us. Noseworthy criticized government for entering into major capital works projects with external contractors without a contract provision for the hiring of apprentices on these projects.

I ask the minister: How could you miss these opportunities to get apprentices the work experience they need when thousands – thousands – of them are unable to secure work?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, to be clear let me say that this government has done more for the apprentices in Newfoundland and Labrador than any previous government in the history of this Province.

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, an employer, whether it is an employer who is doing work for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador or in private industry, or a major contractor doing a megaproject in Newfoundland and Labrador, can avail of the services that we provide for apprentices in this Province. We have many training opportunities for apprentices in this Province as well as our wage subsidy program.

If there is any particular employer who would like information, Mr. Speaker, we would certainly encourage them to contact the Department of Advanced Education and Skills.

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

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

**MR. KIRBY:** Mr. Speaker, last year when the Minister of Education was asked about the \$12 million he claimed would be saved by merging school boards, he said he had nothing to hide. A year later, we still have no details to back that up.

I ask the minister: If there is nothing to hide, why haven't you released the basic information on the savings earned?

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying I want to commend the people who have been involved in the restructuring of this board from the trustees to those working at the board office. They have done a commendable job.

Mr. Speaker, I think the people of the Province recognize, whether they recognize it or not, with a decrease in population of some 14,000, a 17 per-cent reduction, it was time we took a review of the school board, the first review since 2004.

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** As the year unfolds, Mr. Speaker – we have not gone through a year in this process yet. This new board took effect on September 1 and as that unfolds we will see what final dollars are realized then.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I ask the Member for St. John's North for a very quick question without preamble.

**MR. KIRBY:** Mr. Speaker, will the minister finally admit that cutting three school boards resulted in no cost savings at all?

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, the man is not a mathematician; I can assure you that. My answer is that there will be savings.

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

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

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

The government plans to appoint a committee of bureaucrats to oversee the Muskrat Falls Project.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: Why doesn't he just ask our Public Utilities Board to give oversight as their counterpart in Nova Scotia is doing for the Maritime Link Project?

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

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

**PREMIER MARSHALL:** Mr. Speaker, the Public Utilities Board, of course, will have a role. It is a regulator, it will deal with all general rate applications, and it will deal with all the capital applications and so on.

We have a responsibility to the people of the Province who are asking us to provide oversight for this project. It is owned by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is a large project. It is imperative that proper oversight be provided.

There is oversight being provided now. There was oversight provided when the decision was made to sanction the project. There was oversight provided when the decision was made to come up with the financing, and the financing has been obtained and the cost is certain and the amount is certain; and now that we have moved into construction there is further oversight, a different type of oversight, now going to be required to oversee that aspect of the project. Later on, when the project is commissioned, then there will be oversight over the operations.

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

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

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

All of which the PUB could have done.



I ask the Premier: Was he aware when he announced his oversight committee that its reports would have to be kept secret under Bill 29?

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

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

**PREMIER MARSHALL:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is incorrect in that statement. Reports that we have, if government wants to voluntarily release the reports, we have done it in the past and we will be doing it again very soon. The midwifery report came out, the busing report – we are always releasing reports and we are going to continue to do so.

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

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

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

I ask the Premier: Is he now committing to release all the reports of the oversight committee as they receive them?

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

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

**PREMIER MARSHALL:** Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the other day the oversight that is in effect right now in terms of the internal auditors of the company, the audit committee of the Board of Directors, the Board of Directors themselves, the independent auditor, their external auditor, their lawyers, and their financial people. Also, now the independent engineers report is going to be available as well. We are going to continue to add some more from the government's perspective so that the people of the Province can have assurances that the government is doing what the people want and ensure that the appropriate oversight is in place.

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

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

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

I did not hear a commitment to release the reports of the oversight committee.

Mr. Speaker, the quickest route to allowing openness and transparency on the Muskrat Falls Project would be to introduce legislation changing the wording in the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, section 18.(2), from “shall” to “may”, allowing his oversight committee reports to be made public.

So I ask the Premier: Will he move quickly to pass this amendment?

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

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

**PREMIER MARSHALL:** Mr. Speaker, we have access to information and protection of privacy legislation in this Province, and people have raised concerns, and then we announced today the appointment of a committee with stellar credentials, chaired by a former Chief Justice of Newfoundland and Labrador, made up of a Privacy Commissioner of Canada, and well-respected journalist from this Province. We have asked them to conduct a review. We have asked them to look at the whole legislation – not just Bill 29 – and then we asked them after they complete a line-by-line review to give us the benefit of their advice and their knowledge.

We are not going to pre-judge the report, we are going to wait and see what they say, we are going to take their recommendations very, very seriously, and I am sure, if it is not this government, the next government will respond accordingly.

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

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

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

While government has announced a moratorium on fracking in the Province, back in November now, nothing has been heard from the government since. It stated that it would do its own internal review of regulations across the country.

Can the minister please update the House and the people of the Province what it has been finding so far?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the fracking issue, and particularly with respect to fracking on the West Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, this government recognizes the importance to protect the health and safety of our people and the environment. We called for a hold on accepting any applications for fracking, Mr. Speaker, until we did some work on behalf of the people of the Province.

My department continues to do that work. It is not completed, but in the interim I have also travelled to the West Coast and met with representatives of some of the anti-fracking groups who wanted to share information with me, and certainly I wanted to get information from them. I have also met with a proponent, Mr. Speaker, on the industry side, again, committing, as I have, to a balanced approach to this whole situation, and we will continue to do our work and report to the House –

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

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

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

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

It is okay for government to be doing an internal review of regulations across the country, but

what the people of the Province need is a full independent external and scientific review that includes public consultation.

Government promised that they would be doing some public consultation, Mr. Speaker. When will those consultations begin?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, this is a very important issue with respect to a safe and healthy environment. It is also a very important issue with respect to economic opportunity and development, and creating jobs, so finding that balance is extremely important.

I have committed in this House that we would do a balanced review both internally within my department. I have had some discussions as well outside, as I have just indicated, Mr. Speaker. I have also committed and promised to the people of the Province that when we have that work, and we have had a chance to analyze that work, we will absolutely go to the public for consultations. They will have an opportunity to have input as promised.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's East for a quick question without preamble.

**MR. MURPHY:** Mr. Speaker, I ask the government: Will the government be following the recommendations of Health Canada when it comes to a human health risk assessment?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we always follow the recommendations, particularly when it comes to human health and safety. We will do so this time as well.

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

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

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

### Notices of Motion

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

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

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The City Of Corner Brook Act, The City Of Mount Pearl Act, The City Of St. John's Act And The Municipalities Act, 1999, Bill 6.

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

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

**MS SULLIVAN:** I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Mental Health Care And Treatment Act, Bill 4.

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

The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009, Bill 3.

I have another one, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Proceed.

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Repeal The Printing Services Act, Bill 5.

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

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. KING:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will introduce a resolution calling for a national inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada:

WHEREAS Aboriginal women experience a rate of violence 3.5 times higher than non-Aboriginal women; and

WHEREAS Canadian Aboriginal women between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four are five times more likely than all other Canadian women in the same age group to die as a result of violence; and

WHEREAS the Native Women's Association of Canada estimates that there are approximately 800 cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada; and

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is on record as supporting the Native Women's Association of Canada in calling for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in July, 2013;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that all parties of this hon. House call upon the Government of Canada to do its part to address the very serious issue of violence against Aboriginal girls and women by launching a national inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.

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

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

A notice of our private member's resolution:

WHEREAS government has recently indicated that energy conservation was necessary to prevent rolling blackouts; and

WHEREAS Nalcor has issued two energy conservation requests to the general public in 2014;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House urge government to consider developing and introducing energy conservation programs for all ratepayers in our Province.

This is seconded by the Member for Humber Valley.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Standing Order 63.(3) entered by the Member for St. John's South is the motion to be debated tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

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

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

WHEREAS visitors to Gros Morne National Park, more than 100,000 annually, expect to

communicate by cellphone when they visit the park; and

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

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

WHEREAS cellphone service is essential for business development;

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

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, one of the interesting things about this particular petition is that in addition to being signed by a number of residents of Trout River, it is also signed by somebody from Orangeville, Ontario, Brampton, Ontario, and Pasadena.

Mr. Speaker, people are coming through the park regularly and they are at a loss not to have cellphone coverage. They leave generally urban areas; the majority of Canadians live in urban areas. They come here for vacations. They see some of the wonderful advertising our government has done, and continues to do, and the place looks like a great place to come. They come here and they find no cellphone service.

Cellphone service has penetrated most of the Canadian culture. Most people with the means to travel this far from other provinces have the means to have a cellphone, and they carry cellphones. For them not to have cellphone service is a blight on this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege to present this petition on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador several times in the House. Each time I try to speak about a different aspect of the court. I suspect by the time we get the court back everyone here in this

House will be fully, fully familiar with the court and how it works.

The issue I would like to speak to today, Mr. Speaker, about the Family Violence Intervention Court is what would it take to reinstate this court? Even the Minister of Justice himself talked about how important the court was and that the court was doing what it was mandated to do and it was doing it well.

The court again, the budget was \$500,000, Mr. Speaker. We know that for instance the budget for Muskrat Falls is \$7.7 billion, so that is 0.00649 per cent of the budget for Muskrat Falls. The new third line that has been introduced is going to cost \$300 million. That money was found very, very quickly. What we are talking about for the Family Violence Intervention Court is \$500,000. So, \$300 million was found very quickly. Muskrat Falls currently is spending a minimum of \$1 million a day. We are talking about \$500,000 for a court that could serve the people for a whole year.

Mr. Speaker, I will be happy to once again stand and talk about the other aspects of the court that we will need in order to get it up and running again because all of the pieces are in place.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS hundreds of residents of the South Coast of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, including residents of the communities of La Poile, Ramea, Grey River, François, Rencontre East, Pool's Cove, South East Bight, Petite Forte, Gaultois, McCallum, and Hermitage use the provincial ferry system

on a regular basis for work, medical, educational, and social reasons; and

WHEREAS the provincial ferry system is the main source of transportation for these communities; and

WHEREAS most of these ferries are old, have ongoing mechanical problems, and are constantly being taken out of service and replaced with even older vessels; and

WHEREAS government, as part of its provincial ferry strategy, agreed to replace the ferries servicing these communities and awarded a design contract to Fleetway on January 11, 2011 for five new ferries for same; and

WHEREAS the residents and users of these communities are still waiting for these new vessels;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to finalize the design and begin construction of the new vessels for residents of the South Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have these petitions circulating all over the South Coast of this Province, and it is certainly outside districts that are not my own because everybody should be treated to a properly working ferry system. I get calls, not even people in your own district. They call you. It is not hard. Every one of us here has heard the calls that come into radio shows talking about the ferry service, about how one is being juggled here and one is being juggled there, and we are going to take this one and put it there.

The funny thing is there was a strategy. Again, I mention strategy because I heard that word numerous times during the Throne Speech. Everybody was so optimistic and positive, but this was a strategy, too. This was a few years ago now and we have not seen much on that.

I am looking to see what is going to come out of this. The optimism is starting to wane and people are still waiting to see the ferries. They are getting subservice in many ways and many times.

I take La Poile, for instance. The number of calls I got over Christmas when people could not get back and forth was absolutely amazing. I am getting calls from all over.

I know the minister was supposed to make an announcement sometime in the new year. I was told this in a meeting just before Christmas. We are into March now and I have not heard anything yet, so I guess like many things the government does, I will use the term hopefully we will hear it very soon.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

WHEREAS current government regulations deny busing services to students who live closer than 1.6 kilometres to school; and

WHEREAS parents have expressed concern that children living within 1.6 kilometres of school face dangers in walking to school, such as congested streets and busy intersections, especially during winter weather conditions; and

WHEREAS the \$75,000 review of the school transportation system completed by Deloitte recommended that the Department of Education consider reducing the 1.6 kilometre eligibility zone for kindergarten and elementary students; and

WHEREAS the \$75,000 Deloitte report also noted that only 10 per cent of those surveyed for the school transportation system review agree

with the current 1.6 kilometre policy is reasonable for students and families; and

WHEREAS parents are continuing to demand more flexible policies to meet current needs of school children;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to change the outdated 1.6 kilometre busing eligibility policy in order to ensure safe transportation for primary and elementary school children in the Province.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, parents are asking why the minister is continuing to sit on the school transportation review that he paid \$75,000 to complete.

I was doing some research on this and found this letter to the editor that was written about school transportation polices and busing in the Province. It talks about how the previous Minister of Education, the Government House Leader, had said it was no problem, he was going to look into this, and how the current Minister of Education at a convention also said no problem, he was going to look at it. The writer of the letter said it is unfortunate if Ministers of the Crown are too busy or too important to have time to listen to the legitimate concerns of those who are striving to make things better.

I ask the minister and I ask members to think about it. Are you too busy to act on the \$75,000 Deloitte review? We asked for a review, the minister was co-operative, and carried out the review. Now he is sitting on the review. Is he too busy to actually do something about it? Because, as the minister knows, he gets e-mails from my constituents, he gets e-mails from other members' constituents, and he probably gets telephone calls about this as well. It is something that needs to be acted on. He cannot just spend \$75,000 on a report such as this, lay it up on the shelf in the office and just let it collect

dust forevermore. We need action on this, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

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

WHEREAS most communities in the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair do not have adequate broadband service; and

WHEREAS residents, businesses, students, nurses, and teachers rely heavily on the Internet to conduct their work and cannot afford to wait until 2016 to access a potential plan in partnership with the Muskrat Falls development; and

WHEREAS there are a number of world-class tourism sites in the region, including a UNESCO site at Red Bay, Battle Harbour historic site, and the Mealy Mountains National Park;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to work with the appropriate agencies to provide adequate broadband service to communities along the Labrador Coast.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne that came down talking about investing in infrastructure and growing communities by attracting opportunities, it listed that in 2014 the Province will reach 95 per cent broadband coverage. My question immediately was: 95 per cent but is the coverage adequate? Every single day –

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

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

**MS DEMPSTER:** I have a number of communities in my district that are not covered, that are paying for their own Internet. They all have a dish on their house. The communities of Williams Harbour, Normans Bay, Black Tickle, these towns are paying for their own.

