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HANSARD

*Speaker: Honourable Ross Wiseman, MHA*

Thursday

20 March 2014

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

**Statements by Members**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today we will start with members' statements from the Member for the District of Kilbride; the Member for the District of Torngat Mountains; the Member for the District of Exploits; the Member for the District of Humber West; the Member for the District of Harbour Main; and the Member for the District of Baie Verte.

The hon. the Member for the District of Kilbride.

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

**MR. DINN:** Mr. Speaker, on December 19, 2013, Bishops College held its graduation exercises and presentation of awards. There were 124 graduates in the class of 2013, thirty-one of whom graduated with honours and twenty-four students graduated from French Immersion. There were well over fifty scholarships and awards given out in the ceremony.

Natalie Griffin received the Governor General's Medal, the Campbell Macpherson Scholarship, and Electoral District Scholarship plus a few other awards.

Sarah Winsor was presented with the Electoral District Scholarship for Kilbride along with several other scholarships and awards. Joshua Lehr received multiple awards. Another twenty-five to thirty students were presented with one or more scholarships or awards.

Sydney Ezekiel was named the female athlete of the year and David Grainger was the male athlete of the year. The valedictorian was Natalie Griffin who praised parents and teachers for all the efforts put forth in the education of this 2013 class. Many of the students have

moved on into institutes of higher learning; some have entered the workforce.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating all the graduates in the 2013 class of Bishops College and wishing them all the best in the future.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Two days after this hon. House put all politics aside and unanimously voted to lobby the federal government to conduct a public inquiry into murdered and missing Aboriginal women, I rise today to pay tribute to all the victims.

I especially want to remember Loretta Saunders whose family I grew up with in Hopedale. Unfortunately, Loretta was the success story we did not know we had until we lost her. I will be meeting with Loretta's professor next week to discuss all of the valuable research she has done on this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to remember Henrietta Millie from Nain who went missing right here in St. John's over thirty years ago. This Inuit lady had dreams of becoming a nurse and was only twenty-five when she disappeared. This remains one of the oldest missing person cases in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear that the Nunatsiavut Government has fully endorsed the call for a public inquiry.

I ask all hon. members to join me in paying tribute to the 825 murdered and missing Aboriginal women across the country and to continue to strive for justice on their behalf.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Exploits.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, February 20, the Exploits Regional Chamber of Commerce held its annual dinner and Business Excellence Awards presentations.

Two businesses from Bishop's Falls in the District of Exploits were very deserving award recipients. Morgan Printing, owned and operated by Leo and Carolyn Morgan, received the Small Business of the Year Award. Morgan Printing was founded in 1929 by Walter Morgan and is still operated by family members today.

Mr. Speaker, King's Transport received the Helping Hands Award. Incorporated in 1975, King's Transport consistently offers equipment and financial support to volunteer organizations in the area. It has been said they put the good in good corporation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in expressing sincere congratulations to Morgan Printing and King's Transport on receiving these Business Excellence Awards.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Mr. Speaker, I stand in this hon. House to congratulate third year physics student from Corner Brook, Jessica Strickland, who has become the first student in Newfoundland to be awarded the prestigious Institute of Particle Physics' Summer Student Fellowship at the European Organization for Nuclear Research.

Jessica will spend two months in Geneva, Switzerland, working in the field of subatomic physics. Prior to this venture she will work on a

subatomic physics project, and will spend fifteen weeks on research over the course of the program. Jessica is only one of five Canadian Undergraduates in Physics awarded this lifetime opportunity.

Jessica will be a part of an international group of select students who will work with research teams in experiments at the facility where, last year, the first conclusive evidence for the Higgs Particle was found. Her work will include a set of specific lectures, visits to accelerators and experimental areas, and discussion sessions and workshops.

Jessica is a student at Grenfell Campus, Memorial University of Newfoundland and hopes to complete Masters and Doctorate Degrees in Physics.

Honourable members, please join me in congratulating Ms Strickland on being awarded this prestigious internship and wish her well in her future academic pursuits.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise in this hon. House to congratulate Ms Amy Furey of Harbour Main on receiving the National Professional Caregiver of the Year Award for 2013 from Canada Cares.

This non-profit organization has a vision to create a sense of community for family and professional caregivers by increasing awareness, providing encouragement, and showing appreciation. In 2013, Canada Cares launched a recognition program throughout Canada.

Amy was nominated by her client, Jeremy Cross, whom she has assisted as a caregiver, post-secondary student assistant, and job coach for the last six years. Jeremy is a graduate of

Academy Canada College, having successfully completed the Therapeutic Recreation Program. He is currently employed at Easter Seals assisting verbally and physically challenged individuals communicate by assisted technology.

Amy is the first recipient of the National Professional Caregiver of the Year Award, a testament to her unselfish devotion and attention to Jeremy, allowing him to lead an independent fulfilling life. His parents refer to Amy as the Pot of Gold to Jeremy's rainbow.

Both Amy and Jeremy are with us today, Mr. Speaker, and I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Ms Amy Furey on receiving this prestigious award.

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

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

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

Volunteers are the lifeblood of a vibrant community. I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate a very special, energetic, tireless, unselfish community volunteer who loves to serve.

Born March 20, 1939 at King's Point, daughter of George and Edith Rideout, Ada Maude Noble now lives in picturesque Middle Arm, where she and her husband, Lester, raised three children.

Maude knows how to serve her community and give of her time, talent, and energy with a heart and a half. In her fifty-five years of community service, Maude has done it all: Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillor, organizer, chairperson, fundraiser, director, entrepreneur, postmistress, business owner, superintendent, teacher, musician, choir member, caterer, and the list could go on.

In recognition of her outstanding contributions to her community, back in November 2001, Maude was awarded the Newfoundland and Labrador Volunteer Service Award. When her

town and other towns are in need of a helping hand, you can count on Maude Noble.

Honourable colleagues, please join me in recognizing and thanking Maude Noble for her extraordinary involvement in volunteer work – and by the way, Maude, happy seventy-fifth birthday!

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### Statements by Ministers

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services.

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

I am proud today to rise in this hon. House to recognize March as National Social Work Month. The theme for National Social Work Month 2014 is Social Workers: Promoting Equity for a Strong Canada. I want to sincerely thank all of our Province's social workers for their dedication to the social work profession and for the vital services they provide.

Each year, March is designated as Social Work Month in order to highlight and observe the positive impact social workers have in communities throughout the Province. During this month, social workers have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities taking place in their regions, such as networking events, professional development sessions, and career events.

Currently there are over 1,500 registered social workers practicing in diverse settings throughout Newfoundland and Labrador with the provincial government being the largest employer. Social workers practice in settings such as youth corrections, child protection, adoptions, addictions, mental health, community-based centres, government departments and universities, as well as private practices and consulting businesses.

Mr. Speaker, social workers are at the very core of the mandate of the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, which is to ensure the safety and well-being of children and youth. They are not only the front line of the services and programs we provide, but also the leaders we rely on to help create and implement legislation and guide policy decision making.

There have been many significant accomplishments since the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services was created just five years ago, and our social workers have played a fundamental role in how far we have come in such a short period of time. We are very fortunate to have social workers not only as part of the department, but as part of the public service as a whole.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all social workers throughout the Province and the country for the positive impacts they continue to make in the lives of children, youth, families, and seniors.

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 thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. National Social Work Month is an opportunity to give much deserved recognition to social workers. Their work is selfless, and often thankless. They have devoted their careers to helping people when they need it most. I honestly do not know what we would do without them.

The Canadian Association of Social Workers choose the theme, Promoting Equity for a Strong Canada, to reflect the profession's growing concern at the rising social, economic, and health inequities in Canada. For a government celebrating the contribution of social workers, I would be remiss if I did not point out that this government underspent its CYFS budget in 2012

by \$25 million, when social workers struggle with severe burnout due to workload. Then in Budget 2013, they cut the budget by \$15 million. In every investigative report from the Child and Youth Advocate, workload and worker turnover plays a significant role in each and every tragic outcome.

In the latest annual report from the Advocate, she highlighted limited staff resources required for investigative work which is impeding the offices ability to engage in proactive, systemic advocacy. One of their three directors was eliminated in the last Budget. We need more proactive, systemic advocacy to prevent more tragedies like those detailed in the Advocate's report. We need greater resourcing, and certainly this government needs to give them greater support.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Social workers play a crucial role in our Province, often under the most difficult circumstances. The Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers pre-budget consultation paper said: Government needs to ensure that Newfoundland and Labrador has a strong public sector, a competitive minimum wage, accessible and high-quality child care, and progressive employment incentives.

They recommended government focus on investments in social policy, program development, and service delivery in the same regard as economic planning and development. They warned: With continued talks of economic restraints, deficits and departmental cutbacks, now is not the time to cut social programs.

I urge every member in this House to read their paper. Social workers are experts in their area and I hope the government is listening, really listening to their expertise.

Thank you, social workers, for your commitment, your passion, your compassion, your expertise.

Bravo.

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

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

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

I rise in this hon. House today to discuss the success of the provincial delegation that attended Seafood Expo North America in Boston from March 13 to 18.

Mr. Speaker, this expo is one of the largest seafood trade events in the world, involving 19,000 industry representatives from more than 100 countries. In addition to facilitating hundreds of international trade opportunities for provincial seafood companies, the expo also provided the opportunity to engage my federal and provincial fisheries counterparts and various industry leaders on matters of mutual concern.