In the communities, Mr. Speaker, it was very sad, just every single day I receive e-mails. Yesterday I had an e-mail from a lady who is working on her masters and could not sign on to do the final course that she needed. I think we have to put increased emphasis on retaining these professionals in rural parts who want to stay here. We certainly cannot wait for two or three years because our communities are dying.

We have teachers who we are trying to entice to the area, yet they cannot get Internet. Just in my district alone we have ten communities that are maxed out – ten communities in the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair that are maxed out with broadband, and the broadband that we have is very inadequate. I am going to continue to stand and raise the cases as the people bring the issues forward to me.

Thank you.

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

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

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

WHEREAS in the past the town of Conception Bay South has provided space for the Conception Bay South Public Library, but will not be providing space for the library in its new town hall building; and

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am quite pleased to present this petition again today, as I did in the last session of the House. In particular, what I was really pleased to see with this petition was the representation from other communities that are out supporting Conception Bay South in this effort, particularly as this petition comes from Central Newfoundland, from the Town of Gander.

I am quite pleased to see one community supporting another. Particularly when it comes to an initiative like this, because whenever you see people signing a petition from other areas of the Province – there is a direct area of concern here on the part, for example, of the Town of Gander, whether they are going to be the next ones to be losing their public library. I think the people of Gander, Mr. Speaker, know the importance of a public library, of what it represents.

Among some of the things I have also listed here; we know government, for example, wants to get out there and start an outreach program where it is going to be reaching out to the various publics here in the Province to find out



the opinions of government. What better way for somebody to be able to do that than by going to the library, for example, and not only doing research for a small business or whatever it is they are going to be doing at the library, but as a way for government to be using libraries at the same time, for government to be working with this outreach.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased. Again, like I said, the representation from other communities on this issue is very strong. I will continue to stand in the House when it comes to talking about the issues around public libraries, and I will be looking forward to standing in the days ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Orders of the Day.

#### Orders of the Day

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

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

Orders of the Day, I call Motion 1. On behalf of the Striking Committee of the House of Assembly, and in accordance with Standing Order 65.(1), I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources, that the Member for Conception Bay East be replaced by the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune; and that the Member for The Straits – White Bay North be replaced by the Member for St. John's East.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All against.

Motion carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. KING:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I call now Motion 2 from the Order Paper. I move, seconded by the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services, the following resolution:

Be it resolved by the House of Assembly as follows: Whereas Section 7 of the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act provides that the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Assembly is to be appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council on a nomination of the House of Assembly;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Mr. Wayne L. Harnum be nominated for appointment as the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Assembly.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is it the desire of the House to approve the motion?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

It is certainly a pleasure to be able to stand in the House today for a few moments and speak to this particular resolution.

I want to start, first of all, by recognizing our outgoing Sergeant-at-Arms who happens to be with us here in the gallery today, Mr. Bill Brown, who served with us for two years.

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

**MR. KING:** Bill was a tireless worker in this House, who worked very diligently and gave the House itself and all of us on all sides of the House, a great level of commitment. I think I can, on a rare occasion, speak for all members when I say he is very highly regarded by all of us here in this House for his commitment and dedication.

I am certainly going to miss you Bill. I am not supposed to speak to you, but I will say that to you. We are going to miss you. I understand he is going to stay around, Mr. Speaker, as Director of Security with the Department of

Transportation. On behalf of government, I want to wish you well. As I said, thank you so very much for your service here for the past two years. We appreciate the commitment and dedication and the level of service that you provided here. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased now to take a few moments to welcome another very qualified and very experienced individual to the position of Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Wayne Harnum, who is coincidentally a former Royal Newfoundland Constabulary as well, similar to his predecessor. Mr. Harnum recently retired as a Staff Sergeant with more than thirty years. Being the Justice Minister, I take pride in saying that anyone who is coming out of thirty years with the RNC, and such a quality organization as that, brings a tremendous level of skill and a lot of strong attributes that are required to function effectively in this House. I want to recognize that upfront.

Mr. Harnum is known, Mr. Speaker, for being a very dedicated and loyal employee in whatever position he has taken up. He has been highly recognized in the RNC, in particular, for his work in forensic identification. I hope all of us would recognize and share the view that the experiences and extensive knowledge that he brings to this position will be very invaluable to the position here in providing a great high level of service to the position and ensuring a safe and secure House of Assembly.

I am sure his experience of course with the RNC, and particularly when you are engaged in forensic investigations, you would be required to pay attention to detail. That is probably a significant responsibility of the position that he is going to be taking here with us today. It is a great attribute in assisting him in doing his job and maintaining order and decorum in the House.

As a side note, I understand as well he is an accomplished photographer. Maybe we will get a chance to have a look at some of his work one of these days.

Mr. Speaker, just a couple of quick further comments for the record. This is an opportunity for us to pay tribute and welcome Mr. Harnum. I understand he is a very strong family person, who is married. He has a son and a daughter. I understand your son is carrying on the family tradition in the RNC. I wish him well in that.

We feel as a government, Mr. Speaker, that we are very fortunate to have someone of Mr. Harnum's qualifications and credentials join us here in the House of Assembly and help us maintain and perhaps surpass the high level of service we have been used to for the last number of years. On behalf of the Premier and members of the government caucus here, I want to congratulate him on obtaining the position and officially welcome him here to the House of Assembly.

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

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

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

I know under the rules that we operate here under this House it is not usual that we look to the gallery and speak to someone in the gallery. I will look at you, Mr. Speaker, knowing that the voice over in the corner will hear me.

I too want to congratulate Mr. Bill Brown on his years of service here in the House of Assembly, a couple of years now since I have been here. We have had many chats in the corridor about things we like to do in the few hours that we get away from this House, in relaxation and those sorts of things. I could tell he was a family man, someone who enjoyed living in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As one point and a memory for me going back to June of 2012 during the filibuster time, it was quite demanding on our staff here in the House of Assembly. Bill Brown, in this particular case, worked his way through that as being just relatively new to the work here. I really admired the level of service, what he did, and the commitment to us as MHAs here and to the

Speaker as well during that time. As the Leader of the Official Opposition, I want to extend my gratitude and thank you too for the contribution that Mr. Brown has made to all of us here.

Really the reason why we are standing and responding here today is to welcome Mr. Wayne Harnum to the position of Sergeant-at-Arms. What I did is I looked at what is the role here. As people watching the broadcast, the Webcasts and all the things that go on, not too often does the camera actually be on the Sergeant-at-Arms.

For the information of the people who are watching and saying, who is this guy? What does he do anyway, the guy with the white gloves on and carrying this mace in? He is the officer who is responsible for security here in the Chamber, protecting the MHAs, and takes custody of our Mace but also is the enforcer for the Speaker here in the House of Assembly. So for those of you who are watching, this is the person we are talking about.

What would make someone like Mr. Harnum qualified to protect us? Well, his thirty-two years of experience with the RNC, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, certainly does that, but it is much more than that. If you look at the c.v. of Mr. Harnum, you will see that he is renowned as the senior forensic identification officer within the RNC and he has been a very valuable contributor to the RNC in general.

It also goes to say about his calmness under pressure, and I can almost see that as I look at his demeanor as he sits in the chair today. He has been called as an expert witness and has been part of many active investigations in his term at the RNC. So these are the attributes, these are the things that make Mr. Harnum, I believe – and we support him being the new Sergeant-at-Arms. These are the attributes that would make him certainly qualified to do this job.

Not only that; when I looked a little bit back into his history, I also realized that back in his early years, back some time ago, he had an interest in automotive technology and surveying technology, back in some of his education,

because now he comes with obviously a lot of his own personal experiences and he will bring that to the floor of the House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, it also goes on to say that the RNC call on him to design and teach several courses within the Constabulary. That is very important because that is the leadership role that he would take and he would be part of the education for the younger officers. This all prepares him for his new job here; but, even more than that, he has been recognized by multiple awards. Two that I could actually mention would be the Michael J. Cassidy Award in 1998 and the Tiller Award in 1996 for his excellence as a police officer.

So, Mr. Speaker, you can see that my job today to respond to this and welcome Mr. Harnum as the Sergeant-at-Arms is relatively easy when you look at the experience and you look at the credentials that this man brings to the House of Assembly.

On behalf of the Official Opposition, and as Leader of the Official Opposition, I want to welcome Mr. Harnum to his role as Sergeant-at-Arms. I look forward to many years of public service as you take on this new role in working here at the House of Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Being the third speaker, there is not a lot left for me to say. So if I repeat some things, I hope everybody will understand. First of all, I, too, want to recognize Mr. Brown for the role he played with us here in the House of Assembly. I am hoping that we did not frighten him away with two filibusters, because in his short history with us, less than two years, that was a lot to take on. I do wish him well in his new position as director of transportation.

We do not interact a lot with the Sergeant-at-Arms, but we did get the times when we can have little chats and you get a sense of people's personality during that time. It has been a pleasure having Mr. Brown here in the House with us. As I said, I do wish him well on behalf of our caucus.

I am very pleased to join with the other leaders in the House to welcome Mr. Harnum in his role as Sergeant-at-Arms. I cannot help but note, Mr. Speaker, that you must really want help in keeping us toeing the line with our second Sergeant-at-Arms from the RNC background. If you are trying to put the fear of God in us, perhaps you are going to succeed in doing that.

I say to Mr. Harnum, we are not as bad as all that though, I do not think. I wish him well in helping us do what we should be doing here in the House of Assembly.

On another light note, I do read with interest the awards he has received and the fact that he is a forensic footwear examiner. I, myself, am a real fan of *CSI* and I am going to try to find time to ask him: Is anything that I see on television what he actually does? I am also going to watch what I wear on my feet and where I walk in this House of Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** 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.

Before we move to further business of Orders of the Day, I just want to take a moment, with the House's indulgence, to offer my thanks as well to the outgoing Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Brown, for his wise counsel, advice, and support to me

in my role as the Speaker. As the Leader of the Official Opposition pointed out, one of the roles of the Sergeant-at-Arms is protection of the Speaker. I always felt pretty secure, not because of anything you would do, but obviously having someone of Bill's calibre to be able to provide some advice and support to my role as Speaker. Thank you very much.

I want to welcome as well, and thank all of you for endorsing the decision to recruit Mr. Harnum into his new role as Sergeant-at-Arms. Welcome, Sir, to your new role.

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

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

**MR. KING:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, with leave from my colleagues of the other two parties, I would like to call from the Order Paper the notice of the resolution that I gave earlier today respecting a national inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and children.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Leave.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Government has leave.

The hon. the Premier.

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

**PREMIER MARSHALL:** Mr. Speaker, let me begin by reading into the record the all-party resolution that we are bringing forward today. I want to express my appreciation to the Leader of the Third Party who came to me with the idea that we unite in doing this. It says:

WHEREAS Aboriginal women experience a rate of violence that is 3.5 times higher than non-Aboriginal women; and

WHEREAS Canadian Aboriginal women between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four are five times more likely than all other

Canadian women in the same age group to die as a result of violence; and

WHEREAS the Native Women's Association of Canada estimates that there are approximately 800 cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada; and

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is on record as supporting the Native Women's Association of Canada in calling for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in July of 2013;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that all parties of this hon. House call upon the Government of Canada to do its part to address the very serious issue of violence against Aboriginal girls and women by launching a national inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.

That is seconded by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, healthy debate is at the heart of our democracy. Much can be accomplished by exploring all sides of an issue, but there are also times when it is proper to put aside our differences and to stand united to achieve a goal about which we all agree. This is one of those moments.

Loretta Saunders was a young Aboriginal woman from Newfoundland and Labrador who was deeply troubled by the issues of violence against Aboriginal women in our country – violence that so often leads to death or disappearance. She understood the grief; she understood the unbearable vacuum that so many families endure when they do not know where their loved ones are, or what has happened to them. She understood it, because as a young Inuk woman she felt it. She took ownership of it, and she set out to change it.

She enrolled at St. Mary's University in Nova Scotia and commenced work on a thesis about missing and murdered Aboriginal women. Her thesis advisor has written poignantly about the

insight she brought to this issue, and her determination to shine a spotlight on those tragedies and change things. She was just twenty-six years old, just starting out, expecting to have a whole lifetime in which to bring about change, but then she herself disappeared.

In a database of statistics somewhere in Ottawa the number of Aboriginal women murdered in Canada increased by one, Loretta had become a statistic. Loretta's family, her community, and all of us are absolutely determined that just another statistic is not what Loretta Saunders will be. This time it will be different. This time we act.

Loretta's sister, Delilah Terriak, announced on Facebook that she intended to help organize a national vigil on March 27. She wrote, "While we found my sister, she and I know of too many stories of women who will not be laid to rest. This needs to change now. I plan on holding a country wide vigil and would love to have any help organizing actual gatherings in your community. This is for all women, not just you, me or Loretta."

In a couple of minutes I am going to ask that we all rise and pay tribute to Loretta with a moment of silence. Then I am going to ask that all of us put our silence aside and raise our voices unitedly to make change. Indigenous rights groups, the United Nations, the Premiers of all thirteen provinces and territories, and both opposition parties in Ottawa have called upon the federal government to launch a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women as reported in *The Independent* on March 1, 2014.

Mr. Speaker, such an inquiry will be one of the most painful in Canadian history. It will reveal deep and bleeding wounds in our society. All sorts of things will be said that will be very painful to hear. There will be anger and outrage, harsh accusations, and scathing indictments. The process will unleash a tempest of fury like none that we have seen in our history. Many political advisors and public relations professionals would probably advise that this is

absolutely, unequivocally not the thing to do, but it is the right thing to do.

Just as South Africa needed Nelson Mandela's Truth and Reconciliation Commission to expose the deep wounds in that society in order for the necessary reforms and the healing to begin, so too we need such a process to expose the wounds in our society, to change things and to start the process of healing. We are a long way from healing because the violence continues to be done. The wounds continue to be inflicted.

Aboriginal women continue to suffer from violence. They continue to disappear. They continue to be murdered. They continue to live in fear that it will happen to them or their daughters or their neighbours. All of us are culpable if we continue to ignore it.

I implore the federal government to take a leap of faith, as truly this will require. I implore them to ignore those who are saying no and to make this inquiry happen. Find a way, do it now. Let this be Loretta's legacy, the legacy of the thesis that she never got to finish.

I am sure she would say that far more important than the thesis she hoped to write, was the change she hoped to inspire. Although her voice has fallen silent, we can breathe life into her words and aspirations by taking up the torch and bringing about the change that she hoped to inspire.

Let us rise to honour her now with a moment of silence and then let us resolve to be silent no more.

**MR. SPEAKER (Verge):** All rise.

[A moment of silence is observed.]

**MR. SPEAKER:** Members, please be seated.

The hon. the Premier.

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

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

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

Many times when we respond to something like this from the Premier, we start by saying we are happy to respond, or we take the opportunity to respond, but today as I stand here in response to this all-party resolution I cannot say it is something I am absolutely happy to do because the story in itself is a difficult story. It is a narrative we have heard about, we discussed and talked about for many years now, but I do consider it a privilege that we join with the government caucus and the Premier's resolution, and I want to thank the Leader of the Third Party for extending this invitation. I believe an all-party resolution is certainly very appropriate on an issue like this.

As Leader of the Official Opposition, we do support the call for an independent national public inquiry. It is indeed important for us to set aside our differences on issues like this so that we can all be united, not only as members of the House of Assembly here in Newfoundland and Labrador but on behalf of all the residents of our Province.

We did, a few weeks ago, issue some press releases as critic for the Status of Women and Aboriginal Affairs. I see the need to do this. So it is appropriate that we do take this opportunity today to stand here in this House and support this resolution.

Going back to July, 2013, it was not only us here in this House today, it was many other people at the Council Federation meeting where the Native Women's Association of Canada recognized the need for a national inquiry. As the Premier said, at that meeting we had thirteen premiers across our country that supported this.

The Aboriginal women and young girls, as the resolution says, are three-and-a-half times more likely to be victims of violent attacks than non-Aboriginal women. When you think of this, when you look at how disproportionate that is in terms of numbers, realizing of all the missing

women and girls in our country today, based on the database that the Premier mentioned, it is there as a statistic, we realize if you look at the 824 in that database, it speaks to the Aboriginal women and young girls, that is about 25 per cent. That is the disproportionate number we are talking about. That is the statistic, but behind every one of those statistics is a family. Realizing that of 25 per cent of those, they were indeed a mother.

It is not a story that we only hear about in the news today as we listen to this, it is a story that affects families, that affects young children, and children who would have to live without the experience of growing up with their mother. It is important for us that we do stand here today united and in solidarity as the House of Assembly to support the need for this and supporting this all-party resolution, and the call for the national, public, independent inquiry.

People would say: Well, here we go again; we have another group of politicians who are asking for an inquiry. The question would be: What is the purpose of this inquiry? The purpose is we want to make a change, and as the Premier said this would be difficult. The conversation around all of this will indeed be difficult, but it is time that, as a society, we now identify what the systemic problems are facing Aboriginal women. What are the root causes that, indeed, we have those disproportionate numbers? That is what this inquiry would do. It is my privilege to be able to stand and support this all-party resolution.

When you look at the life of Loretta Saunders, a promising young graduate who in herself had recognized the need to do whatever she could, really as an individual, to make a difference, for her to go out, write a thesis, and try to identify what those root causes are. To think now the legacy of her death will be that she has a family member, and the Premier mentioned her sister, but indeed her cousin as well and they put together almost 60,000 signatures on a petition that is calling for this national inquiry, all of this to support the research that has already been done. The answer to get to the systemic problem, as I said, will be a national inquiry into

the murders and missing young Aboriginal women.

So it is a difficult time. I will read in the resolved part again that I do support, and as a Leader of the Official Opposition, we do support that all parties of this hon. House today call upon the Government of Canada to do their part to address the very serious issue of violence against Aboriginal girls and women by launching the national inquiry.

It is important we do this. I believe it is also important that the Premier take the opportunity to write the Minister of Justice, the appropriate ministers around Status of Women federally, and indeed the Prime Minister himself. This is not about politics; this is about identifying the root causes and the systemic problems we have because we do need to change this so that Aboriginal women are not living with the fear of being another victim, another statistic, be added to the missing persons list, and indeed a murdered victim.

It is my privilege to be here to support this all-party resolution on behalf of the Official Opposition.

Thank you for the time, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs.

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

Mr. Speaker, to stand in the House today as the Minister Responsible for Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs it is not a day that you want to stand to this resolution, but I feel it is necessary to have a few words. As difficult as it is, on February 13 we lost an individual to a very unfair circumstance, an individual who was making a difference to Aboriginal people.

This is my second time as the Aboriginal Minister. As an Aboriginal Minister you sit on the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group, which is a committee that is formed by all of the Aboriginal ministers across the country. At

every meeting that I have been to, they normally meet face to face twice a year throughout the country. At every meeting that I have been to with the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group, violence against Aboriginal women and children has always been one of the top priorities to try to find a resolution for it.

I think that through the loss of Loretta Saunders it certainly brought it to a forefront again, not just in our Province of Newfoundland and Labrador but throughout the whole country. I have spoken with some of my colleagues across the country and the devastation that this senseless murder and senseless act of crime against another Aboriginal youth almost, because Loretta was very young, has had a terrible effect throughout the whole country.

I am proud, I guess, to be part of a government that is standing today as three parties in a House that are unified in getting a message sent clearly to our colleagues in Ottawa that this does need a national inquiry. As you heard the Premier and you heard the Leader of the Opposition allude to that, with a national inquiry it is not always the good things you are going to hear; but, hopefully, through a national inquiry, you do have good results. We know that if there is a national inquiry, there will be changes made. We know there will be very difficult and sensitive issues that will be raised. There will be a lot of hurt for people who still have members of their family missing and no resolutions to those missing people still out there.

There will be anger and pain also in a national inquiry, but I think most important with a national inquiry what we get is that we find some closure, we find an opportunity, and we find an opportunity for some healing. I think that is very important.

Next week I will be meeting, personally, with Loretta's thesis advisor, and I am hoping that her sister and her cousin will also be at the meeting and they want to sit down and talk to me about the work that they are going to be doing in the near future.

As we all know, there was a petition in Ottawa last week – actually, it was this week, and 300 people were at that. It started out with about twenty people walking up to the steps, and by the time they had unrolled the banners and the drum dancers had played, there was over 300 people listening to a clear message. I think the clear message is that we need to be together on this, have that national inquiry and, hopefully, find some answers so that we can once and for all put an end to the violence that our young Aboriginal women and children are being subjected to and, hopefully, find some resolutions to that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, I, again, also speak in support of this resolution.

Maryanne Pearce, an Ottawa-based researcher, has developed a database with 3,329 women who have gone missing or have been murdered, and, of these, 824 were Aboriginal women. That means 25 per cent of the 3,000 women database has been Aboriginal women, yet they make up only 2 per cent of the population of Canada. The odds on being murdered if you are a woman are higher than if you are a man, generally, and if you are an Aboriginal women, they are in the extreme.

Mr. Speaker, hopefully this inquiry will not focus exclusively on the offenders – one of whom it is reported today, his victims are going to receive a compensation reward for a serial murderer in British Columbia. Mr. Speaker, I am not saying his name because I believe that too often we focus on the name of the perpetrator and that only tends to, in their warped way, glorify some of the acts they have done; it publicizes them and makes them prominent. There are many of these serial murderers and mass murderers who, after they are dealt with through the criminal justice system, in my opinion, they ought not to be in the public domain as a name any more, simply as a person who perpetrated certain offences.



The victims, we need to know – and not from the time a young girl is picked up hitchhiking, not from the time that a young woman is picked up prostituting herself in some of our streets because she is drug addicted and made vulnerable - we need to go back to the beginning. We need to go all the way back to the communities where these women came from. We have some of these communities in our Province.

The Premier said yes, this inquiry will unleash a lot of strong emotions. In my view, it is likely that nobody will be left untouched by this. We have issues with how we have dealt with native people, Aboriginal people, even in our Province that tends to make them more vulnerable. The root causes of why 25 per cent of the women who have gone missing or have been murdered in this country in the last few decades – and most of them are only in the last two decades – have been Aboriginal women.

For sure we need this national inquiry. The national inquiry needs to be a public inquiry; it needs to touch on all provinces. In addition to looking at today why a person such as Loretta Saunders finds herself a victim of crime, why is it that so many people over the entire nation have found themselves, so many Aboriginal women and girls who have found themselves in vulnerable situations. The results speak for themselves. These are horrific outcomes.

We need to know: What were the beginning stages? How did this begin in the first place, and what can we do to alleviate these numbers? Not just by apprehension and enforcement, which clearly is important, but by getting at the root causes of why these Aboriginal women were in a situation where they could be so easily victimized by the monsters among us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

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

It is an honour and a privilege to rise today in support of this all-party resolution and to have a few words on behalf of the people of Lake Melville, and the people indeed of Labrador. As a young Inuk myself, as an Aboriginal person, it becomes very clear to you in life where the matriarch of our families stand in terms of the perspective we give to our elders. It is something that is bred into us. It is the way we are raised.

If you look at traditional Inuit families going back before colonization, you see the mothers, the grandmothers, our elders in the families. They are the pillars behind those families and those communities, small and isolated and rural as they may be. What you see is the men hunting and fishing, but the social network, the weave of the fabric of the society was maintained by the women. That is what we are here to talk about today.

When we heard the Minister of Environment and Conservation last week talk about how issues such as this transcend partisan politics and the colours we fly as the banners around the communities we represent, I was so glad to hear this is the way we were going to stand, united. To look towards Ottawa, and to look towards the Harper Government and demand that an inquiry be held to get some answers, to have justice for those who have been lost along the way, and to get some type of closure for the families involved.

Today, I would just like to share with this House and the people who are watching at home, how it affected our community. Loretta, as we all know, was not the cause and the start of the call for a national inquiry, but she is certainly that spark, the catalyst that should hopefully drive this home. I had the pleasure to have been to two fundraisers on behalf of the family during this whole process when we heard the bad news and all of that.

At the first fundraiser we had hope. It was a search effort. We all came together and played our instruments. We took the stage. We shared in a night of social engagement, just to throw in a few dollars and do your own little part at a

community level to make sure the family at that particular point in time had the resources to carry on a search, to fly family members out to Halifax, to print flyers, to put out ads in as many places as they possibly could, to have people dedicated to organizing this on our social networks, if you will, on Facebook, on Twitter, doing those things. All of which we engaged in.

I will not forget it, Mr. Speaker. You put your cellphone on airplane mode. I was on the way back to a fundraiser when we were sitting on the tarmac in Deer Lake and somebody I had known from the community of Rigolet, the AngajukKak, the Mayor, Ms Charlotte Wolfrey, a friend of mine from my previous life in the Nunatsiavut Government. She said: Keith, did you hear? I said, no. She told me of the news of the update where Loretta was found. I was floored, just like every community across Newfoundland and Labrador, indeed, the country, because that is what Loretta has done here.

Even in the most tragic of circumstances here she has reached out. She has put a national spotlight back on the issue. She was not the start for those calls for an inquiry, but she is certainly hopefully going to be the one to bring it on home for people everywhere.

Without belabouring the point, I will just say in previous roles within the Nunatsiavut Government, as Minister of Health and responsible for the Status of Women, I have seen first-hand how these issues are still prevalent in Inuit communities today. Even though some of the stats we have heard mentioned by other members of the House here today talk about older numbers going back, even back into the 1970s. I believe the earliest case from the Native Women's Association of Canada was probably in the 1940s; having said that, we still see it today.

Due to isolation and due to rural communities, we still have to combat these issues. I believe it does come down to prevention. I know this government, in our Violence Prevention Initiative, is part of that, so making people aware this is still happening. It is about making people

aware this is unacceptable, it will not be tolerated, and that there is hope.

I will not go on and on, but I want to make this point, Mr. Speaker. Prime Minister Harper has a chance now to keep hope alive in the hearts of Aboriginal communities and for Aboriginal women across the country everywhere. Hope that an inquiry will be struck, it will have some meaning to it, and it will change this trend in terms of these statistics and the fact that there is a disproportionate amount of Aboriginal women falling victim to unfortunate circumstance.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will say thank you for the opportunity to speak to this. I am fully in support of this. I have never been more proud to be a member of this House, to see all parties united and doing something that is genuinely right. Now it is on Ottawa.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

It is unfortunate that we have to stand in our House today to call for the kind of inquiry that we are calling for. What this resolution is dealing with is the reality that we wish did not exist, and that is the reality of violence against women, girls, and children, and particularly in this House today, violence against Aboriginal women, girls, and children.

I am proud of us as a House of Assembly, as a Legislature, that we have come together to stand solidly in support of the resolution. I do thank the Premier and the Leader of the Official Opposition for responding positively to my request for an all-party resolution. I knew when I wrote the letter, I had no doubt there would be agreement, because however much we may disagree on various political points in this House, I know we would not disagree on the issues around violence against women, girls and children, and particularly Aboriginal women, girls and children.

I think we should be proud of ourselves that we are here today united in this issue and are ready to do what the Premier has called us to do, which is not to be silent. That means that after our debate today, we still have to stay vocal. That after our debate today, we have to continue to let the federal government know what we expect of them. We have to, I think, reach out to other provinces.

We responded to what happened in Nova Scotia. That was my inspiration, the fact that the Legislature in Nova Scotia did what we are doing here today, and now I hope that we will become a role model for other Legislatures in the country. I would love to see all provinces and territories stand and say to the federal government we absolutely need a national inquiry. Because, no, the answers have not been found, as I have heard said by the federal government. The answers have not been found. We have a major systemic problem in our country and we have to get to the bottom of that systemic problem, and I think a national inquiry is the only way to do it.

We have to deal with the fact that the murder and disappearance of Aboriginal women and girls has gone on for way too long in Canada and it has gone on because nobody spoke out about it. I lived in Vancouver in 1991 when a young woman was murdered on Powell Street in the downtown east side, which has almost become an iconic region in this country when it comes to the murder and disappearance of Aboriginal women, younger and older.