Participants included Ocean Choice International, the Fogo Island Co-op, the Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association, and Green's Seafoods, to name a few, and all noted the tremendous networking and new business relationships made possible by the expo, and expressed appreciation for the support they received at the provincial government's Newfoundland and Labrador pavilion.

The provincial government released its Seafood Industry Year in Review document prior to the expo so national and international buyers could access vital statistics regarding the performance of the provincial seafood industry. I am pleased to note that our Province continued to be a strong competitor in global seafood markets in 2013. Provincial seafood is exported to more than forty countries, and the total value of provincial seafood production increased by 8 per cent from the previous year to approximately \$1.1 billion.

The gains this government achieved through CETA negotiations, as well as the recent trade agreement between Canada and the Republic of Korea, will create tremendous new opportunity to grow business in new markets and add value to the industry. Combining these trade achievements with this government's ongoing investments in research and development, science, marketing, and quality control, will position the provincial fishing and aquaculture sectors to build on this success in the years to come.

Seafood industry representatives throughout the world learned a great deal about our Province's fishing and aquaculture sectors during Seafood Expo North America, and I encourage people in this Province to do the same by reviewing the Seafood Industry Year in Review. Working collaboratively with industry, we are securing a strong future for our fishing and aquaculture sectors, and creating benefits for rural families and communities.

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.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement on the Seafood Expo in Boston, formerly known as the Boston Seafood Show, which as the minister said is a huge show. Mr. Speaker, marketing is the name of the game in the world of the seafood market. It seems, however, this government has not been able to make any significant headway on marketing despite a decade at the helm.

Year after year, a provincial delegation goes to these shows, yet we get no report of progress and no accountability for the money spent. This is the same government that sold off the lucrative marketing arm of FPI, and now High Liner is reaping the huge profits.

Again in 2010, government announced they accept all marketing recommendations of the MOU, and still no headway. Now we have the new \$400-million fishery investment fund.

I, for one, am not confident that under this government they will be able to capitalize on the marketing opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government not of action, but of smoke, mirrors, and secrecy, in spite of their farce today at our taxpayers' expense.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. It is great to hear all the good news about the Seafood Expo and its benefits to our fishing industry, although the minister is very short on details about the latter. It is the details people look for, Mr. Speaker.

This morning, government promised they were going to strive to be more open. The minister claims gains through CETA that they recently signed, yet we have yet to see the document or learn any details about the \$400 million fund which came along with the signing and how it will be spent.

I would like the minister to tell us finally who will benefit from this funding and how it will be spent in the new spirit of open government. We are waiting, 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.

This morning the Premier hosted a little party in the lobby of the House of Assembly to claim that government is now listening and open, but really no new information was made available. After eleven years, they are finally calling themselves open.

I ask the Premier: Now that you claim to be open, will you tell the people of the Province how much money you spent on your little party this morning?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, we would be happy to make that information available to the Leader of the Opposition and everybody else who wishes to have it in the spirit of openness. It is disappointing and frustrating to hear members opposite refer to our Open Government Initiative as a farce.

We have undertaken a review of the ATIPP legislation. We are going to advance whistleblower legislation. We have launched an open information Web site to make more information available to the public than ever before. We have launched a new open data portal that is going to allow people to use and reuse data free of charge. We have adopted an open data licence, and I could go on and on. All of this is what we have done. In the months ahead, we are going to do even more, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

**MR. BALL:** Talk about being accountable, he does not even know the price of his own party. He just threw the people's credit card out there and said you can pay for it.

Mr. Speaker, government had a fancy launch for a new Web site, complete with professional lighting, sound, and backdrops. We know it had to cost thousands of dollars. Do you realize that \$1,000 gets you about seventy-eight hours of home care?

Why did you choose to spend taxpayer money on really a PR stunt? Could you not have used the money on something better?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, what we did this morning was demonstrate how committed we are to changing the way we do business, to making more information available to the public than ever before, and engaging the citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador in a way that has never been done before. Not only will I give the member opposite the total cost, I will him copies of the invoices if he wishes.

There were some audiovisual costs, of course, associated with this morning's event. It is money well-spent as we launch an initiative that has the potential to transform how we govern in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

**MR. BALL:** For the last eleven years, this is what we have been getting right here, Mr. Speaker. This is the kind of information that we have been getting. Maybe we will get a little more, I would say, now.

Mr. Speaker, this morning the invited guests – and now that you claim to be open, at the same time, the same Cabinet that defended Bill 29 for

the last two years, this is the same government that continues to withhold reports and information.

I ask the Premier: Now that you claim to be open, prove it; commit to the people today to release all reports and reviews that you have been withholding from the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, this government has demonstrated it, we believe in the public's right to know, and we want to release as much information as possible, wherever possible. There are reasonable limits, Mr. Speaker, and we have to respect those.

We have to respect the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy legislation that exists as well; but through this new initiative, we are going to go out and find out exactly what kind of information people want and expect, and we are going to make it available in a format that makes sense to them. That is part of the Open Government Initiative, and there is certainly much more to come in the months ahead.

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

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

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

Well, the minister is right; people do have a right to know – and they have a right to know not at their cost. Now that we have asked this self-proclaimed, open government how much taxpayer money – they did not answer – you spent on today's campaign, will you now admit that you spent money on a marketing and advertising campaign and to release that information you needed \$1,600 in order to release it?



If you are truly open, why are you charging \$1,600 to release the information to the ratepayers, taxpayers, of Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, it should not come as any surprise to anybody in this House that we are only a few days into a new session of the House of Assembly and the Liberals are already recycling questions.

I answered the member's question last week related to that request for information about marketing and advertising. There were thirteen requests made related to marketing and advertising. We clarified what the applicant wanted. We recognized that based on the detail that was desired, it was a broad request that would require over sixty hours of work and there has to be a fee charged for that work.

As I said last week, Mr. Speaker, in the vast majority of cases for access to information requests, there are no fees charged. This is an extreme request. We are happy to provide the information, but it is a broad request that requires a significant amount of work.

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

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

**MR. BALL:** Marketing and advertising is an extreme request – really?

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

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

**MR. BALL:** Mr. Speaker, not only is this government charging \$1,600 to reveal how much taxpayer money they spent on marketing; they have also demanded \$19,000 to release aquaculture reports.

I ask the Premier: It is the first day of spring, now that you are open, now that you are listening to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, why are you continuing to charge thousands of dollars for information that should be publicly available?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, last week when the members opposite were asking questions about the marketing and advertising expenditures which relate to all kinds of different budget categories, they referred to it as propaganda, things like our Foster a Future campaign to recruit foster parents, which has been very successful I might add.

Advertising to promote our tourism industry to bring millions of dollars to Newfoundland and Labrador on an annual basis, that is propaganda according to Liberals, Mr. Speaker. Campaigns to promote violence awareness and to ensure that our communities are safer for women and children, that is what they call propaganda. These are important investments. We will continue to make investments in those areas that make sense and that are beneficial to the people of the Province.

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

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

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

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

The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

One of our members placed questions on the Order Paper regarding autism in the fall of 2013. He followed up with a letter in November asking for answers since none were given. In January,

the minister wrote our MHA and said the request would need to go through ATIPP.

I ask the minister: Why would you make our office jump through hoops to get this information, given that you are an open government?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I stood in the House yesterday and answered four or five questions on autism and I am quite prepared to do it again today. Whatever the questions are, let's have them.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** The minister spoke yesterday but answers might be a different way of putting it. The requested information about autism asked for six numbers, it did not ask for reports, it did not ask for briefings. You can answer them now if you want.

He asked at that time for information on the number of children on a wait-list, the number of pediatricians working in the Province, and the number of patients sent outside the Province. A self-proclaimed open government could not answer these simple questions in a timely fashion.

Now that you claim to be open, will you continue to release this information, instead of forcing us to go through ATIPP?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I do not have those exact numbers here with me but I would be happy to have those and to give them to him on the next day.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** (Inaudible).

**MS SULLIVAN:** Mr. Speaker, if I do not have them here with me, I do not know how he expects me to give him the exact numbers today. As I said, I am happy to get him those numbers and I will certainly respond to the question on the next day.

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

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

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

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

During 2012 Estimates, the Department of IBRD was asked –

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

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** – for a list of government buildings without access to the government broadband initiative. Government responded in this very House, yes, we can provide that list, who has access and who does not right now.

I ask the minister: Since you claim to be open, why are the people of the Province still waiting for this information nearly two years later?

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

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

**MR. FRENCH:** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to our Rural Broadband Initiative we have been very clear and open on everything. We have done a significant piece of work, Mr. Speaker.

Let me fill the member in. Rural broadband one, 2012, Mr. Speaker, twenty-four communities affected, 11,858 households serviced.

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

**MR. FRENCH:** In 2013, Mr. Speaker, rural broadband two, fifty-four communities, 3,344 houses.

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

**MR. FRENCH:** Rural broadband number three, Mr. Speaker, in 2014, proposals have been in, the date closed the end of February, I say to the hon. member, stay tuned, there is good news ahead.

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

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, I know the minister is –

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

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** - new in his role, but the information was requested two years and still has not been provided.

Mr. Speaker, last December I wrote the Minister of IBRD for a list of communities without full access to broadband Internet. In January, the former minister confirmed that her department has the information, however, was unwilling to disclose it.