It was that death in January of 1991 that created what became the first of many annual women's memorial marches. I remember taking part in some of the activities that took place on the first February 14, 1991 to mark the memorial of the death and disappearance of Aboriginal women. I think we all know the horrific stories that have since come out of the downtown east side, about women who had been murdered, women who have disappeared and the frustration of the community they were part of in trying to get a justice system to listen to them, to pay attention to the fact that they just did not walk off the street on their own and not come back, that some

other people had been involved, that murders had happened. They just did not disappear accidentally.

I took part in other memorial services as they grew across Canada. Throughout the 1990s I lived outside of the Province and I took part in some of the memorials that happened in Toronto, where I lived after Vancouver. Then I came home in 1999 and was surprised to find out that in actual fact we did not have a memorial here in Newfoundland and Labrador, that nowhere in the Province did we take part in this February 14 date which was the time for remembering disappeared and murdered Aboriginal women.

I remember the first time that I saw the reminder that the memorial was taking place in different parts in Canada and feeling sad that we did not do it here in this Province, because I knew that we did have women who were being murdered, not just Aboriginal women but women including Aboriginal women.

I knew the mother of one of these Aboriginal women. She has been mentioned already here in the House but I want to mention her in a deeper way today. I do have her permission for doing this. It is Mayor Charlotte Wolfrey in Rigolet. Charlotte's daughter Deidre was murdered in 1993. She was actually the second young woman in that community to be murdered by her partner. That is shocking to think of such a small community having two murders in a fairly short period of time. I think the first one was 1985 and then in 1993.

Charlotte Wolfrey and another wonderful leader in Labrador, Ruth Flowers – I do not think her son is in the House today, but her son sits in the House – worked together with the community to raise the issue of what was happening and the fact that women, particularly in Rigolet, did not feel safe, they wanted justice, they wanted protection, and they wanted police protection.

They started with the women throughout the North Coast of Labrador, calling for protection for Aboriginal women, calling for protection by the presence of police. It took seven solid years.

I asked Charlotte last evening when I was talking to her: Can you remember when that struggle was over? She said: My memory is that in the 2000 Budget the money was there to finally have RCMP officers in Rigolet.

It is good that they are there, but isn't it a shame that it took seven years of the women of the North Coast of Labrador begging and pleading and trying to prove why this was necessary? Do we have a problem in this country? Yes, we do. We have to face it. We have to face what the systemic issues are. They will not be pleasant as has been pointed out by the Premier and by others. It will not be easy, but if we do not do it, the murders will continue. We have to stop those murders from happening.

It is important that we not just do what we are doing here today in having the debate, but we do have to put in writing – and I am sure the Premier will be taking the leadership in doing this – of letting the federal government know what we have done here today and in telling them that we are insistent, that we have to have an inquiry. In February of this year – though it was not done on the fourteenth, I think there were reasons for that. On February 3, in St. John's, we did have finally a vigil in remembrance of the murdered and missing women and girls in Newfoundland and Labrador. It included all that they knew at the time, not just Aboriginal. The decision was in our small community it was good to recognize all.

We have a list going back to 1815. It was chilling that night to be at that memorial and to hear the descriptions of the murders. It was horrific, and we have to stop it. We have to make sure that murders stop. We have to continue with our initiatives with regard to violence against women. More than that, we have to make sure that there is no silence. We have to make sure that murders end. We have to make sure that if murders happen that the full justice system finds out why the murders happen and justice is done.

What we are doing here today is absolutely essential. What we are doing here today I think

should make us proud, but it also should make us sad. That has already been expressed. Just as in 1991 in Vancouver the murder of a young woman on Powell Street in Vancouver woke people up to what was going on and broke the silence. I think that is what Loretta Saunders death has done for us in this Province. I think some people have not been aware of the number of murders of women that have happened, and a lot have not been aware of the numbers of murders with regard to Aboriginal women. So we are helping break that silence. We are helping shed a spotlight on an issue that is a shame on any society, and it is part of our society.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again, thanks to everybody in the House, that all of us can stand here together today united. I look forward to being able to vote for this resolution.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, as expressed by many who have stood before me in this House today, it is so unfortunate that we have to stand here and do what we are doing today, but stand we will because we need to. We need to ensure that all voices are heard, as the Premier said when he spoke earlier this afternoon on this issue. We have to break the silence, Mr. Speaker. We have to ensure that united – united in this House, united in this Province, united in this country – we make a difference for Aboriginal women and children.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that this is not a new problem. This is an issue, Mr. Speaker, that I would say since Newfoundland and Labrador has been settled, has been an issue. It has been with us since our earliest days. It has been with us for more than 500 years, Mr. Speaker. It is a terrible blight on our society. It has resulted in so much pain. It has resulted in so much sorrow, not just for the families of those who have been inflicted and affected, but for the friends and for our society as a whole, Mr. Speaker.

For particular members of our communities, particularly for Aboriginal women and children who have either been victims of violence or somebody they have known or a friend has been a victim of violence, it has been all of that pain that has finally raised this issue into the public prevue. That is where it should be, Mr. Speaker.

It should truly be under the harsh light of the day for all of us in this Province and in this country to see and to understand so that we consider all of the aspects that contribute to this issue, so that we take the time to interpret what is going on to the point where we get to the root cause of this particular issue. That is our responsibility, Mr. Speaker. That is the responsibility of all of us in this Province, all of us in a civilized society who want to make a difference.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to quote some stats. I do not normally like to do that, but there is a time for stats. Because I believe that armed by knowledge, inspired by understanding, and determined by a caring that all of us have when we read about and when we understand what has happened to women and children, and particularly to Aboriginal women and children, I believe when we take the time to focus, that is when we will truly rise up and that is when we will make a difference.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to quote some of the statistics I was able to find quickly this morning. Some of them you may have heard already, but, again, I really believe that as painful and difficult, and unpleasant as it is, we need to focus on these stats. For each of us individually, we need to make some determination about: What does it mean to us? What does it mean for us? What does it mean about our society?

Mr. Speaker, I will read some of them.  
“Aboriginal women are 3.5 times more likely than non-Aboriginal women to be victims of violence.”

“Physical assault is the most frequently reported violent offence by Aboriginal people.”

“Approximately 56 % of violent incidents committed against Aboriginal people are

perpetrated by someone who is known to the victim.”

Aboriginal women are more likely to report the most severe forms of spousal violence, such as being beaten, choked, threatened with a weapon, or sexually assaulted.

“...75% of survivors of sexual assault in Aboriginal communities are young women under 18 years of age.” Almost 50 per cent of these girls are under the age of fourteen, and nearly 25 per cent are under the age of seven.

“Canadian Aboriginal women between the ages of 25 and 44 are five times more likely than all other Canadian women in the same age group to die as a result of violence.”

Between 1997 and 2000, the murder rate for Aboriginal women was almost seven times higher than that of non-Aboriginal women. Mr. Speaker, I have pages. I could go on.

How can we hear these statistics, how can we know these facts, and not act? We have to do what this all-party resolution is calling for, Mr. Speaker. We have to let our voices be heard. We have to stand with the Native Women’s Association of Canada and call for that national inquiry. I believe the inquiry can be the first step. I believe it can be that first critical step, Mr. Speaker, to producing a national action plan, and it is an action plan that we need.

The federal government, we all know, is responsible for Aboriginal people. They really need to and ought to engage in meaningful discussions with Aboriginal women’s organizations, given the significant rates of violence I just quoted here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I believe everyone in this Province as well needs to engage in that discussion. We cannot simply pass it off and say the federal government should do this; the provincial government should do this. We all need to stand and talk about the issue and ensure it is understood from coast to coast to coast and ensure that our voice has been part of what has

made a difference for missing and murdered Aboriginal women and children. Mr. Speaker, there has to be zero tolerance for any sort of violence, but in this case particularly for missing and murdered Aboriginal women we have to make it our cause to make that difference.

Mr. Speaker, I did not know Loretta Saunders. I had never met Loretta Saunders, but my niece is a student at Saint Mary's University in Halifax. She is studying sociology and criminology. Though she was not in Loretta's classes, because she is in the first part of her program, many of the professors she has at the university were also professors of Loretta's. So the conversations have been had in all of the classes.

She reports that before this actually happened and she had the sense of walking the halls of that particular university where Loretta had been, and interacting with some of the people with whom Loretta had been interacting, she had heard much about this but really did not understand. She really did not quite get it, but now that she is so close to it she understands. She, too, like all of us, is saying: What can we do? How can we make these differences?

Mr. Speaker, I believe the Premier used the word implore. We have to implore the federal government to get to work and to initiate this national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women. Mr. Speaker, it is something that we all ought to be involved in. I encourage everyone in this Province who is listening, who is watching us today, and who hears what we are about in this House of Assembly today to join with us and make this happen for murdered and missing Aboriginal women in this Province and in this country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

As the Opposition critic for the Status of Women, I, too, want to mingle my voice here with the voices that we have already heard today

in support of Loretta. On March 1, on behalf of the Liberal caucus, and with the support of our leader who was very much in favour, we put out our first press release calling for an inquiry. I have been taking every opportunity since that time to speak, and to do our part here to ensure that our voices are heard on the hill in Parliament.

Shortly after my election in July, there was a call from the native women to launch an inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women. At that time all of the provinces bought into it, and all of the territories bought into it. We little knew what would happen in February, but we were fully aware back then that this was a huge issue, that missing and murdered Aboriginal women was already a national crisis that we were dealing with in our country. Then we have a beautiful young woman who goes missing. The outcome is what we had all hoped it would not be. What that did was raised again for us those very daunting, staggering figures that cannot be dismissed.

The executive director of the native women's council in expressing her sentiments said that Aboriginal women continue to be treated as second-class citizens and that Aboriginal women often are considered disposable. What a chilling, chilling thought.

It is important, Mr. Speaker, for us to differentiate between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women's experiences of victimization to better understand the extent of violence against Aboriginal women and the context in which it occurs. Every time I have the opportunity to speak about violence against women in general, I certainly seize that opportunity. I was grateful for the opportunity last night.

It is very important that we identify that the numbers are so disproportionate when it comes to Aboriginal women. It was a sombre, sombre evening for me when I visited with Loretta's family in Goose Bay a couple of Friday nights ago at that funeral home. Any time a parent loses a child, I think there are a couple of things they want. They want them to never be

forgotten, they want to keep their memory alive, but also they want to know that it mattered that they lived.

I can tell you, in the midst of that very grief stricken atmosphere, forefront on the minds of the parents that I spoke with, and of her sisters, Delilah and Audrey, was the fact that this has to happen – a non-partisan independent national inquiry has to happen. It is the only thing that will bring the family and members of all of the Aboriginal groups – and I am sure everybody connected who have parents, have moms, and have aunts. It is the only thing that will bring some solace if we get this national inquiry because violence, Mr. Speaker, is something that affects everyone. It affects people of all ages, race, culture, marital status, and gender. That is why we need to keep speaking out.

We have the purple ribbon campaigns that we have had here in Newfoundland now for four years, but aside from all that we know that Aboriginal victims – my colleague, Randy Edmunds, I would be remiss if I did not mention that he talks about Aboriginal victims a lot and he calls for a better justice system improvement in Labrador and the trend of lesser sentences. Often in Labrador we have issues around delayed justice, meaning denied justice.

Maryanne Pearce, as was mentioned here earlier, an Ottawa-based researcher has shed light on some very, very sobering figures of research that she has done. In a database of 3,329 women, 824 of those were Aboriginal women.

It was early February that I took my place and attended a provincial vigil at the Holiday Inn. Sixty-eight names were read. The pain, the grief, the rawness – the date on the calendar might have been two or three decades ago but to look at the faces of those families who lost their loved ones, you could tell that in their heart it was just yesterday. Sixty-eight names were read and there were eight, I believe, that were read from Labrador. Of the eight names read from Labrador, I am going to venture to guess that probably 90 per cent of them were Aboriginal women – very, very sad.

As the Leader of the Third Party mentioned, it was also identified how they died. It was very, very brutal. They were not just killed; they were killed over and over again. These are difficult things to talk about, Mr. Speaker. It is not pleasant, but we have to. We have to continue now to do this for Loretta, and to do this for all of the other ladies who lost the opportunity to go out and leave their mark and make their contribution in society.

Sometimes we can stigmatize a little bit in society; does it feel as tragic to the public to hear if somebody was further down in society? We know that was not the case with Loretta. Here was a very bright girl. She understood that this was an issue, and so she took it upon herself – and that is what her sister said to me when I met her that night in Goose Bay. She said: Lisa, she knew this was a problem; we feared ourselves for our lives lots of times. It was bone-chilling to listen to her talk to me like that, and just in the next room was her sister who did not get to finish her thesis.

I believe we all have a responsibility here to ensure that we mingle our voices, and that we stay the course, and that we remain relentless in ensuring that this national inquiry not only happens, but that some real results come out of it; and then we need people with the courage in influential positions in both provincial and federal government to ensure that the recommendations are implemented. Far too many times we have inquiries that are called and then the information coming out of that ends up on a shelf and that benefits nobody.

Once again, on behalf of the caucus, it has been sober conversations around our table, we certainly do support a national inquiry, and we will continue to call for that.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

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

I certainly want to join with my colleagues today and echo their sentiments that we must have an inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

When the Minister of Health and Community Services spoke a little while ago, she talked about some statistics and I am going to repeat a few of them because these statistics are crucial. It may not be top of mind for many of us, but the reality is Aboriginal women today are three-and-a-half times more likely than other women to be victims of violence – totally unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

The national statistics also reveal that women between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four are more likely to die from this violence. Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely staggering and certainly something we have recently witnessed. As members have talked about earlier, hundreds of women have been murdered in this Province and all across this country, and we need to put a stop to this. We cannot wait any longer for a national inquiry. The time is now.

In those cases of Aboriginal violence, 50 per cent of the violent incidents were committed by people who knew them. In over 56 per cent, they knew their perpetrator. They know the person who victimized them. We really need, as a population and as a society, to put an end to this, to eradicate the days of violence against women and violence against all persons in our society.

I am going to focus, though, today predominately on women. Looking at our Province alone of Newfoundland and Labrador, there is a very alarming statistic. Seventy per cent of women in this Province are most likely to experience victimization by a spouse or partner. The rest are due to an ex-spouse or common-law or a relative. Only 5 per cent of women in most cases are unable to identify their abuser in any way.

We all need to pay attention to the signs that we see. If we hear of someone using language we do not like, if we see signs of someone becoming withdrawn, it is important for each

and every one of us to speak up, to step up and do what we can to ensure that this person is provided with the safety and the supports they need to get out of their situations. Far too many women in our Province live with violence every day.

In 2012, of the 5,847 crimes committed in this Province, 54 per cent of them were against women. During the past seven years two police forces in our Province, the RNC and the RCMP, reported a total of over 20,000 incidents of crimes against women. These are crimes recorded by the police as actual offences and include crimes such as physical assault, harassment, and sexual offences.

Incredibly, in about 90 per cent of these domestic assaults the man is the perpetrator. Even more incredibly, only 10 per cent of these women will actually report the victimization to police. If the numbers and statistics we are talking about only represent 10 per cent of what has been reported and what is known, how much is really happening and taking place day to day in our society, Mr. Speaker? The stats are alarming and they represent a huge societal issue that we all have a responsibility to address. Our ultimate goal is eradication.

Mr. Speaker, I am honoured that today we are taking an all-party resolution, because by working collaboratively together with government, community partners and stakeholders, we can all make a very positive difference in not only raising awareness about what is happening but putting an end to what is happening.

Mr. Speaker, today I wanted to, if I may – and I know we are not supposed to read directly from text but this has been an issue that has touched my heart for many, many years. In my District of Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune, not so very long ago we had two murder suicides over a seven-month period. We certainly know and understand the pain that this causes to the families and their entire communities.

We had back in 2010, a very special event. I think it was done province-wide in many areas



by the co-ordinating committees. We call them silent witnesses. These were silhouettes of all the women who have lost their lives. These women of course represent people like Loretta Saunders.

The poem here I think really portrays what Loretta is going to continue to do in her afterlife and how she will continue to lead us to do the right thing and achieve what she so desired.

“I have no voice. I feel no pain.  
I’ll stand beside you each step of the way.  
I’ll see you through, there’s work left to do  
So no more lives will be lost in vain  
I’ll stand in the rain.

I’ll stand in the rain. I’ll stand in the snow  
I’ll carry my message wherever I go  
To bring peace and healing... to help the world  
change  
I’ll stand in the rain.

Don’t turn away, don’t close your eyes  
My friends it’s time to realize  
There’s lots to do, reach out your hand,  
We’ll heal the pain across this land  
Together we’ll stand.

If we all work together, we’ll see a new day...  
...We’ll stand in the rain.  
Our voices are gone,  
but our spirits live on...”

Mr. Speaker, Loretta certainly has inspired us all to change this behaviour. I join Premier Marshall and everybody here today in saying that we must resolve to be silent no more.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I am proud that we can all stand together in this House today to deal with this very important issue. I am proud that the Leader of the Third

Party has led us to this action in this House, to bring us to unity.

My grandmother was a Mi’kmaq woman from Port au Port. I grew up watching the effects of daily racism that she faced. I also grew up watching her strength, her determination, and her pride. When I went to school in Winnipeg in high school, I went to school also with Aboriginal girls who had grown up in a residential school system. We witnessed their vulnerability. We witnessed their pain, and we witnessed the racism that they, too, grew up with.

As a young social worker, I worked in a residential treatment centre for juvenile girls. Most of those girls were Aboriginal girls. Aboriginal girls who had been held into sexual slavery, and Aboriginal girls who were the victims of random acts of violence based on racism and based on their vulnerabilities.

We all know the depth and the breadth of this issue. We know how deep it goes. We know how long it has existed. We know how far-reaching it is. We know the pain, we know the loss, and we know the tragedy. We do not need any more statistics. We know. We see it, we hear it, and we understand it.

I am proud of the Native Women’s Association of Canada. I am proud of all the Aboriginal women and their supporters who have spoken out, who have cried out in public, who have demonstrated, who have walked for miles, who have written briefs, who have written letters, and who have talked to their politicians; the Aboriginal women who have called out the names of their mothers, their sisters, their aunts, and their grandmothers who have been beaten, who have been raped, and who have been murdered; the Aboriginal women who have been courageous enough to tell their own stories or the stories of the women they have loved who have gone missing or murdered.

We must listen. We must listen. We must listen to their pain. We must listen to their truth. We must listen to their wisdom. We must listen to

their expertise. We must listen and respect their courage.

The Native Women's Association of Canada in a press release in responding to the Report of the Special Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women wrote, "The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) wishes to express its disappointment and frustration at the report recently released by the *Special Parliamentary Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women* that was touted to be the panacea for addressing the high rates of violence against Aboriginal women and girls, including their disappearances and murder. In spite of the call by many witnesses, who appeared before the Committee, to hold a National Public Inquiry and to implement a National Action Plan, their recommendations fail to appear in the Final Report."

They also go on to say, "Early on, the Special Parliamentary Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls offered the role of a special advisor and expert witness to NWAC but this role fell short of NWAC's expectations vis-à-vis their participation. Instead, NWAC lobbied the Committee to be granted ex-officio status to assist the Committee in developing its work plan, identifying and questioning key witnesses and to participate in developing the final report. Even as a non-voting member of the Committee, NWAC with its extensive knowledge and experience on the issue of violence against women and girls would have been a valuable asset throughout the Committee's mandate. Consequently, NWAC's involvement with the Committee has been minimal."

They finish by saying, "'It is truly unfortunate that this opportunity has been lost; on paper it looks like we are the special advisor and expert witness, but what we received was tokenism and no real engagement,' stated President Audette. 'The committee report does contain a few nuggets of hope, but there is no commitment to substantial change and no new funding dollars to ensure appropriate actions are taken.'"

What have we learned, Mr. Speaker? We have learned again that women who have been working in the field, who have been courageous enough, determined enough, passionate enough to commit themselves to this kind of work have not been heard. There is more for us to learn and we must listen. We must listen to what Loretta Saunders so courageously began.

In an article written by her thesis advisor Darryl Leroux, he said, "The last time I met with Loretta Saunders, two weeks ago, I had never felt more inspired and proud of a student. She had sent me her thesis proposal a week before, and at nearly 11,000 words (28 pages), it was 3 times what the department expected of honours student proposals. Beyond its remarkable length, Loretta carefully presented her research in what I recognized as a most beautifully written and cared-for assignment I had ever read in seven years of university teaching..."

He was listening; he was hearing Loretta. We must believe that we can do this; we must. The problem is so big but we must believe that we can make a change.

After her murder, Loretta's cousin wrote, "It boils down to a simple question. Does the Canadian Government think it's a problem that Aboriginal women are 5-7 times more likely to die from a violent attack? Right now, we don't know. I'm praying that Loretta's death and tens of thousands calling for the inquiry will finally move them to do the right thing.

"I travelled from Labrador to St. John's with Loretta when she left home. We talked about our Inuit roots, our family and our pasts and how we looked at our future as an opportunity to create change and different more healthy cycles and family patterns. We spoke about the topic of aboriginal women going missing and being killed. We joked about how she would change the world, but it wasn't really a joke at all. Loretta HAS changed the world and I'm determined that Loretta will continue to change the world."

Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that the actions that we take here in our House today will also be

about being determined to change the world and making the world a better and a safer place for Aboriginal women and girls, and then consequently making the world a better and a safer place for all women and girls, and then consequently for all people.

As the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa called for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, so must we as a country call for our own, and we must call for it with a sense of urgency, for this is a crisis that needs immediate – immediate – action. Let us be led by Aboriginal women and their communities as we gather the truth, as we gather the truth that tells the story, the stories that will compel us to action because dialogue is not enough. We have to have change on both personal and systemic levels so that perhaps one day we may reach reconciliation.

I would like to end, Mr. Speaker, with a quote from Arundhati Roy, who wrote: Another world is not only possible, but she is on her way, and on a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Placentia – St. Mary's.

**MR. F. COLLINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to offer my words of support to the previous speakers on this significant, very important resolution. I thought I would take a few minutes, and I will be very brief, just to give a little background on how this whole request for a national inquiry has evolved over the last couple of years.

Back in 2006, the First Ministers of Canada in British Columbia gave direction to establish a National Aboriginal Women's Summit in Canada to give direction on strategies with regard to the issues and concerns of Aboriginal Women. As a matter of fact, the first such summit was hosted right here in Newfoundland in Corner Brook in 2007. The second one was in Yellowknife a year later. I had the opportunity to attend the next two in Winnipeg

in 2012-2013. These summits were hosted by the hon. Eric Robinson, who is the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs for Manitoba, and Ms Michèle Audette, who is the President of the Native Women's Association of Canada.

The thrust and focus of those summits was to recommend to the federal government that there be a national inquiry into murdered and missing women in Canada. Mr. Speaker, various numbers have been used, 600 to 800 murdered and missing women. The experiences we have had in this part of the country, in Eastern Canada – you have to remember that these experiences are amplified hundreds of times over in Western Canada, and it was Western Canada that was driving this particular issue.

Mr. Speaker, at that first summit, it was a complete eye opener for me. It was an emotional experience that I have never had before and one that I will always remember. We had participants in that summit, in that conference, giving their personal experiences about missing siblings, missing daughters, missing mothers in British Columbia and Western Canada. Having them pour out these heart wrenching stories to the conference, it had an impact on me and an impact on the other people around the table like I have never seen before.

Mr. Speaker, the result of that conference was not a request for a national inquiry. As much as the Aboriginal people there were so disappointed at the time, primarily because at the time there was already an inquiry ongoing in British Columbia; British Columbia was conducting its own inquiry and the final report had not been released from that.

As well, there were certain parameters. We were not sure of the parameters around the inquiry and what impact it would have on various provinces. So we came out of that summit directed to go back to our governments, our Premiers, and get further direction for the next summit, which was held a few months later back in Winnipeg again.

This time, Mr. Speaker, at the second summit there was no hesitation. After the presentations were made it was decided, much to the relief of the Aboriginal leader there, that there would be a request to the federal government to conduct a national inquiry into murdered and missing women in Canada. Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to be able to come back and sign off on that, have government sign off on that request and be part of the national movement and be part of that national discussion.

Mr. Speaker, it was felt, as a result of that second summit, that this was not an Aboriginal tragedy. This was a national tragedy, and a national disgrace that we had reached this point.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to give that little background because today this resolution is a fitting follow up to what has gone on so far. It is unfortunate and it is tragic that we had to have the experiences of Loretta Saunders in order to instigate that, but the fact is we are here today as a whole, the House as a whole, as a three-way party resolution, that we add our support to this resolution. Hopefully, it will be another step in making the federal government listen.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I have to say again, when you serve in the House of Assembly sometimes you have very emotional days, as this one is. I have to say it is one of the most pleasurable days too, at the same time, to be working hand in hand with government and the Premier for introducing the resolution with the Official Opposition, and for seconding the motion at the same time working with our Leader, Ms Michael, who presented the idea to government.

It is a pleasure to be speaking hand in hand with my fellow members of the House of Assembly. Again, this is going to be one of the days I think that we will all remember. The day when we spoke about the murdered and missing, and at

the same time remember some great people who have gone on before us, including Loretta Saunders.

Again, after hearing the other members of the House of Assembly here today, I am quite honoured. I keep asking myself the question, and I keep coming back to the question ever since – well I guess even before Loretta's passing, when we first all heard the calls for a national inquiry into the murdered and missing.

What is it going to take for the federal government to stand up and say, yes? What is it going to take for our Prime Minister to stand up and say, yes, we will do this? We will cut our population and bleed what is there harming us at the same time and to bring reconciliation to the country again, because as long as he says no, we will forever fester in the knowledge that we are still seeking answers. We are going to be asking ourselves, I fear, for a while yet until they begin to understand.

As my fellow member of the House of Assembly for St. John's Centre just said, the great country of South Africa bled itself and sat down and reconciled with itself that something bad happened. That something nasty was there within its history. After it got rid of apartheid it met the challenge and it refused to put down the challenge.

That great Archbishop Desmond Tutu chaired the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of the late 1980s, early 1990s, and peeled back – as painful as it was – the truth and exposed it for what it was. Now we have a country that has started healing as a result of that. The South African name, the country has become great again, all over again. Not only because of Mandela, but because the truth was exposed.

I want to bring out the points as well that for every crime that has happened and for every Aboriginal person who has disappeared or has been murdered as a result, somebody knows something. Do you know who I feel for in this? It is not just the families that I think of, it is the police forces who investigate cases like this and who have to long live with the memory of the

case that is unsolved or because they have had to go and attend to a crime scene like this. We have to put a stop to it.

What makes it keep happening? I do not know, but somebody knows something. Hopefully, in spite of all these cases that remain unsolved and people murdered, nobody convicted for their crime, somebody may pick up the phone and justice will be served one day. Hopefully, the justice we are serving today will be presented again to the people of Canada one of these days and represented by the Prime Minister who is going to say yes to this. We will continue to press on for it.

What can we as people do? Some people sitting at home today may be wondering what to be doing to help us as legislators, to help us as MHAs, government, Official Opposition, Third Party, call us what you will. It takes nothing to contact your Member of Parliament. You can rip off the top of a cereal box and ask the Prime Minister today. Drop it in the mail. Ask the Prime Minister to get the inquiry on the go. It costs nothing.

It does not cost you a stamp to get in contact with your member, (inaudible) off to the Prime Minister. That is probably one of the best ways to do it. Send a message as legislators here in the Province. Perhaps they could send us a message too at the same time, but I think we have already gotten the message as members of the House of Assembly. Our own constituents tell us every day, we want to get an effective message to the Prime Minister on this issue and help bring resolution to the cause.

We stand with the Official Opposition, we stand with the government on this, and we stand with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador on this issue. Mr. Prime Minister, we want that inquiry and we want it now, the same as other provinces and other people who have come forward.

I will leave you with a little line, it is not very often, I guess, sometimes when you hear a member speak, sometimes he sparks something in your mind and you have to grab a pen and

paper and write. I will leave you with something that just came about because I have the note. The Member for Lake Melville, for some reason, sparked this in my mind and I wrote it down. It goes something like this – because he was talking about women being the fabric of society. It goes like this: While our women are the fabric of our society, within action we all stand with fabric torn. While we wait for others to react and help mend, another into trouble can be borne.