I ask the minister: Now that you claim to be open, will you provide a list of communities without full access to broadband Internet?

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

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

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

I am delighted to talk about communities with the hon. member. If the hon. member would be kind enough to listen this time I will certainly fill him in a little bit on communities.

When we took over government in 2003, Mr. Speaker, there were 113 communities serviced in this Province. Today, Mr. Speaker, there are in excess of 500 communities in Newfoundland and Labrador serviced.

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

**MR. FRENCH:** I will also remind the hon. member, that this is a government that has invested \$29 million, Mr. Speaker, in Rural Broadband Initiatives. Because of that \$29 million, it has helped leverage another \$115 million for rural broadband in this Province, Mr. Speaker. This is a priority for this government. It always has been since 2003, and our numbers speak for themselves.

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

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

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, it has been almost a year since this government made savage cuts to the justice system. Under a storm of protests, many of these cuts were reversed and the government ordered a review of legal aid and the Sheriff's Office. Government has had the final version of both of these reports for over a month and is refusing to release them.

I ask the minister: Now that government claims to be open, will the minister immediately release these reports he has been sitting on for the past month?

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

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

**MR. KING:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, we know that a crushing workload is an issue for Crown attorneys in the justice system and likely the reason behind resignations in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, where the backlog of cases continues to grow.

I ask the minister: Now that government claims to be open, will he tell us how much the backlog in Happy Valley-Goose Bay is caused by the crushing workload he has placed on all front-line justice workers?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Attorney General.

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

**MR. F. COLLINS:** Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member's question, and a similar question he asked yesterday, we have examined the data with respect to caseloads in the courts in this Province and I am happy to advise that the caseloads in the Labrador courts have been met with. The cases have been completed in the same level and same speed as other courts around the Province. So we are quite happy with the way the workload has been taken care of in the Labrador courts.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, the Humber Valley regional land use draft plan was presented to government three years ago by the advisory committee.

I ask the minister: Now that you claim to be an open government, can you update the House on the status of this plan?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report since the last session of the House we have made considerable progress on the Humber Valley regional plan. It was just in recent weeks that a comprehensive response was sent to the chair of the committee outlining the concerns and recommendations of government. We look forward to working with the committee to move the process forward.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, I said from day one that this advisory plan was nothing more than payback for some political friends.

Mr. Speaker, is the minister aware of this letter you sent out, which I have a copy of here? Are you aware that Don Downer is not the chair anymore? He resigned over a year and a half ago. Are you aware, Mr. Minister, that there has not been a meeting in three years for this committee? Are you aware, Mr. Minister —?

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

I ask the member if he could direct his comments to the Chair.

**MR. JOYCE:** I ask the minister: Is he aware that they are now phoning out trying to get people who were off from losing elections to try to get people to fill the committee to have a meeting? Who is running your department, Mr. Minister?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, my department is making all kinds of progress in the Humber Valley region and in every region of this Province.

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

**MR. KENT:** When it comes to the Humber Valley Regional Planning Advisory Authority, we look forward to receiving a draft plan from the authority and we will work with them to move it through the process. We have provided comprehensive feedback from government departments, and we will continue to work with all communities on the West Coast in the Humber Valley region to advance this work.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: In the spirit of openness and accountability, will you confirm that \$650,000 was spent on the committee for the draft plan, only to be drafted and sent back by government and sent to a defunct committee; and, will you confirm how much Mr. Don Downer, Premier Marshall's former co-campaign manager, received as Chair of the Humber Valley land use committee and how much he is now being paid as Chair of the Western management committee?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, the information that the member opposite is requesting is information that we would be happy to provide. It is information that we would be happy to make publicly available.

What is frustrating, though, is that there are lots of people leading communities and leading regions in this Province who give of their time and their talent to support the growth and development of regions, to have their characters attacked and questioned on the floor of this House is absolutely shameful.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, I will tell you what is shameful: \$650,000 paid, as part of the Premier's co-campaign manager, for a report – \$650,000 – and the report sent back to a defunct committee.

I ask the minister: Is it shameful that there are people who cannot get enough food to eat, cannot get enough medical transportation, yet we are paying money out – I ask the minister: When will I receive that information of how much was paid to Mr. Downer?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, the behaviour of the member opposite speaks for itself, so I will speak to the facts, and it does speak volumes as well. I will be happy to provide whatever information the member opposite is requesting.

The planning process is a complex one. We consider many aspects of urban and rural regional planning in developing a new plan for an entire region. There are all kinds of considerations related to transportation and land use, and agricultural lands, and the list goes on. All of that has to be considered. It does require time; it does require resources. There are people who have done some good work. We have gotten some great input from various government departments, we provided that input, and we will work with the Humber Valley region to advance that work.

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

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

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

The Residential Tenancies Act that governs both tenants and landlords in our Province was written over a decade ago. Government has been reviewing this act for two years, but there is still no commitment to change.

I ask the minister: Now that you claim to be an open government, will you release the results of the review to say whether or not the minimum standards will be included?

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

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

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Mr. Speaker, the Residential Tenancies Act is well underway, the revisions that we are looking at. We already did some consultation in public about a year-and-a-half ago; that is on the SNL Web site now, Mr. Speaker. You can have a look at what we heard from the people of the Province when it comes to proposed changes in the act, what they are thinking about and what they are doing.

We are going through a legislative review now, Mr. Speaker, as well. We are also doing a jurisdictional review. We are getting very close to putting things on paper and having a look and see where we need to go for the future of the people of the Province when it comes to these issues.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Six months ago, I asked the same question and they were very close to putting things on paper.

Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador, unlike most other provinces, do not have public health legislation related to minimum housing standards for rental properties. In the House of Assembly last November, I asked the Minister of Service NL to protect tenants with minimum standards, as they do in other provinces. His response was: When the time is appropriate.

In light of recent issues with regard to rentals in this Province, I ask the minister: When do you deem it appropriate to protect our tenants?

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

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

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Mr. Speaker, when anybody in this Province who rents a place for their family, they expect to live in a healthy and safe environment. Certainly, the Residential Tenancies Act that exists today makes sure that this is indeed the case.

If there are problems within the relationship between landlords and tenants, there are remedies in place that will help tenants, in particular, when you are dealing with bad landlords. I may say, Mr. Speaker, not all landlords are bad. There are many good landlords out there. There are many good tenants out there. We are talking about a small minority of landlords in the Province.

We are aware of the issues. We are aware of the problems. There are remedies in place within the act, within the regulations, and I encourage anybody who is having difficulties to contact the residential tenancies division of SNL and they will have the answers to the question and how to go about it.

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

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

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, one direct, pointed question at the minister: What is the remedy for bedbugs that we have heard several cases of in this Province? His department has done nothing.

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

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member across the House just referenced a very complex issue in Newfoundland and Labrador. The first

thing I want to clarify is that complex issue is not just an issue that will be indicative of low-income people. Actually, it is a problem for ourselves here in this House of Assembly, because anybody who has travelled could be subject to bedbugs. So it is a very complex issue.

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

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** What I have done as the Minister Responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing is that we have created a committee of deputy ministers from several departments and we are going to have a look at it. We invite, actually, as well the City of St. John's, and participation from any other of the stakeholders; because, I say again, this is not just about low-income people and Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, Mr. Speaker.

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

The hon. the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

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

The ferry service between Blanc-Sablon and Corner Brook has been ongoing nightmare for people because of the increased delays, inability to make reservations, scheduling, and the whole ordeal of being at sea for more than fifty hours on repeated trips.

I ask the minister: Now that you claim to be open, why won't you tell us why you refuse to provide air service to the people of Labrador who are subject to constant and prolonged ferry disruptions?

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

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

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

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

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

I will tell you one thing that is not open today, and that is the Straits of Belle Isle, with the ice at four-and-a-half feet deep.

Mr. Speaker, we are very familiar with what is happening in the Strait of Belle Isle with the ferry service, and this year the ice conditions in the Strait of Belle Isle, as well as everywhere else in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador that depend on ferry service are dealing with ice conditions that have been unprecedented and worse than the last twenty-five years in our history. We monitor it on a daily basis.

To provide an air service is not just a matter of calling up and having a plane. We have invested over \$500 million in the Trans-Labrador Highway in the last ten years. The whole purpose of building the Trans-Labrador Highway was to open (inaudible) –

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

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

This morning, government announced its plan to be more open and accountable.

So I ask the Premier: Will he tell the House about the organizational changes that we hear are coming today to government's large and unwieldy Department of Advanced Education and Skills?

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

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Mr. Speaker, my department was created in 2011 to address the growing labour market demand in Newfoundland and Labrador. We wanted to make sure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians had the opportunity to become well educated, to have

the opportunity to seek prosperity, to be settled in Newfoundland and Labrador. To do that, we have to streamline the department. We have to deliver our services to the best ability for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to avail of that opportunity, 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 have heard a very dangerous word, they have to streamline.

I am asking the Premier: What will these streamlining changes do to assist desperate people who, thanks to the drastic staffing cuts in last year's Budget, are waiting five to eight weeks or more for assistance?

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

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

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the people who work in Advanced Education and Skills, delivering those services to the people of this Province. A lot of them have low income, Mr. Speaker, and they are very vulnerable people in this Province.

I am very proud of my staff and the way they deliver, how they execute, get the answers to them and the services to them as fast as they possibly can. This will streamline that service. This will consolidate the service. It will provide the services that these people require. As well, in regard to addressing the labour demand issues, the skilled people we have in our Province and the opportunity that aligns them in the fastest growing economy in Canada.