Mr. Speaker, I support this call for a national inquiry. I stand with my brothers and sisters in this House of Assembly and do the same thing.

Thank you very much.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, as you see here today all parties are in favour of an inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada. As people spoke today – and particularly people like the Member for Lake Melville who is from the same community as Loretta Saunders, this is still very raw in everyone's mind what happened to Loretta. We see the emotion and we hear it from a number of members here today. As much as emotion plays into the debate, the need for the inquiry is not just based on emotion; it is also based on some facts and some statistics that really outline why we need to dig deeper and we need to understand the depths of the problems that we are talking about.

Aboriginal women have a higher rate of victimization compared to non-Aboriginal women, both in their spousal relationships and non-spousal violence. Aboriginal women experience higher and more severe forms of violence in intimate relationships than non-Aboriginal women. When we use words like severe forms of abuse, people are probably wondering: What are you talking about? What does that mean? When you put the words to it, Mr. Speaker, it means they are more often sexually assaulted, beaten, choked, and

threatened with a gun or with a knife. Aboriginal women are disproportionately represented as homicide victims in Canada.

We always look for the explanations of these findings. Why is it that Aboriginal women experience violence more in and out of relationships than other women in Canada? There are some explanations and we have some broad socio-economic factors that affect this. We look at issues – sometimes we look for answers, whether it is in loss of culture, residential school experiences, economic and social inequalities, or demographic differences, and in particular the fact that we have a faster growing youth population in our Aboriginal communities than we have in some of our other communities.

When we look at these explanations and we try to find some level of explanation or be able to answer our questions, all of these socio-economic factors need to be brought together. Because no one factor provides the explanation to help us explain why Aboriginal women are more susceptible or are victimized more than non-Aboriginal women, but it is being able to put a culmination of all these different factors together and lay that over some of the institutions they use when they need services.

Aboriginal women killed by a spouse in a relationship account for about 4 per cent of the murders in Canada, and that is in relation to the population. So it would be the same for Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal when it comes to the homicide rates, but Aboriginal women account for at least 11 per cent of the dating homicides in Canada and 10 per cent of the non-intimate partner homicides in Canada as well, their victims. As we look at the different forms of violence, whether it is a homicide within a spousal relationship, in a dating relationship, or no relationship, we start to see that Aboriginal women outpace other women in Canada as far as being represented as victims in these types of homicides.

One of the shortcomings when we look at the stats and we start quoting the 10 per cent and the 11 per cent is 11 per cent of all homicide cases

in the survey, where the stats came, from the Aboriginal identity was unknown. What that means is it is very likely that the Aboriginal women are represented more than the statistics can tell.

We should be able to understand that as a Province of Newfoundland and Labrador simply by the fact that we have so many women today who would be recognized as having their status as Qalipu; however, if we go back into the history of the homicides in Newfoundland and Labrador, we would have no way to know if the female victims were Qalipu or Mi'kmaq in origin. We would probably have more ability to look at the Inuit or Innu, but I would think if we looked back over our statistics and we looked at the women who lost their lives over the years we would probably have a higher rate of Aboriginal women victims than what we know today.

We also know that the severity of violence suffered by Aboriginal women is far greater than non-Aboriginal women. What that means is that if there is an act of violence towards an Aboriginal woman, it is more likely that level of violence led to some level of injury which was greater than what would be experienced by other women in our society.

There are a number of stereotypes. There are a number of ways that are systemic of how Aboriginal women have been stereotyped and are subjected to racist views that lead to some of these statistics. The racist and sexist stereotypes deny the dignity and the self-worth of Aboriginal women. What that means is that because of these long-standing stereotypes, we often think less of Aboriginal women in our communities. As a result, they are more likely to be a target.

Mr. Speaker, these racist and sexist attitudes need to be challenged. They need to be challenged in an inquiry that we hold into murdered and missing Aboriginal women. Because if these attitudes are being held by society, we need to come to grips with these attitudes. Until we become aware of them and we address them and we understand the implications, they will never change.

We need to look at all systems and how they are responding when Aboriginal women are looking for supports. This could include housing services, child protection, addictions, health care, mental health services, and policing services. We need to be able to see that in all of these services – and there are even more – is there any way that racist or sexist stereotypes are pervasive or in any way affect how women receive services? If we can start digging and look at this, we will be able to come to some level of agreement on what it means to move forward.

The inherent and systemic biases needs to be removed; it needs to be removed right across this country and at all level of services. We need to examine and no longer accept the inequalities, we need to see that this is a national issue, and we need to work with all the other provinces and the federal government to ensure that the solutions that we find are not just localized to one province or another. We need to recognize that these issues are prevalent across Canada and we need to ensure that any solutions also need to be enacted across the entire country, as well.

Mr. Speaker, this government has had a Violence Prevention Initiative for a number of years, with six strategic priorities. One of the strategic priorities is increasing awareness and attitudinal change, and that gets right at what I have been talking about when I talk about the racist or the sexist attitudes that may underline some of the statistics when we talk about violence towards Aboriginal women. We need to ensure that we have social awareness campaigns that people are aware of violence, they are able to identify what it means, and they are able to understand that it is wrong. It is not a joke, it is not a laughing matter, and they need to be able to deal with it.

Another strategic priority is increasing community participation. We have ten regional co-ordinating committees that help us with the activities of the Violence Prevention Initiative. What that means is that we recognize our local communities have the expertise and what it takes to understand their area, understand the violence

that is happening and what they need to do to address it to effectively address a message. Mr. Speaker, we understand that our Aboriginal communities play an important role in this as well.

Another one of our strategic priorities is supporting Aboriginal women and children. We have \$200,000 dedicated and we have eleven projects where our Aboriginal communities apply for grants so that they can do anti-violence or violence prevention activities in their local areas.

We have also had, for a number of years, an annual Aboriginal women's conference. It started in 2006. I understand the planning is underway now. I have had the benefit of attending a number of these difference conferences when they are held throughout the Province, Mr. Speaker.

As we come together in our Legislature to say that we want to have a national inquiry on murdered and missing Aboriginal women, we understand that there is really only one side to this issue. No one is going to argue that we do not need an inquiry. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that this is not if there is going to be an inquiry, this is about when there is going to be an inquiry. The need is not going to change until we understand the issues and we are able to provide some answers.

I hope that the Government of Canada acts swiftly so that we can have this inquiry because, as I said, it is not about if, but it is about when.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I just want to speak about the person who has really been the catalyst to move us in this direction at this time; it is Loretta Saunders. Loretta Saunders was from Happy Valley – Goose Bay. She was attending university in Halifax. She was doing an honour thesis on missing and murdered Aboriginal women. Mr. Speaker, she did not get a chance to finish her work; however, if we all work together we will finish the work of Loretta Saunders.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** If the hon. the Premier speaks now, he will close the debate.

The hon. the Premier.

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

I want to express my appreciation to all members of the House who have taken part in this debate. What we have had here is something that does not happen too often in this House that we have united; all parties have united in common agreement in seeking this inquiry. Our voices have been joined and it is now time to join our votes and pass this resolution and then pass it on to the Government of Canada so they are well aware of the unanimous feelings of all members of this House of Assembly.

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

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Conservation, that the House now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 2 respecting the granting of Interim Supply to Her Majesty.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that the House now resolve itself into a Committee of Supply to consider Bill 2, and that I do now leave the Chair.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

### Committee of the Whole

**CHAIR (Littlejohn):** Order, please!

We are considering the related resolution and Bill 2, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2015 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

The hon. the Minister of Finance – the Minister of Education, I am sorry.

**MR. JACKMAN:** I am not the Minister of Finance, Mr. Chair, and I do not want it either.

Mr. Chair, I suppose I will put it this way. I am in a bit of a difficult situation right now as we are going back to Interim Supply following the debate – no, it is not debate – the conversation, I will put it that way, that just happened around the call for this national inquiry. You are sitting here and you have your BlackBerry, and you take a look at the Twitter messages. I am going to reference TelegramJames. I do not want to inflate his ego too much, but I am going to take a look at him. He is saying that three parties in this House can get along.

The roles that we carry out in this House are a wonderful part of democracy. Sometimes I am certain people will stand up and say: You know, I do not think Minister Jackman likes the Member for St. John's North. Now, that is absolutely not true. We do our roles. He is in on the opposite side being a critic for Education, and he has his role to carry out.

I will remind some of the people who follow it in the public or who look at it through the television screens that off of these screens our roles are often quite the opposite. I have a



respect for the Member for St. John's North, and I would hope that he respects my role as Education Minister because both of us want the same thing. We want what is best for the students of this Province. We want what is best for education in this Province.

Mr. Chair, I am going to take you back a few years now to when I was in university. I can remember one professor bringing in a document at one point. He wanted to point out to us that once we got out in the schools in our classes we will have teachers, doctors, tradespeople, lawyers and ministers – not the ministers who are in this House, I call them the clergy but they would have ministers – but also that in your class you would have people who could end up being murderers, robbers, thieves, and all of that.

You have that broad spectrum in your classes starting at a very young age and eventually they develop into different roles. I guess it has been a part of the education system for the longest time, ever since education, schools and everything have been established. The bottom line as to the role of teachers in our schools and I guess us as individuals in society, is that bottom line of respect.

Anybody who has been following I will say my appearances or the things that we put out, the documents that we have put out as a Department of Education, and from the Department of Education previous to my coming into the ministry – let's talk a little bit about the Safe and Caring Schools. We can have the debate about what the roles of teachers are, the numbers that are required and everything else. Look, the bottom line in anti-bullying and having our school system being the best that we can is that one underlying word and that is respect.

We see it in our ads: Teach him how to respect women – that ad that is on TV. Mr. Chair, I have four sons and a daughter. I would hope that my sons have learned from my example the respect that I have for their mother, and the respect that I have for their wives, my daughters-in-law. They all have different personalities and sometimes each will rub the other's nerves, but

the bottom line, Mr. Chair, is that bottom line of respect.

What are we doing? I do not care what anyone says – I do not care what anyone says – you look in our schools today and take a look at the education the young people are getting around that message of respect, acceptance, and understanding. There will always be the challenges of the few and that is what this discussion today was about, that we have to find our way to a place where we see incidents of this nature – unfortunately I think these types of incidents will happen again, but we have to make sure we do everything we possibly can to counter these types of activities.

All we have to do is take a look at the impact this has had on the people of this Province and the people of this country. I have to tell you, when we followed the story, it just gnaws at your heart and your psyche; it is something that bothers you, that ugly side of society.

As minister, I have to say I have been into a number of schools. I would say I have probably been in ten to fifteen in the last year. When I go into a gymnasium, I see the majority of the students that are wearing pink t-shirts. We look at a principal who stands in front of 400 and 500 students and says to them: Okay, what is our main message? You get students who are echoing back: It is about respect; it is about understanding that you do not bully the person next to you and that you do not want anything done to others that you would not want to have done to you. All of these messages are coming across and I have to just stand and commend the teachers who are in the system, who are working day in and day out to promote that message across their entire curriculum.

Now, it is a never-ending struggle, there is no doubt about that. We have to keep on preaching that message. We have to start it as early as we can. We continue to preach it. We deliver it in the schools and you take it into the home.

I learned a lesson quite a while ago. I was a member of a volunteer fire department. This is going back a ways, too; it was when they were

trying to get smoke detectors into the homes. One of the things they had trouble with was getting the smoke detectors into some homes. So where did the provincial fire department go and look? They said, let us start with kindergarten to Grade 3, the reason being they knew that if miss or sir – the teachers – said that a smoke detector had to go into the school, those students were going to go home and they were going to insist that those smoke detectors went into the home. They were highly successful.

My point in telling that story is that young children respect and take the messages of their teachers very seriously. As we move further into the Safe and Caring Schools Initiative, then we know the teachers will continue to preach and get that message out there.

I have to say that every school I have gone into, you can see how the messaging is taking effect. You can see their messages. They are on their walls. They are on whiteboards in their classrooms. They are in the corridors. It is no trouble to see. I can remember the one I went to, the school in Harbour Breton, and right in the corridor was – five, I believe it was – their key messages that they wanted their students to abide by, and if I go to Beachy Cove, when I was there, and when I was in Grand Falls, Exploits Valley High. So right from the youngest of age to the oldest of our students, they are getting that message.

I was so pleased on Pink Shirt Day when I went to a restaurant out in the local area to see a young child there with their pink shirt on, but also to see a senior high young girl who had the pin in her lapel on Pink Day. The message is getting out there. It is about our Safe and Caring Schools, and today I kind of speak to the message in a tone I do not think we normally see in this House of Assembly.

I just want to say to James, TelegramJames, that democracy is at work and doing quite well.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

**MR. KIRBY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to say in response to the minister, I certainly respect him and the work he has to do as Minister of Education. I know he has to make difficult decisions, and while we disagree often, my disagreement with him is certainly not personal. It is based on our policy differences and maybe a difference in perspective for a variety of different reasons.

In the spirit of positivity, before I get into some other more gritty detail, I just wanted to thank the Minister of Education for helping out a school in my district recently, Leary's Brook Junior High, where there are a number of students who could avail of the use of a sport wheelchair. They had borrowed one from Easter Seals, which is also in my district. The minister was kind enough to listen to administrators at the school and help us out.

It is funny, last week I was taking the minister to task, and after I sat down I went around the Speaker's Chair and I said: I want to thank you very much because I was at the breakfast program at Leary's Brook this morning, and I mentioned it to a young woman who is in a wheelchair there, a student, and she was so delighted to hear this. Then I said to him: Now, thank you very much, I have to go back over and start at you again once I stand up. So it is the nature of debate; we certainly disagree, but the minister has been helpful. I can go into details on a number of other occasions where he has certainly done things that are very positive for schools in my district. I wanted to put that out there.

Now, on another matter, I listened to the minister last week when he spoke in debate on this particular bill, and I will quote the minister. He says, "I would just like to take us through where we are. I am the minister for kindergarten to Grade 12 and also the minister responsible for the education component from zero up to the time that students enter kindergarten."