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

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

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

The minister has not told us what this is, so I am expecting a news release to tell us what this is.

Mr. Speaker, parents of children attending Mount Pearl Intermediate are upset that the English language school board is destroying their school in order to deal with a crowded school situation elsewhere in the area. Parents believe that the most logical solution is the addition of a modular to Mount Pearl Senior High. The board has resisted this option.

I ask the Minister of Education, if he is prepared to support the call of the parents with this logical solution?

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, over the past while the representation of the MHAs in that particular area has been heard; the call for a review of that entire system. The school board is conducting that review, Mr. Speaker, and we are not going to interfere with that process. We will let that process unfold and then what comes out of it we will make a decision from there.

Understand, Mr. Speaker, and I will tell the hon. member, we are very supportive of that entire community and we will find a successful resolution there.

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

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

**MS MICHAEL:** Mr. Speaker, then I ask the minister: If they are not going to be satisfied with the answer from the school board who have passed the resolution saying they will reorganize Mount Pearl Intermediate, will he intervene to



make sure that the pleas of these parents, which are coming to me, will be heard? Really concretely, I would like the answer.

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, we are going to be as supportive of these parents as we are of the ones in Virginia Park. We are going to put a school in her district.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to intervene. Are we going to satisfy all parents here? Not likely will we satisfy all parents, but we will hear what parents have to say. The board is conducting these discussions and out of that will come a decision.

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** Mr. Speaker, where is the 2013 Drinking Water Safety Annual Report?

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

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, any annual reports, like the drinking water annual report, will certainly be released publicly. In saying that, next week there is a conference in Gander regarding drinking water in Newfoundland and Labrador. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend because I will be here in the House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, drinking water and testing of water is something this government has made as open data we release so every community can monitor where their water situation is.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Open government.

**MS SHEA:** Open government.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that we post this information long before this initiative today certainly shows that our commitment to open government has been there for quite some time.

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** Mr. Speaker, World Water Day is March 22 and studies show that our drinking water does not have compulsory sourced water protection of all water sheds, unlike in other provinces.

Will the government commit itself to extending the protection of drinking water sources for the welfare of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians?

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

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

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, the Department of Environment and Conservation, along with the Department of Municipal Affairs and all our local service districts and town councils throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, are committed to safe drinking water. We have a history of working with our communities to ensure they are able to avail of the services to help them provide the drinking water to their communities, and we have never fallen down on that commitment. We will continue to work with the communities in this Province.

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** Mr. Speaker, the project of exploration undertaken around the Big Triangle Pond project puts the backup water supply for nearby communities at risk of pollution.

Will the government please tell the House why such an exploration project can be allowed to happen where people would depend on their water source?

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

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

**MS SHEA:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is wrong. The environmental assessment process and the environmental protection review report that is being completed is done so that all aspects from an environmental perspective can be reviewed and analysis can be done. Projects will only proceed if they are deemed as safe. So until the information is in and the analysis is done, this project has not been released from the environmental assessment process.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

During Question Period, upon questioning by the Member for Bay of Islands, the Minister of Municipal Affairs clearly pulled out a document from which he read. According to Bosc and O'Brien, page 433, "Any document quoted by a Minister in debate or in response to a question during Question Period must be tabled." Indeed, they are "...not at liberty to read or quote from a despatch or other state paper without being prepared to table it...".

We have seen this before, Mr. Speaker. I think the minister clearly read from the document and I think he should be forced to table it.

Thank you.

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

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

If you look at the desks of any minister over here, mine included, you will see multiple papers. Any time we stand we have papers in our hand that we often refer to. Sometimes we hold them for the sake of holding them.

I do not think the member actually read from a document. The section in Bosc and O'Brien that the hon. Opposition House Leader is referring to states specifically if a minister reads directly from notes. The minister referred to notes on any number of occasions, as we all do.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member of Burgeo – La Poile to the point of order.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** In response to the comments from the Government House Leader, I would note that the minister answered four questions and he did not pick up a piece of paper during each question. In fact, some he did not have any paper in his hands. He specifically, in this case, raised the paper to which he had to read. I am going by Bosc and O'Brien.

I think the minister read from the paper. I will leave it to the discretion of the Speaker to review the video and make his ruling.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Speaker does not need to review the video, I was observing during Question Period. I am not sure what member of the Opposition posed the question, but the very first question answered by the Minister of Municipal Affairs today, I have deemed that he had read from a paper. I would ask him to table that particular document.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

**MR. KENT:** A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs on a point of order.

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, during Question Period, the Leader of the Opposition posed a

question related to the precise cost of the launch this morning.

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

Is the minister responding to the ruling already made by the Speaker?

**MR. KENT:** No.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Okay.

There is no point of order.

**MR. KENT:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, the total cost involved – and I would be happy to provide the Leader of the Opposition with the invoices – was \$4,566.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Tabling of Documents.

#### Tabling of Documents

**MR. SPEAKER:** In accordance with section –

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

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

In accordance with section 19(5)(a) of the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act, I hereby table minutes of the House of Assembly Management Commission meetings held on September 18 and December 11, 2013, and March 5, 2014.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

#### Petitions

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

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

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

WHEREAS we wish to raise the concern regarding the recent delay of the construction of the new hospital in Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the government to commit to the planning and construction of a new hospital in Corner Brook, as previously committed to, and in a timely manner as originally announced, without further delay.

Mr. Speaker, I present this petition and I am going to present a lot more in the near future. Over 4,000 people signed petitions about the delay of the hospital in Corner Brook, about the rightsizing of the downsizing of the hospital in Corner Brook. I heard Mr. Frank Coleman mention yesterday that the only policy he made was that the hospital in Corner Brook should have been built by now. Mr. Speaker, don't he know that was a fourteen, fifteen-year project?

Mr. Speaker, I would just to let you know that the people here are looking for a full-scale hospital which includes a PET scanner and a radiation unit. Mr. Speaker, I spend half my time in this House disputing the facts that are being presented by this government on a radiation unit.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** I fully support the action committee in their drive for their PET scanner and radiation unit. Mr. Speaker, I hear the Minister of Health over there – the Minister of Health someday should stand and tell us about the poll she did out in Grand Falls. Tell us about the poll that was done, Mr. Speaker. That is one of the things – and about how it is \$40 million

for a PET scanner, \$40 million, which the minister said in this House. That is the kind of information that I have to go and disprove on a regular basis.

I have asked for it on a regular basis. I asked the Premier on a regular basis. Let's have an informed decision. I understand that the Premier is out himself – this is encouraging, Mr. Speaker, and I tell the people this is encouraging. He does not even believe the information of the Department of Health; he is out getting his own facts. I say congratulations, Premier, because I do not believe the facts that were put forth either.

I encourage the people to keep signing the petitions. Premier, keep getting the facts because you will get the same answers I have, and it is not the same information that the Minister of Health and the Department of Health is putting out.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

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

WHEREAS violent workplace incidents involving convenience store clerks and gas station attendants are a serious health and safety issue; and

WHEREAS many public and private sector employees are being left in vulnerable situations, especially in the opening and closing of their buildings and establishments; and

WHEREAS all workers deserve protection from danger and harm; and

WHEREAS current government regulations are woefully inadequate in providing even basic protection for these vulnerable workers; and

WHEREAS it is the responsibility of employers to keep workers safe and the responsibility of government ensure employers adhere to regulations;

We, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge government to immediately enact legislation and regulations to protect workers in hazardous workplaces, including late-night shifts in convenience stores and gas stations. This legislation must direct employers to have a minimum of two workers on site after 10:00 p.m. and before 6:00 a.m., or have a secure barrier between the worker and customer in place between these hours.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, to have an opportunity once again to represent the voice of people in the Province who are concerned about the lack of safety for people working throughout the nights in convenience stores and in gas bars. Any of us listening to the news know that we continue to have break-ins happen, not just in St. John's or on the Northeast Avalon but throughout the Province.

Some of the people who have signed this petition are students, and we know that many students cannot afford to be here in St. John's attending the university or college without holding down jobs. Of course, because of daytime classes and their studies, one of the jobs that a lot of them hold down are jobs in convenience stores and gas bars and are working at night.

I have spoken to a number of them, actually – and, in each case, they were young women. In some cases, they are in situations where they are the only person working at night. We have a duty to our young people to protect them. We have a duty to make sure that as they go to university, they are going to be able to get their education without fear. It is bad enough that

they have to hold down jobs – I did not have to, Mr. Speaker, because my education was free. When I was in university, we did not have to pay for it; but, in order for them to get through, they have to hold down the jobs. It is our responsibility to make sure they and other workers at night are safe.

So I really encourage the House to listen to this petition.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is like a jack-in-the-box today.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

**MR. LANE:** 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 humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS there are many individuals within our Province who have mobility issues; and

WHEREAS it is extremely important, as an inclusive society, to ensure appropriate access to both public and private facilities and institutions; and

WHEREAS a key component in the provision of access for a person with mobility issues is the provision of regulated blue zones; and

WHEREAS our provincial government implemented new blue zone regulations two years ago and has not only failed to adequately enforce them on private parking areas, but has failed to ensure compliance with these regulations at all government facilities, hospitals, and agencies;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to lead by example and ensure that all government facilities,

hospitals, and agencies are in compliance with its own blue zone regulations.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue I have raised on a number of occasions, and I will continue to do so. As we know, two years ago, the government passed blue zone regulations and all members of the House of Assembly, on all sides, voted for them unanimously.

The problem we have, Mr. Speaker, as I have said on other times I have spoken on this, is that the regulations are not being enforced. Government has certainly failed in that regard miserably. Not only are we not enforcing regulations upon private premises, as we are supposed to see happening and should have happened long ago, the government is not even leading by example when it comes to implementing these regulations on its own properties.

We have seen it at the Health Sciences Centre, St. Clare's hospital, Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, the Newfoundland Liquor Corporation outlets, AES offices, and the Department of Natural Resources. Mr. Speaker, there are a number of government facilities, corporations, and so on where they are not even compliant with their own legislation.

I am calling upon the minister and the government – obviously, they are now claiming to be open and accountable, they are going to save a lot of money in toner on these ATIPP requests, and I suggest they invest in blue paint and signs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament

assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

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

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

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

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

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

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

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have presented this petition, I do not know how many times in the House of Assembly. On Tuesday, this week, when we were talking about – everybody here in this House stood up and unequivocally supported the resolution to urge the federal government to launch an inquiry on murdered and missing Aboriginal women. One of the ministers on the other side of the House said, I believe it was the Member for St. George's – Stephenville East: It

is not about if we are going to have an inquiry, but when. The need is not going to go away.

Mr. Speaker, the need for the Family Violence Intervention Court is not going to go away. The last time I spoke to this petition I talked about how much money it would take to reinstate the court and where there are pockets of money far greater than that being spent.

I would also like to look at, really, what would it take to reinstate the court? Well, the courtroom is already there, so we do not have to come up with a new courtroom. It is only half a day, twice a week, so that courtroom is already there. The specialized judge is still at the bench, and this is a judge who has had specialized training in the area of domestic violence. Why waste this expertise? He is ready to go.

The Crown prosecutor, the current one that was there has gone; however, there are Crown prosecutors who can take up this cause. Legal Aid defence, that is all there.

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

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

**MS ROGERS:** A new Legal Aid lawyer would not have to be hired. We would have to hire a risk assessor, Mr. Speaker, but that would have been part of that budget. Victim Services is still there and operating in the Province. A bail supervisor is still there. We need a new court liaison; that was a very important role. John Howard Society is still there.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the Minister of Justice are telling me that John Howard is still doing the training program with offenders, but they are not because the money for that was cut. Mr. Speaker, I believe that this can be reinstated without a whole lot of additional funds.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS the Town of Goose Cove still remains without broadband services; and

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

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

We the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge the government to assist providers to ensure the Town of Goose Cove is a recipient of broadband Internet service in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I guess to make clear, the Town of Goose Cove is one of those up to 200 communities that do not have access to broadband Internet. We are not able to get a clear list from the government on this –

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

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** It is very important to acknowledge and know where the communities are that do not have access to broadband

Internet. The mapping model has been done by the department. Why will they not make that publicly available so we can get the best investment from providers, from those people working there, so that we can ensure people in rural communities, especially municipalities that really struggle to provide service and operate their town, like Goose Cove, have access to broadband Internet? That is quite key. We really need that in terms of moving forward to building a knowledge-based economy.

My constituents have put forward this petition. I am encouraged by it. With the Rural Broadband Initiative that is there, I would hope that we will see a number of more communities moving forward and have broadband Internet. It is vital, it is essential. We have to build a ubiquitous network.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**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, humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS hundreds of residents of the South Coast of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, including residents of the communities of Burgeo, Ramea, Grey River, and François use Route 480 on a regular basis for work, medical, educational and social reasons; and

WHEREAS there is no cellphone coverage on Route 480; and

WHEREAS residents and users of Route 480 require cellphone coverage to ensure their safety and communication abilities; and

WHEREAS the Department of IBRD recently announced significant funding to improve broadband; and

WHEREAS the residents and users of Route 480 feel that the Department of IBRD should also invest in cellphone coverage for rural Newfoundland and Labrador;

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

Mr. Speaker, this is a petition I have entered numerous times in this House before. The facts do not change; it is a service that has come a long way. I bring this up today in response to – the new Minister of IBRD stood up today and talked about broadband and when it comes to the government tea party today on openness and transparency.

I am putting this forward again now. I do not know the process of how I would have to do this. I asked the previous Ministers of IBRD – there were a couple of them – for a coverage area on where there is cellphone coverage and where there are cellphone gaps. I have never, ever gotten an answer ever.

What I am doing is there is a new Minister of IBRD and I am going to put the question to him. I do not know if I have to rewrite the letter or take the old letter. I see the old Minister of IBRD, and there was another one there. They never wrote back.

Now that this government has found their openness and their transparency, I am putting it out today. It is on the record. I would like a map of the coverage areas of cellphone coverage in the Province and where there is a lack of cellphone coverage. I asked it before in numerous letters and I never received anything.

I can put it through ATIPP, but I figured where you are open and transparent I could get it for free if I asked about it. I do have residents asking. I put that on the record today. I am hoping we can get that. Then once I get that information I can come back and ask more questions on this. Cellphone coverage is

necessary, we need to have it for various reasons.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

WHEREAS Route 510 from L'Anse au Clair to Red Bay is in deplorable condition and requires immediate upgrading; and

WHEREAS the condition of the highway is causing undue damage to vehicles using the highway and has now become a safety hazard for the travelling public; and

WHEREAS both residential and commercial traffic has increased dramatically with the opening of the Trans-Labrador Highway and increased development in Labrador; and

WHEREAS cold patch is no longer adequate as a means of repair;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to immediately allocate resources to Route 510 from L'Anse au Clair to Red Bay that allows for permanent resurfacing of the highway.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about is a seventy-six kilometre stretch from L'Anse au Clair to Red Bay. I know when you talk about roads and ferries, the response you get is you will never have enough money for the ferries and there are road problems everywhere.



I would challenge everybody in this House to come down and drive what we have to drive in my district. You will be hard-pressed to find anything worse. There is a picture that many of you have seen, a very tall gentleman who lies down on the side of the road and the hole in the road is bigger than the gentleman. Last week, we had four accidents – four accidents last week. Who is going to take the responsibility when somebody is killed?

In the spirit of openness and transparency, I would love to see the cost. Every summer you see ten, twelve, or fourteen transportation workers all putting in cold patch. We call it now the Dalmatian highway because there are more patches than there is the original pavement. It is all these black spots everywhere. It is absolutely ridiculous, Mr. Speaker, what we have to drive on.

I know the minister said earlier that he knows one thing that is not open today and that is the ice in the Labrador Straits. If he knows that, why are we being treated differently once again than other parts of the Province that have ferry disruptions? It is the same thing as the road.

I am going to continue to advocate so that, God forbid, if somebody is killed I will at least have a paper trail to know that I was lobbying, I was advocating, and being a voice for the people. I would like to know what government is going to say in the unfortunate event that happens. We cannot wait six years until the road is paved from Red Bay to Goose Bay before something is done with that section of the highway between L'Anse au Clair and Red Bay.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS the residents of the Pynn's Brook area are facing dangers in turning their vehicles safely off TCH Route 1 into their own driveways; and

WHEREAS it is common practice along TCH Route 1 to impose speed reductions for traffic travelling through communities such as Badger, Deer Lake, Bishop's Falls, Gander, Clarenville, and Whitbourne; and

WHEREAS highway traffic accidents along the stretch of TCH Route 1 through Pynn's Brook have caused deaths and injuries;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to reduce the maximum speed limit on TCH Route 1 through the Pynn's Brook area from the present 100 kilometres an hour to sixty kilometres an hour.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I did stand in the House in the last session and present a petition from this same area on this same concern. The residents who have signed this in this particular case come from Corner Brook, Pynn's Brook, Port Saunders, Deer Lake, and Pasadena. This is not just a Pynn's Brook issue; this also has to do and is well connected to residents on either side of Pynn's Brook who have to travel that section of the highway.

I say to the government, the other side of the House, it would be minimal cost to put in such a safety measure as this so residents can get in off the highway safely, so they do not have to run the risk of being rear-ended, for example, by a tractor trailer, when all they want to do is get into their own homes and get into their driveway safely, get in off the road and end up not being the victims of a car accident.

Mr. Speaker, as I have already stated, there are more than enough communities as shining examples as to reasons why government has already stepped down speed limits going through these various towns, Gander and Whitbourne –

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** Everybody knows that the speed limits are well-reduced. Again, they were done for a reason. Now, government has already come out and stated with legislation in the last little while that they have come out with some safety measures to carry out along our highways.

Mr. Speaker, this is so simple of an item. It is minimal dollars to do this. We know that there is a concrete record of accidents and deaths in this area, and I think that the Minister of Transportation can address this by a budgetary requirement of probably a couple of hundred dollars and an awareness campaign to let people know that if the speed limit is going to be reduced so that people can get in off the highways safely, as in other areas – these people, Mr. Speaker, have rights. They have the right to be safe while they are residents. People who are passing through the area have a right to be safe as well when they are driving through that area, so that coming upon turning traffic –

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** – that they do not have to put up with the road hazard as well that is in front of them. This one goes two ways as much as the highway does, Mr. Speaker. I thank you for your time on this, and hopefully government will address this concern.

Thank you.