Of course, that is accurate, there is no question about that, but there is also a responsibility that comes under the Minister of Education that he did not mention at any point in his speech, and I can understand why. I think what has happened with the public library system in Newfoundland and Labrador is perhaps somewhat unmentionable in the context of the positive message the minister was hoping to deliver.

I had received correspondence from an organization with an interest in the state of public libraries in the Province earlier last month. They were imploring government to restore the funds that were cut to libraries in Newfoundland and Labrador last year. We know rural communities rely on libraries. We know those young children the minister is talking about, their parents rely on libraries.

I have personal experience with this myself because my son is just turning three years old in May, and I know the number of trips we have made down to the library to get children's books, because you would have to have a small fortune really to keep up with the books that you go through in the run of a week. It is not just books. It is other tools, if you will; there are other tools you can take out of the library these days, whether it is DVDs and other sorts of learning materials.

Libraries are incredibly crucial for people with young children. Oftentimes there are people in our communities who have young children; they are starting out, they have student loans, they have mortgages, they have child care expenses, and they really cannot afford to purchase all of those learning materials, storybooks, and so on themselves. So libraries are extremely crucial in our Province today.

Last year, a total of \$1.2 million – \$1.2 million – was taken out of the library system. That resulted in a significant loss of personnel, of managers, of librarians, a number of IT personnel, and other personnel at libraries. I remember sitting here – or maybe it was over there – last year when the Budget was being delivered. The Premier stood there and she said: We will get more with less. I stood up and I

looked at the Premier and I said no, we cannot get more with less when it comes to our libraries.

I see the minister. The minister spends a lot of time – and as I said the last time I got up to speak on this, the minister is very privileged, in my opinion. He gets to go out and he gets to see the good work that our teachers are doing in our schools by hook or by crook. Sometimes things are almost like they are duct-taped together. They are doing the best they can, extraordinary work under sometimes difficult circumstances, children with increasingly complex needs, all included in classrooms that require differentiated instructions. That is whereby the teacher has to deliver curriculum in multiple ways, sometimes at different levels to students, all in one classroom. The minister gets out to observe this frequently across the Province.

I try to spend as much time as I can working with and speaking with teachers, administrators, and staff in the schools in St. John's North, and so I really envy the minister that he gets to go across Newfoundland and Labrador and observe the good work, but also the problems first-hand. That is incredibly important for somebody who has to do that job.

I know the minister is often out reading to children and so on. There was an article last year, I think this was the CBC, just observing the dichotomy of politicians, ministers of the Crown reading, celebrating, and promoting literacy amidst the cuts we saw to public libraries in Newfoundland. Not only that, because as I mentioned the last time I was up, we also saw cuts to learning resource teachers as well.

Learning resource teachers are sort of a modern-day, highfalutin way of saying librarians. Learning resource teachers deal with the books in the library, but they also deal with a lot of the information technology and twenty-first century teaching tools in our schools. They were cut as well. We have one now for every 1,000 students instead of one for every 750. That has significant impacts on the delivery of education

in a classroom in the context of cuts to public libraries.

None of this really should be surprising because by and large literacy in many ways has fallen off of this government's agenda. We also saw at least a very significant pause in anything being done with the Strategic Adult Literacy Plan that was promised back in 2007. I do not know how many ministers have gone through that portfolio since that was promised. Not much has been done in that area.

We regularly see international test scores that say we have serious problems with literacy in this Province. Of course, a lot of that comes from the structure of our economy. There was a time when people did not have to achieve higher levels of education in order to get a half-decent job. I remember when I was growing up a lot of the people who I went to school with quit school in Grade 9 and went to work down to the plant. You cannot really do that the same way as you used to be able to.

I went up to the Legislative Library and I had a look around. We did have a strategic literacy plan in this Province. We had a very well-thought-out, well-researched literacy plan for this Province in 2000 and it just fell off the agenda. I think this is the time; this year is the time to put literacy back on the agenda. Let us put literacy back on the agenda with this Budget this year. This is an excellent opportunity, going into the election now the fall, I say to members opposite.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

I remind the hon. member that his time has expired.

**MR. KIRBY:** Put literacy back on the agenda.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Finance.

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

**MS JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, it is a pleasure to rise again in this House and speak to Interim Supply. I did bring it in last week, but before I get into that, I would like to speak about the debate we did earlier today.

First and foremost I would like to send my condolences to the family and friends of Loretta Saunders. I have been in this House almost ten and a half years now and we have had some moments where the debates have been very moving, but today was certainly one that will remain with me for a long time. It is such a tragedy to see such a young, bright female pass at such an early age with so much to look forward to in life. That was all stripped away, Mr. Chair.

It is really good to see all parties on one side here today calling on the federal government to do an inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women. It is really hard to move from that debate back into Interim Supply and speak about the economy and all of the things that I, as Minister of Finance, have to speak to, but I did want to certainly send out my condolences before I switched gears, Mr. Chair.

Most of Interim Supply now has been taken up by the Minister of Education and his critic, the Member for St. John's North, so I thought before I got into speaking about some economic indicators I wanted to continue the piece around education because it is so important. Family is critical and certainly education comes very closely behind. We strive to ensure that from birth onward, right throughout the entire continuum, that as a government we do what we can for our children right from birth.

I personally have seen the kits that are given out at the public health nurse and the clinics. My daughter recently had her preschool checkup and she absolutely loves the two books that were included with the kit. We read them over and over and over again. As educators will tell you, that is the best way for the children to learn. In very short order they are reading the books to you. They do not get every word, but they certainly understand and can memorize a lot of what is in it, and there is no better way of

learning. Those kits are absolutely fabulous. I have to commend the minister and the department on the work. Also, the other things in the kits, in terms of the modeling clay and all sorts of educational things, are not only educational for my child; it was actually educational for me as a parent as well, so great kits.

We see what we do for age zero to three, and then of course from K-12. Our government has made such significant investments into education, and so we should, Mr. Chair. Since 2003, it is amazing to note that our spending has increased by 61.4 per cent just in education in K-12 alone, and that includes capital infrastructure. We have made extraordinary investments in the K-12 system, particularly around infrastructure in our Province. It is always important that we remind the public and we also remind ourselves, sometimes, but we often forget, with so many things happening and so many initiatives being brought in, what it is we have done.

It is really interesting to note, Mr. Chair, that since 2004 thirteen new schools have opened and eight more are under construction or in the planning phases. These are some of the areas where they have opened or are under construction: we have projects in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Port Hope Simpson, L'Anse-au-Loup, Baie Verte, Carbonear, St. Anthony, Port Saunders, Conception Bay South, Portugal Cove-St. Phillip's, Paradise, Torbay, Gander, and the list goes on and on.

It is not just the new schools that are under construction, but also major school extensions. Since 2004 we have completed twenty-six major school extensions. These are redevelopments and renovation projects, both in rural and urban parts of the Province. Certainly more of those are under way as well.

So, Mr. Chair, when it comes to our investment into the K-12 system, it is certainly unprecedented in terms of the numbers I have seen over the history of Newfoundland and Labrador being a Province. It really illustrates our commitment, the minister's commitment, the

Premier's commitment, and our government's commitment, to young people of this Province. We want to ensure they have safe and healthy environments in which to learn, and that is so critical, having a safe environment around you. As we all know, it is important to have a safe home to live in, it is important to have a safe workplace, and it is critically important to have a safe school to learn in.

Just last year alone was another extraordinary year for educational infrastructure in our Province. We allocated \$102 million in school infrastructure, and this includes \$3.5 million for major capital projects, \$76.9 million for continuing projects, and \$21.4 million for repairs and maintenance. That was just last year alone, Mr. Chair. As we all know, the Budget is coming soon and we will see where we go in terms of investments as we go forward with schools.

I just wanted to have a few words around education because I really, truly believe that in order for society as a whole to benefit both from a social and economic perspective there is no better investment we can make than in our young people, particularly in the areas of education.

To switch gears just a little bit, Mr. Chair, I had the opportunity last night to speak at the university to a Master of Employment Relations program. There were some MBA students in the room and I understand the Member for St. John's North was there a couple of weeks ago. I believe it is so critically important as politicians, as government members, and as Opposition to speak to young people, to speak to university undergrads, and to speak to graduate students because they are the leaders of tomorrow. They will be making the decisions and it is important we have this dialogue with them. They were very interested in the prospects for them when they graduate and what is happening in the Province. I talked about a lot of the economic indicators and they were quite pleased to see how we have been doing as a Province since 2009.

As I said, we have said this information before but it is important to keep saying it because this is really remarkable stuff. When you look at from 2003 to 2013, capital investment in the Province has increased by 232 per cent. In terms of employment, employment has increased over the last decade by 9.9 per cent.

Mr. Chair, in response to the Speech from the Throne the other day, the Leader of the Opposition said that we are the highest in Canada when it comes to our unemployment rate. Well, first of all, that is not the case for this year. We are very proud to say we are no longer the highest in Canada when it comes to the unemployment rate; PEI has surpassed us. What he did not say the other day in terms of unemployment rates is that it has come down in the last ten years by 5 percentage points. It is the lowest this year than it has ever been since 1973, since before I was born. That is something to be very proud of as a Province and it speaks to all of the businesses and all of the major projects that are underway in the Province.

Mr. Chair, I also talked about average weekly earnings last night, and we are actually the second, only behind Alberta, in the country when it comes to average weekly earnings. Our average weekly earnings in the Province now are \$951, and since 2003 that number has increased by 48.6 per cent. Certainly that is attributed to a lot of the oil and gas projects and mining projects, but there are also major spinoffs and benefits that come from those projects as well, which is increasing the earnings.

Mr. Chair, when you combine these factors with unprecedented reductions in income tax by our government – and when I get an opportunity to get up again because my time is short I will speak to and remind people of those tax reductions, which, by the way, have put \$600 million back into the pockets of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians every year since 2006. The result of all of this is that people have more disposable income. If you have more disposable income, retail sales go up and housing starts go up.

With only less than twenty seconds left, I would like to save some of that detail for later because I do not want to rush through it. It is important in terms of what is going on in our economy. So I will leave it at that and give somebody else an opportunity. I will take my place again soon.

Thank you.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

**MR. LANE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It certainly is a pleasure for me to stand again in this hon. House and make a few comments. I am glad that we are on the topic of education because we have significant issues taking place within the City of Mount Pearl as it relates to education these days. Of course, Mr. Chair, I am referring to the review which is being done of the Mount Pearl-Paradise school system.

I will acknowledge up front that this review is certainly something that needs to be done. It is something that I have advocated. Myself, the Member for Mount Pearl North, and the Member for Kilbride have had meetings over the last couple of years with what was then the Eastern School District. Of course, there was, I think, at least two if not three years that there was actually a review promised and in each year for one reason or another it did not happen.

The last year that was promised, it was supposed to happen last year, and we were told at the time the rationale behind why it was not done was because they were dealing with situations with the school system in the Whitbourne area. That was something that raised a question in my mind in terms of the whole amalgamation, if you will, of all the schools under the English School District. If they cannot handle looking at reorganization in Mount Pearl and then dealing with some issues in the Whitbourne area, how are they going to handle the whole Province? It did make you think about that. Nonetheless, it is happening now. The fact that it is happening I

think is a good thing. It is a needed thing. We have issues.

We have two streams coming into Mount Pearl; we have the Mount Pearl Senior High and the Mount Pearl Senior High feeder system, and then we have the O'Donel High School and the O'Donel feeder system. In the Mount Pearl Senior High system, there have been overcrowding issues. There is no doubt, Mr. Chair, that something needs to be done there. On the O'Donel side of things, particularly as it relates to the feeder system and St. Peter's Elementary in particular, we have had significant issues.

I attended a couple of rallies last year that were held by parents at school council and parents at St. Peter's Elementary who had great concern because of the overcrowding. I heard the Minister of Finance talking about all the investments that have been made into school infrastructure and so on. I think it is important that we make those investments. I am glad to see other communities throughout the Province have benefitted from that. There is a requirement for investment to be made in Mount Pearl as well.

When we look at St. Peter's Elementary we have a situation there, Mr. Chair, where we have the lunchroom being utilized as a gymnasium by children. We have the lunchroom also being utilized as a music room. We have kids utilizing their desks in their classroom as a lunchroom because of the fact that the lunchroom is being used for other purposes.

We have seen the loss of the resource centre. We have seen what used to be two classrooms – renovations made to make two classrooms into three classrooms, and jamming the kids into those three classrooms, and then having to go around in terms of the use of computers and so on because of the resource centre issue, having to bring in mobile systems into an already jammed space for children. That is totally unacceptable and there is no need. Some changes have to be made.

That said, Mr. Chair, I think what we have had occur since that time, the English school board have met with school councils in the Mount Pearl-Paradise system, and as a result of those meetings and I guess other consultations, they came forth to parents with – they held two meetings, public meetings, and they came forth with just two options. I would suggest both options that were presented, present serious concern. Present serious concern to the students, present serious concerns to the teachers, serious concerns, most importantly, to the students.

Basically, they had a meeting with two options, both options of which were unacceptable and basically gave parents the opportunity through their feedback to come up with one. It is almost like here are two bad options, which one do you prefer the best? What is the best of the worst?

Since that time, the school board has come forward with one option. The option that has come forward, Mr. Chair, I think there are numerous concerns around it. I think I would liken it to basically trying to kill a fly with a sledgehammer. I think that is what they are doing with the option that has been presented. It is just like trying to kill a fly with a sledgehammer – you talk about overkill. On the Mount Pearl Senior High side of things, they are looking to totally destroy a school community at Mount Pearl Intermediate; totally destroy it.

Mr. Chair, we are going to see a situation, for example – if I can find my notes here now. Mount Pearl Intermediate is going to lose their Grade 5 and Grade 9s. They are going to lose their early French teaching staff; that is going to impact specialty teachers as well. For example, because of the size of the population and the student body and so on, they are able to allocate, for example, a teacher who is dedicated to art as opposed to a teacher who teaches some other subject and art is sort of a sideline. They lose expertise in some of these areas.