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

**MR. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, a petition to the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned 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, this petition – I keep getting copies of it sent to me, and people keep on circulating it. Now they have gone through pretty much most of the people in the Town of River. There is somewhere in the order of 650 people or so in Trout River, and I see names are coming now from other areas, Rocky Harbour and various different towns.

I was somewhat encouraged yesterday by the government's announcement of extending 911 coverage. The extension of 911 coverage would be a very good thing for the Province. It would be a great thing; it would alleviate all sort of safety issues and make people be able to report

emergencies. In the minister's statement, he was saying how people could use cellphones and they could phone 911. Well, not in Trout River they will not, because they will not have cellphone service in Trout River. Also, a first responder coming, based on a 911 call, is going to need a street name and a street number.

So, in addition to cellphones for Trout River and for any other communities that do not have cellphones, I would urge government to continue moving forward, accelerate the pace, work with private service providers in order to extend cellphone coverage.

Moreover, continue with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador and start extending the naming of streets and numbering of houses, because for sure – this is something that government could learn from its past oversights and shortcomings. Instead of bringing on 911 service and saying now we have to get the streets done, but now we have to get the houses numbered, now we need to put in place cellphone coverage, why not have all of this move forward in sync and in a little while, maybe a year or more or less when we have 911 coverage, we will be able to have everybody in the Province access 911 coverage because we have already done the groundwork for it?

These petitions urge the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to extend cellphone coverage, in this case, to Trout River.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

WHEREAS the lack of services and supports in the school system is a serious obstacle to

learning for children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder; and

WHEREAS long wait-lists for pediatric assessment and diagnostic services are preventing many children with Autism Spectrum Disorder from receiving needed early diagnosis; and

WHEREAS the Intensive Applied Behavioural Analysis Program is currently not available for children after Grade 3; and

WHEREAS applied behavioural analysis has been shown to be effective for many individuals beyond Grade 3; and

WHEREAS there is a lack of supports and services for children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder after they age out of the Intensive Applied Behavioural Analysis Program; and

WHEREAS it is unacceptable to expect parents in Newfoundland and Labrador to pay thousands of dollars out of their own pockets to cover the costs of privately delivered applied behavioural analysis after Grade 3;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to extend eligibility for the Intensive Applied Behavioural Analysis Program beyond Grade 3 in consultation with parents, advocates, educators, health care providers, and experts in the autism community.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, we have been talking about Autism Spectrum Disorder and some of the problems, in the House of Assembly for the past couple of days now, in Question Period in particular. I think one of the most significant issues facing families and children right now is the whole question of wait-lists. It really factors into the Intensive Applied Behavioural Analysis Program.

As many parents will tell you, their children often age out of eligibility for this program because the wait-lists are so long. Oftentimes people do not realize that their children have undiagnosed ASD. They do not get the diagnosis in time to qualify for this program, or they get it relatively late and subsequently do not get the level of service. They do not get the level of attention they need to fully benefit from this.

Extending the eligibility of this program is pretty important. Also, the research does show that this particular therapy is useful and is effective throughout the lifespan. There is no hard and fast rule that says we have to end it after Grade 3 because we know it works throughout people's lives.

I encourage members to think about this and to get this done. The Budget period is a good time to think about this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### Orders of the Day

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

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

I call Motion 1, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador, to ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009, Bill 3, and that said bill be now read the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Bill 3, you say, Government House Leader?

It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Service NL shall have leave to introduce a bill, An Act To Amend The Vital

Statistics Act, 2009, Bill 3, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 3 and that the said bill be now read a first time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Service NL to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009", carried. (Bill 3)

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

When shall the bill be read a second time?

I am sorry.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, 2009. (Bill 3)

**MR. SPEAKER:** I got ahead of myself.

The bill has been now read a first time.

When shall the bill be read a second time?

**MR. KING:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 3 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, to ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act to Amend the Mental Health Care and Treatment Act, Bill 4, and that the said bill be now read the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Health and Community

Services shall have leave to introduce a bill, An Act to Amend the Mental Health Care and Treatment Act, Bill 4, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 4 and that the said bill be now read a first time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Mental Health Care And Treatment Act", carried. (Bill 4)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Mental Health Care And Treatment Act. (Bill 4)

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

When shall the bill be read a second time?

**MR. KING:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 4 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador, to ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Repeal The Printing Services Act, Bill 5, and the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Service NL shall have leave to introduce a bill, An Act To Repeal The

Printing Services Act, Bill 5, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 5 and that the said bill be read a first time.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Service NL to introduce a bill, "An Act To Repeal The Printing Services Act", carried. (Bill 5)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Repeal The Printing Services Act. (Bill 5)

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

When shall the bill be read a second time?

**MR. KING:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 5 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** 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 resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider resolution and Bill 2 respecting the granting of Interim Supply to Her Majesty.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved and seconded that this House do now resolve itself into Committee of the Whole and that I do now leave the Chair.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Motion 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 (Verge):** Order, please!

The Committee of Supply is 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 Related to the Public Service.

I recognize the hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation.

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

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

First of all, I guess I should apologize to the Speaker because – not that I disrespect the Chair, I always respect the Chair of this House, but I was a little disappointed because I jumped to my feet during ministerial statements to do a ministerial statement and was very disappointed that the Speaker did not recognize me. I quickly realized when I went back, the Speaker did not know I had a ministerial statement today. So I apologize to the Chair for some dirty looks earlier in the session, Mr. Chair.

I would not normally do this, but I would like to read out my ministerial statement. Normally, I would not but it is certainly sensitive for today because it is a great announcement today. If you will bear with me just for a couple of minutes.

I am pleased to rise today, of course, in this hon. House to highlight an initiative that engages youth in innovative activities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Newfoundland and Labrador's youth are vital to the Province's future prosperity. In order for them to grow and contribute, it is incumbent upon us to provide opportunities to encourage innovation, creativity, and build essential skills in our young people.

Mr. Chair, I am pleased to announce that we are seeking proposals for projects that support and promote youth innovation and contribute to valuable learning experiences for the Province's students, non-profit organizations, youth organizations, municipalities, and industry associations. I am proud to share that since 2009 the provincial government has made four calls for youth innovation proposals and has invested \$1.8 million in 103 projects.

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

**MR. FRENCH:** Available funding will be totalling \$400,000 and will support projects that benefit participants by increasing opportunities to use leading-edge technologies and improve technology skillsets.

These grants will provide non-repayable contributions of up to 80 per cent of eligible project costs to a maximum of \$15,000 per project. This year's deadline is April 17 and projects receiving funding will be announced before the conclusion of the school year.

The grants are designed to connect youth to science, technology, and engineering and identify opportunities in a number of strategic sectors such as digital media, ocean technology and the green economy, all of which reflect our goal of creating awareness among youth of the tremendous opportunities that exist in our Province.

Mr. Chair, our government is committed to supporting youth who represent a bright future for Newfoundland and Labrador. I invite interested groups and organizations to visit Innovation, Business and Rural Development's Web site to find out more and apply for our 2014 youth innovation grant.

This is a great program, one that my predecessors in this department created some years ago. It is certainly a significant contribution to youth in the tech sector, in particular, and we have some real exciting new industries out there including ocean technology, which I mentioned, and the green economy. Certainly, I want to encourage groups across the Province to apply for that.

Mr. Chair, another thing I would like to reference, we are talking about rural broadband initiatives earlier. The member for the Third Party – Opposition, sorry, I get them mixed up; they move around a little bit over there, Mr. Chair. This correspondence could have got lost in the mix because I do not know which seat he is sitting in from time to time, so I am not sure if he was with the Third Party or the coalition party. I am not sure which party he was with.

I just want to remind him he did ask the previous minister for details on rural broadband and he was responded to, Mr. Chair. So, to make an accusation that he did not receive a response, that is not quite accurate. He did get a response from the previous minister and was assured – the problem that we have is that much of this information that he is looking for is commercially-sensitive information. The carriers have this information. They share it with us if they want to. If they do, they do; if they do not, they do not; however, it is commercially sensitive and it is things that they do not want to share with their competitors. Anybody out there in the business world would certainly understand that.

I suggest to the hon. member if he wants specific information, I recommend that he contact the carriers throughout the Province and he will have to deal with them, whether they will share the information with them. I am believer, though, that he will have to keep it confidential. I do not know – I cannot speak for how the companies will deal with the hon. member, but I would suggest to him that certainly, as a member of the coalition party, maybe because there are a mix of three now they might have some input in finding out just who do and do not have the rural broadband.

Mr. Chair, it is not that the previous minister did not respond to him. He did respond to him. It is not that he would not give him the information. It was certainly commercially sensitive and that is why he did not provide it when asked about it in the Estimates. He had to reason to keep it confidential, from our perspective, but obviously from the businesses perspective it certainly is.

I would like to address something else too, yesterday in the House – I do not know if it was yesterday or the day before, there was a petition brought to the House by the Member for St. John's East. I thank the Member for St. John's East for highlighting an issue in my district, that being the CBS library.

He brought the petition forward – and I was curious about the petition because I had personally gone to a public meeting that was attended by some 150 people. Just last week I met with the committee. I know that they made representation to the Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Finance had spoken to me about it, how passionate they were about the library in CBS, as we all are, Mr. Chair.