It is going to cause a major disruption in terms of the teaching staff, and the movement and the bumping and everything else that is going to occur. They are going to lose a large new art room they have. That is going to be gone. A

double gymnasium is going to be gone. They have an awesome resource centre there, that is going to be gone. Smart Boards that they fundraised for, they are not going to be able to take with them. That is going to be gone. Overall, Mr. Chair, it is going to totally destroy that school community. There are also concerns with the Etcetera program and so on.

Mr. Chair, on the other side, what they are proposing – again, the best of two bad options – is that we are going to see St. Peter's Elementary now going to turn to a K to Grade 3, and Newtown Elementary will be a Grades 4 to 6. That is going to present a number of problems. First of all, you are going to have the issue of siblings. You have two kids who might be a year or two apart, now you are going to be bringing them to different schools. There are all kinds of issues around parents dropping off kids and so on. They have young kids, and they are not going to stay together. They will be in two schools.

We are going to have issues around the fact that there will be extra schools they have to go to. Instead of three schools, now they have to go to four schools. They are going to have issues around parking lot safety. St. Peter's Elementary is already – I see the Minister of Health over there getting a grand old laugh out of it. It is amazing that she finds it funny that parents have all of these concerns about their children and this is a big laugh, a big joke. It might be a joke over there, it is not a joke over here I can assure you.

Mr. Chair, a lot of the problems that are presented here, other options could be brought forward, but it may actually require government to spend a few dollars to accommodate. For example, on Mount Pearl Senior High, there is an option that was brought forward of having some – what is it, as the Minister of Education says? State of the art modular classrooms to alleviate the situation until Paradise gets a high school; but, instead, we are going to switch the intermediate with the high school and cause all of this disruption.

The other issue in terms of St. Peter's, even after they make these changes – they have already acknowledged, even with the changes proposed there will still be kids eating lunch in the classroom, doing gym in the lunchroom and so on.

Mr. Chair, there are all kinds of concerns here, and I intend to get up and speak about them even further as time goes on.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First I would like to ask, who do I pay for that little bit of entertainment? Because I have to say, I did find the previous speaker quite entertaining. It is interesting how the placement of one person's backside can change their philosophies and thoughts and opinions. Time does change everything, Mr. Chair, because it was only a short time ago that everything was wonderful and now everything is terrible. Going from cheerleader to critic is a quick transition.

It was only a short time ago that I listened to the member speak about Mount Pearl and I think, as a person with a young family, I would like to move to Mount Pearl because Mount Pearl sounds like a wonderful place, wonderful schools and wonderful infrastructure. My God, I would not step foot inside the city after listening to the member now. Everything went from wonderful to terrible. So, it is interesting. I am glad to see perspectives have changed.

I will have more to say later, but I will take an opportunity to commend the Premier and the minister on this morning's announcement. Of course, they appointed three individuals to conduct an independent statutory review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act.



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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Mr. Chair, that in itself is a significant announcement, but what is even more significant is those who they put on that board. If I can just review for some of the public who did not see the announcement – I am sure they will see it on the 6 o'clock news, but I would like to speak about it for a second. Of course, the first person we have there is Clyde Wells, and many people know Clyde Wells as being a former Premier, as well he held quite a few positions. I have a little bit of background here on the other as well: Doug Letto, who is an accomplished journalist and author, amongst other things, as well as Ms Stoddart – I do not want to butcher her name, but Ms Stoddart who is actually the former Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

We have people who are very, very good at what they have done. They have tied into this type of work and certainly nobody can say they were put there because of their colours because, as you can tell by the names that I just said, there is no political affiliation.

We want to hear what people have to say and we want to hear it without any bias; we want to have it straight. Again, I would like to commend the Premier and the minister – a fantastic announcement.

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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Mr. Chair, since 2011 – actually it seems like since about 1983 I have been in the Department of Health as Parliamentary Secretary; it has only been three years but it seems like thirty-three. As many people know, of course, the Department of Health – the thing we talk about with health, health affects everyone right from your first breath right on to your last breath. It affects and touches every single person and individual in the Province.

I just want to review a couple of things because I have a couple of things to say. I just want to touch the top of the trees first. In Budget 2013 nearly \$3 billion was allocated to improve health

care for all residents of the Province. Right now our health care funding represents 40 per cent of the total provincial Budget, and if you break that down, Mr. Chair, that is \$5,249 per person to provide those services across the Province. In the country that is amongst the highest.

It is incumbent on us as a government, as a department, to spend those dollars in the most efficient and make sure you get the best bang for the buck, with patient care being paramount over all things.

I want to talk about some of the more, to me, important issues in health and things we are making great strides in. Cancer treatment and prevention: Over \$155 million in cancer treatment and prevention since 2004, a huge number. There are three cancer screening programs; some of these being new. The breast cancer screening program – and that has actually been expanded to allow women age forty to forty-nine who were referred by their primary health care provider to be part of that program. Then we have the cervical cancer screening program and we also have the colon cancer screening program. That is one that was rolled out, I guess, last year. That is a new one and that is a wonderful program as well. Again, these things affect all of us at a certain age.

Dialysis services: \$225 million since 2004; we seen a doubling in the number of dialysis sites from seven to fourteen since 2004 and we have the fifteenth site opening up, I guess, this year in Harbour Breton.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** In May.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** In May of this year in Harbour Breton and that will be the fifteenth site, and I know that the folks in Harbour Breton are so appreciative of that.

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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** With dialysis, there is so much travel involved and you have people that obviously are ill, so if we can provide those services closer to home and cover off the large expansive geography that Newfoundland and

Labrador is I think it is a great, great thing to be able to do.

Infrastructure: Over \$1.2 billion in health care infrastructure since 2004; thirty-five health care infrastructure projects, to be precise, have been announced since 2004 including hospitals, long-term care treatment centres, and twelve anticipated to be completed in 2014.

I want to run through a few of these: the youth treatment centres for addictions in Grand Falls – Windsor and complex mental health needs in Paradise; the Faculty of Medicine expansion and Genetics Research Centre in St. John's; the Labrador West Health Centre and Marystown North Clinic on the Burin Peninsula, which is going to be, I guess, the same as the one that was just opened up last year in Glovertown, a new clinic that I am very familiar with and very appreciative of. Certainly I can say on behalf of all the residents in my district, particularly Glovertown and surrounding areas, are very appreciative of – a beautiful building.

We also have the long-term care facility opening in St. John's, along with protective community residences in Bonavista and Clarendville. Now, I want to speak a little bit about the St. John's long-term care. I actually had the opportunity to attend with the CEO of Eastern Health, along with the minister, and they did a guided media tour, I guess that was last week some time, and that was the first time it had been open to the public. It was the first time that I have stepped inside those doors. I have driven by it on Newfoundland Drive quite a few times.

The building is just massive. From the outside, it is just absolutely massive. I have had a few people actually say to me: What is that building? They drive by it and they see it for the first time and they say: What is that building? They are not even familiar with it, so I think it is good to get that message out because it is such a huge piece of infrastructure, such a huge investment, something so important. This facility actually was a commitment that was made back in 2008 and, again, this government is delivering on that commitment. This will open in September, if all goes as planned I believe, so we are nearing it.

I want to give you a little bit of information – I have just over three minutes left, so I want to give you a little bit of a run down on this building. This facility will replace Hoyles-Escasoni, and we are all very familiar with that institution, that building. While in university I did a bit of volunteering at Hoyles-Escasoni, and that was a decade ago. At that point, there left something to be desired about that building. It has obviously served its time; it has been around for quite some time.

As an MHA I have received calls from families saying my loved one is in there; we wish they had somewhere else to go. It is getting a bit downtrodden and whatnot and it is getting up there in age. We recognize that obviously and in 2008 we made this commitment.

The overall cost of this new long-term care facility will be \$150 million with additional funding of \$11.9 million annually for financial and human resources to sustain the operations. The new facility will have a total of 461 beds, and as I said earlier a huge building. That is up from 369 that now currently exist in Hoyles-Escasoni.

We will have twenty-five beds that will be occupied by folks who currently reside in long-term care in the Waterford facility, which is also going to be replaced sometime soon. I can talk about that at a later date. The remaining sixty-seven beds will be for new residents so we see a growing – not only are we taking everybody out of Hoyles and putting them in a new bright, modern facility that can better represent their needs, but we are also bringing in sixty-seven new beds. It is greatly needed.

The facility will consist of two residential buildings, east and west, and joined by a central building. In that centre building you will have kitchen facilities, laundry, maintenance, and supply services. That will all be in the centre. Something that I was impressed by and I was quite pleased to see is that the kitchen services there – everything there is just on a huge scale. Everything is expansive; it is massive.

The kitchen is all modern, a huge facility. All meals, all food services, will be provided on site. For anyone who is familiar with hospital food and whatnot, it gets a bad rap sometimes. When you are able to provide that food service on site so it does not have to be shipped in, you are getting a higher quality of food. The residents are going to be very appreciative of that.

In addition, there will be dedicated space for occupational therapy, physiotherapy, rec therapy, a beauty salon, gift shop, and physician specialist clinics. There will also be spiritual care, if you will, or a chapel area. Not to be repetitive, but it is a massive area. We went in there and actually it is still under construction, the chapel or spiritual area. It is a huge place. It is something that is so important for family members and for those who reside in the facility as well. It is somewhere where they can go for spiritual health and whatnot.

Also, the residents who will be transferred from Hoyles-Escasoni and the Waterford will be provided with other services as well. I just want to go through a couple of those if I could. Enhanced living space for individuals requiring protective care and youth adult population: That was something I was very impressed with. When we went up there into the protective care unit again the scale is very large. It also allows space, because it is so important when you are talking about people with dementia and people with those complex needs that they are given the area to walk, quite literally, and to – I am searching for the words here.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Wander.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Wander – I did not want to say wander, but when people wander with dementia, when they have complex needs, it allows them the area to have, and that is something so important. That is what we were told. When we went out to get this building, we wanted to know exactly what this building was supposed to be and what it should look like. We got the opinion from professionals and they gave us what we wanted, and certainly the facility is quite significant.

I will take my seat. Unfortunately, I did not have time to get through all of it, but I hope to have another opportunity.

Thank you so much.

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

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

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

I take pleasure in getting up and speaking on behalf of my constituents again in St. John's East and expressing my opinion when it comes to Interim Supply.

I have to note, just listening to the Member for Terra Nova talking about the costs, the investments that have been made in the health care system. There are other ways, at the same time, government could save money. I will get into that in the next couple of days. There is a little case that I am working on. I should not say little, but it has pretty much a provincial implication for a lot of constituents out there. So I am going to have more on that in the next couple of days. While government does make strategic investments, there are other ways it can save, too, at the same time.

Mr. Chair, in the couple of minutes that we have left, I would like to come back again and talk about some municipal issues. Knowing at this particular time various councils around the Province have been in talks, for a long time now, with the provincial government, and it has been ongoing pretty much since the 1980s. We have heard talks about the municipal funding arrangement in this Province and how cities and towns feel that they should be getting a better cut of the monies and everything that the Province has, and I believe that.

I firmly believe our municipalities should be doing a lot better by the provincial government, rather than what they have been over the last couple of years. It is no more evident than what we see – every time the Budget comes around, of course, we hear those same arguments being

made, that the Province can be doing more. The obvious evidence, of course, is the impact that this weather has been having on various pieces of infrastructure around the Province.

Of course, lately we have been hearing about the problems up around the Northern Peninsula when it comes to water supplies literally freezing underneath people's feet, and of course people having to go with the lack of water. It is reprehensible when you do hear about it, and it tells the dire need of the investment in infrastructure that has to be made in the Province. Of course, most of these municipalities, cities and towns, cannot afford in some cases to come up with the new pieces of infrastructure that are needed, particularly as evidenced by what is happening on the Northern Peninsula.

We do hope that government this year, in this Budget, is going to come about with a new funding arrangement for municipalities, but by the sounds of the Throne Speech, Mr. Chair, that is not going to be readily happening. They are saying some considerations are not going to be made for a new funding formula until 2015-2016. What that does, again, is it kicks the can down the road.

We keep hearing about it, and I will say it again. If I hear that my constituents, of course, in the City of St. John's, St. John's East, my district, are going to be put at risk of an increase in municipal taxation because the provincial government failed to meet a financing responsibility that we all feel that it should have to the Province, if my constituents are going to be put at risk of seeing a tax increase, that is not going to be very good news for anybody, let alone the present government.

I bring that to the government. They should be on notice when it comes to that. This year should be the year we come out with a funding arrangement, not next year. We have been talking about it for thirty years now when it comes to municipalities about having that fair arrangement put in place. It is hard to believe, but yes, to the people out there who are listening and to the people who this issue matters to, this

is a thirty-year-old issue. Your kids have been born, gone through high school and university at the same time, and they are now in the workforce and they are probably going to be tackling this same argument about how to manage to keep their municipal taxes low at the same time, Mr. Chair. So it is old.

If I could just go back through some of these amounts again - and I can go back to 1997 as being the year that was most evident. Of course with the previous Administration or the present Administration, back in 1997 we had a different government. There was \$30.7 million at that particular time toward municipal operating grants to help carry that load from municipalities. At the same time in that particular year, it faced a 10 per cent reduction.

In 2000, as the years went ahead, of course, these amounts were seen to be cut by that particular Administration in 1997, 2000, and 2002. In 2002, it was down to \$21.5 million. For three years under the Tories we saw a cut in municipal operating grants altogether until the cost cuts were reversed and municipal operating grants started to be paid again in 2006.

Mr. Chair, I will leave it at that for now. I can see by the clock that we are getting close. I will leave my comments at that. There are going to be other days coming up, of course, that we will be able to comment further on municipal funding issues, but it is a big matter for the government to deal with because of the simple fact that these people are at risk of seeing an increase in taxation.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. KING:** Thank you.

Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise, report progress and sit again.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Port de Grave.

**MR. LITTLEJOHN:** Mr. Speaker, the Chair of Committee of Supply reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of Committee of Supply reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have been directed to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

When shall the Committee sit again?

**MR. KING:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted.  
Committee ordered to sit again on tomorrow.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, 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.

The House now stands adjourned until 2:00 p.m. tomorrow.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 2:00 p.m.