What is happening is that the town provided this building for the CBS library for many years – and they still do; so there is no fear of the library closing. The building still exists. There is no fear. I had discussions the other day with the committee. Like I said, I have been very open with them, we have had discussions, and we certainly have no interest in closing a library in Conception Bay South, the second largest community right now in the Province.

I was surprised to see the petition because I knew everybody – obviously, we are always concerned about the library, we always want to expand and we always want to make it bigger, but there was no real threat to the library as I see it today, so I was a little shocked.

I thought to myself: I think I will get the petition off the table and I will have a look at it. I did get the petition off the table and I did have a look at it. I guess on the petition, Mr. Chair – I cannot recall the exact number of names, but I am thinking there was probably somewhere around

twenty or thirty names. Fair enough, twenty or thirty names sit on the petition. Mr. Chair, one of the things that you have to put on a petition when you sign it is where you live.

The hon. member stands in this House of Assembly making an issue of Conception Bay South, which is not a bad thing to do. I raise issues on behalf of the residents I represent all the time, but there was one thing that stood out to me. There was not one individual who signed that petition from Conception Bay South – not one.

They were from different places in the Province. Most of them from my colleague's district, the Member for Gander. He must have gone to Gander and asked the people of Gander what they thought about the people of Conception Bay South's library.

Mr. Chair, I have never heard so much foolishness in my life. The Member for St. John's East leaves inside the overpass and goes out, fair enough, and he talks about an issue in my District of Conception Bay South. Fair enough, but he gets people to sign his petition from Central Newfoundland.

I do not know, I mean, if I was bringing petitions in this House I can assure you the people who sign them would be affected by it. It reminds me of a story years ago, Mr. Chair.

**MR. MURPHY:** A point of order.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

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

**MR. MURPHY:** Mr. Chair, I put it to the –

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

Will the member wait until he is recognized, please?

The hon. the Member for St. John's East, on a point of order.

**MR. MURPHY:** I put it to the Chair that people have the right to sign petitions and have them presented in the House. It does not matter where they come from. I believe –

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation.

**MR. FRENCH:** Mr. Chair, there are only three or four paragraphs; there is not a lot of fine print in this one I can tell you. This is pretty straightforward.

It is no wonder the coalition party picked up another couple from over there – it is no wonder, Mr. Chair. When you have somebody who stands in this House and brings a petition on another member's district and does not have one person from the district sign it, it is shameful. It is somebody who just does not understand this Legislature that we are in here today. Fair enough, you can bring issues forward and when people bring them to your attention. Obviously, this is one that was created simply for the hon. member to be able to stand on his feet, Mr. Chair, and wag his tongue. That is all I can figure.

I say to the hon. member I appreciate him bringing attention to my district; however, I have been meeting with the groups. I am well informed of the issues in CBS. If he wants to find out what is happening in CBS, ask me or at least ask a resident. He certainly does not have to ask the people from Gander.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

The hon. the Member for the Bay of Islands.

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



I will show you petitions of 4,000 or 5,000 people from Western Newfoundland who want the hospital that they deserve and they were promised, Mr. Chair. It will not be anyone outside of anybody's district. I am not sure how much this government is going to listen anyway.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Are they all from the Corner Brook area?

**MR. JOYCE:** No, they are all from Western Newfoundland.

Mr. Chair, I am going to talk about the hospital today. My voice is a bit raspy but I had to stand and speak about the hospital.

Mr. Chair, they have the wrong mike on. Okay, they have it now. It took a little while.

I will go back to where I just started. The minister was just talking about petitions. I have petitions from 4,000 or 5,000 people from Western Newfoundland coming in everyday about the hospital in Western Newfoundland, to ensure we get the hospital that we deserve, the hospital that was committed to, not right-sized, which means downsize, Mr. Chair.

I have been on this issue now for a number of years. I can remember back in 2011 when the Premier, who was the minister at the time, the Premier in 2011 made this public announcement with the tractors rolling up there on the site, that construction would start in 2012. Four months later, I get my hands on the Stantec report, it said: Stop any further development of the site because there is no design selected.

You want to talk about how people can be misled, Mr. Chair. That was the Premier of the Province, the Member for Humber East who did that, Mr. Chair. That is the kind of stuff that I had to battle with and go through.

Mr. Chair, I just want to make it quite clear, the action committee that is set up in Western Newfoundland by Israel Hann, Gerald Parsons, Wayne Rose, and the rest of the members and all the councils, I fully support the action committee. I fully support to have the hospital

that we deserve, that was committed. I fully support a PET scanner and I fully support a radiation unit.

Now, Mr. Chair, I am going to go ahead with a few quotes here, and just some of the rumors I had to go and publicly dismiss on a regular basis. I want to get back to a statement the Premier made. The Premier of our Province, who is the Member for Humber East, who stayed silent on this hospital for years. He is finally now arousing up a bit and saying: Okay, there is enough opposition, I better start moving on this.

The Premier said in the *Western Star*: People on the West Coast should deserve the same level of care as the people on the East Coast. If the Premier of this Province is really committed to his words that he said in the *Western Star* out in Corner Brook to the people of Western Newfoundland, I ask the Premier of this Province to contact Deidre Dunne. She is a radiologist at Western Memorial Regional Hospital as we speak, Mr. Chair.

Deidre Dunne was so frustrated with the information that was being put out by this government, she went public. What Deidre Dunne said publicly – and I ask the Premier of this Province to call her personally because they always said give us the experts; here is the expert. What she said – she deals with people in palliative care, end of life. She said people on the West Coast are not receiving the same level of care as people on the East Coast. Because a lot of people are too old and sick to travel in for radiation and their level of care at the lower end, at the last days, last months of their life is not of good quality and it is not of the same quality as the people on the East Coast.

That is who said it. It is not me saying it. It is not propaganda. Here is an opportunity for the Premier to now stand up and follow through on his words to ensure that the people of the West Coast, the seniors on the West Coast get the same level of care as he committed to when he had a meeting with the residents on the West Coast. Here is an opportunity, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, I will just go through some of the concerns that were raised and some of the myths I had to, on a regular basis, disprove, and I will. One by one, I will. I have done it now ever since I had to fight to get the Stantec report. The Stantec report was completely different, completely opposite from what the government was saying, and as we go through the phase we can see that the hospital was downsized. We see commitments that were being made were all being put back on the backburner, Mr. Chair.

I will just give you one good example, just one good example, Mr. Chair. Here in this House of Assembly the Minister of Health stood up when we were talking about a PET scanner. I have Hansard for this, Mr. Chair, and I can get Hansard. That a PET scanner is \$40 million. That is too expensive to put out in Corner Brook.

Now after I had all the information, the minister finally admitted in Corner Brook, no, it is down to \$3 million. That is the kind of myths that I had to fight with. That is the kind of false information that is out in the public domain, when you do not want to do something you just throw enough mud at it. You throw enough false information that: oh, we cannot do it because of it.

Mr. Chair, now we know that the cost of a PET scanner is about one-tenth or even less than what the minister stood in this House and said. Mr. Chair, after we got through that, then the isotopes cannot be transferred. We need a cyclotron in order for isotopes that cannot be transferred.

I will ask you a question, Mr. Chair. Right now there are thirty PET scanners in Canada and only ten cyclotrons. How do they get the other twenty? They travel. I use the University of Saskatchewan. When the minister stood here and a question I asked the minister, the minister stood up and said: Oh, the University of Saskatchewan is not even open. You do not even know what I am talking about.

I produced a document to the Premier at the time and the Premier said: Oh my God, Eddie, I did

not know that. The document showed isotopes being transferred from Hamilton, Ontario, 2,500 kilometres away. That is the kind of information, Mr. Chair, I have on a regular basis.

Mr. Chair, the latest one that was told to the action committee was that the Minister of Health did a poll out in her district and 70 per cent of the people from her area would not travel to Corner Brook for radiation treatment. That is what the action committee – now, if anybody here wants to say that was never said, contact Israel Hann, contact Gerald Parsons, or contact Wayne Rose. There are three or four other people at that meeting. Let them contact them and let them say that was never said with all of those witnesses there. The number was even put out that the minister said, 70 per cent.

Now, Mr. Chair, I knew that was not true, so I wrote the minister. I put a Freedom of Information on it and I wrote her. She wrote me back. There is no such poll. So that is the kind of information that when you look at it you find out the information that is being put out there in the domain, hopefully no one is going to get to the truth, but I will.

Mr. Chair, I will give you another one, and this is up in Sault Ste. Marie where there is a single unit. I heard the minister here in this House of Assembly. She stood up, and I have Hansard, and she said: That is only on a trial basis; it is a pilot project. That is just not true. It is an established unit.

For anybody in this House, when you hear this type of information, you say: Well, we cannot do it because of this. You start putting out information, Mr. Chair, which has no factual basis to it. When you check into it, it is just absolutely not true.

On a regular basis for the last two years, I had to do this. The Member for Humber West met with the action committee. The Member for Humber West heard all these same false statements being put out in the public domain on the West Coast.

One thing I am glad of, Mr. Chair – and not very often that I like praising people up. When I heard the Premier come out and say that he is collecting his own information, I am glad. I, like him, do not agree with the information that is coming from the Department of Health. I had to disprove it on a regular basis.

Like the Premier told the action committee, he has a file now getting that thick on his own information. I say congratulations to the Premier; get your own information. When you get your own information like the digging I had to do, the research and the calls that I had to make, and the teleconferences that I was on to disprove the information that the Department of Health was putting out – the Premier and the Member for Humber West will come up with the same conclusion I did, that it is viable. We should have an honest, frank, and open discussion on all of this and stop this myth of putting information out there like \$40 million for a PET scanner.

Mr. Chair, I will be back again. I thank you for the opportunity.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services.

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

**MR. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to speak this afternoon in Committee. It is good to see the Member for Humber Valley back on his feet. I know he has not been feeling well over the last few days. It looks like –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Bay of Islands.

**MR. DAVIS:** I am sorry, Bay of Islands, my apologies – the Member for Bay of Islands. It looks like he is getting his voice back because it has been quiet here this week. He has not been feeling well but his voice is coming back and we heard him during Question Period in his usual good form. I know as his voice recovers I am sure we will hear more from him.

I am glad he brought up Corner Brook hospital by the way, Mr. Chair. I think it is a fantastic project for Newfoundland and Labrador and especially for the people in Western Newfoundland and Labrador.

I lived in Western Newfoundland for a number of years. I was stationed there in my days in policing many years ago and spent many trips back and forth to the current Western Memorial Hospital. What I find about hospitals and facilities, Mr. Chair, quite often is that we sometimes forget the service that is provided at such important facilities in Newfoundland and Labrador is provided by the people who work in those facilities, the employees and staff of health authorities, the employees and staff of government departments. We should never lose sight of the great work they do.

We have fantastic people working in health care in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have great people working in education. We have great people working in line departments such as my own in Child, Youth and Family Services. I talked earlier today about this being Social Work Month and acknowledged the great work that social workers do in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In Corner Brook, it is the people who provide the service. The hospital is the facility that is used to provide those services, and quite often contains the equipment that the member opposite is referring to and talking about. One of the things I really like about the Corner Brook hospital is the campus design, the campus set-up, the campus plan that is in place.

Having a campus design where you will have a combination of buildings in one location and which provides different varying types of operations and facilities for those operations in one area, it also allows for expansion, it allows for change in the design and growth in the future. As technology continues to evolve, as medicine and research continues to evolve, there will be new treatment processes, there will be a need for new equipment and with such a design, it will allow for those types of growth in the future.

As the member opposite likes to talk about Western Newfoundland, I also like to talk about my district, the Topsail district. Topsail district – for those who are not aware – most of Topsail district is within Paradise; some of it also is contained, a small amount, in Conception Bay South and a smaller amount again in Mount Pearl. It takes in three very busy communities. They are large communities. They are busy and active communities. There is also tremendous growth in Paradise and Conception Bay South in particular.

Arguably, the fastest growing area, amongst the fastest growing districts in the Province – Cape St. Francis has had tremendous growth. We even see in Gander. I know my colleague for Gander quite often talks about the tremendous growth that is happening in the Central part of the Island. We see pockets in Labrador as well where there is growth taking place; but Paradise, Conception Bay South, Topsail district area is one area that has seen significant growth over the last twenty years or so, and will continue to see.

We see subdivisions, we see new housing development, and we see significant growth in business, especially in Paradise in the new Kenmount Road extension area. There is a significant growth and development of new business in that area. It was an area of development that was a vision of the previous council in Paradise and they saw to it to be able to develop road access and network into the area to allow the development of commercial operations, commercial businesses. I say, Mr. Chair, that they are growing very quickly in that area.

As that happens, more people want to live in the area as well. The residential growth, of course, is also taking place at a very rapid rate. The results of that, of course, is the need for increased infrastructure in such a community.

I have talked to people and MHAs from other parts of the Province in rural areas and in smaller communities, some where the populations are declining. They can very clearly articulate the challenges that are faced by MHAs

in areas where populations are declining. We also have to be cognizant of the fact that our growth areas also come with tremendous challenges.

In Paradise, with such young families, there is a demand for schools, as some of the members opposite have talked about, the need to build new schools. There is a new elementary school project that my colleague, the Minister of Education, has been working on with the school board to move that project forward – the new elementary school in the Octagon Pond area. I am glad to see that there is a commitment there.

I just heard publicly talked about by the Chair of the school board, Mr. Peach, just recently in the media about the need for a new junior high and high school. I have had people talking about the need for a high school and we have had good discussions about that. It is good to see the school boards say that they are also reflecting that the future needs will include a junior high school and high school in that area as continued growth is experienced and we see more development.

The other part of the infrastructure that has been very important in my district is the need for opportunities for families, with the need for recreation. We know right now there are two significant arena projects underway in – three, actually – in each of the communities that I represent. In Paradise there is a new double arena – it will be double, two NHL size ice surfaces in a facility being constructed – partnered funding by municipal affairs, by the provincial government and the Town of Paradise.

There is also a new stadium under construction in Conception Bay South, which is part of my district, but the stadium itself will be located in the Conception Bay South district. There is also a third major project underway, one in Mount Pearl, where the new community centre – a multi-million dollar centre which is being built in the area between the Glacier and also the Reid Centre. I know most people are familiar with that area. This multi-million dollar centre is going to be the centrepiece for Mount Pearl for

many, many years to come – a very important piece of infrastructure for not only the residents of Mount Pearl, but also for surrounding areas.

Similarly, I would say, that the new stadium in Conception Bay South will very much be a regional facility, as will the new arena in Paradise. Those communities are very open to working with other communities surrounding the area, with other residents from the greater area, and having them implement and be part of recreation programs as they can.

The other big one I wanted to mention is a significant project, and I think hats off to the City Council of Mount Pearl, as well as volunteers in Mount Pearl and Paradise who represent Campia Gymnastics – an organization in that area that provides a tremendous amount of benefit to young people in this region and throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. They have athletes at Campia Gymnastics – I would never have known this unless I had some knowledge of the work that Campia are doing - they see more children and youth now from other sports and other disciplines who are coming to Campia to benefit their own abilities as athletes. It shows that gymnastics goes a long ways to help develop hockey players and soccer players. Off season for those sports is a good opportunity for them to continue to grow and develop their physical capabilities to become better athletes. Campia is working on a significant project in Mount Pearl, and we look forward to continued co-operation with them to see that project progress.

As well, a big issue in my district that is talked about from time to time when I talk to residents is road infrastructure. As a growing community, the main road through Paradise, which is Topsail Road, leads from Mount Pearl – through Mount Pearl into Paradise, through Paradise into Conception Bay South, and carries thousands and thousands of cars every day. There has been significant investment by the Province, in partnership with the town, to continue to widen and upgrade Topsail Road. We know that as soon as the weather breaks there will be further work and continued investment in the widening

and the continuation of that piece of work on Topsail Road.

There is a significant amount of funding that was put in through capital works funding through Municipal Affairs. As well, with Paradise Road, this is a significant roadway again through Topsail District and through Paradise, that work is continuing and those investments continue to be made. There is also a problem early mornings on Topsail Road and Paradise for residents coming from west of, also some east of, the Outer Ring Road.

There is a large number of population from Paradise who travel east on Topsail Road in the mornings to gain access on the Outer Ring Road. What government has done through the Department of Transportation and Works – and my colleague is here with me, he and I have had many discussions about this – is cost sharing a study with the Town of Paradise to look at how they can improve the flow of traffic from the town onto the main highways, being the Outer Ring Road.

Mr. Chair, I would like to thank you for the opportunity this afternoon. I look forward to the opportunity maybe later today or another time to get up and speak further about Topsail District.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

I remind the member that his time for speaking has expired.

**MR. DAVIS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

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

I appreciate the opportunity to speak on Supply. The issue that has been tossed back and forth today with the government's little party out in the lobby – the \$5,000 party they had in the lobby for a half-an-hour or so lunchtime – was openness and accountability. One of the big issues in openness and accountability – one of the provisions of Bill 29 that the Opposition found very troublesome, very unnecessary, and

something that closed off access to government was denial of ministerial briefing books.

Mr. Chair, for the people who are watching, it is important to understand what a ministerial briefing book is, why it is created, how it is created, and who pays for its creation. Any time that a minister assumes a portfolio, that minister receives a complete briefing so the minister can understand the portfolio, whether it be Finance, Fisheries, Justice, Education, or whatever it happens to be.

Because that briefing book is put together by taxpayers' dollars, this is something that is assembled to inform the minister, it is something that is also in the ordinary course made available to the critic. Most people accept and believe that the reason we have an Opposition – and preferably that we would have a strong Opposition – is that only by having an Opposition challenge government and ask questions, make inquiries, keep government on its toes, keep your feet to the fire so to speak, that is the way that we get the best government.

The new interim Premier has said himself on numerous occasions that healthy debate and vigorous debate produces good government. Mr. Chair, how can you have healthy and vigorous debate if one side uses public resources to put together all the information and then they inform a minister of decisions based on a briefing book and other information, and then they refuse to share this information that was created at taxpayers' expense with the person who is the Opposition critic for that department?

The types of things that we might be concerned about, for example, say in Fisheries a briefing book might explain to the minister what a disaster marketing has been over the last number of years, how RMS or raw material sharing was a disaster, how FPI was broken up and how the marketing arm was lost, and how somebody else is making millions and millions of dollars based on what used to be the FPI marketing arm. FPI was created initially by the Peckford government at taxpayers' expense.

A ministerial briefing book, say for the Minister of Education might explain the rationale for collapsing all of the English school boards into one school board so that we would have the distinction in this Province of going backwards in education. We know in education we are going backwards in results because our fifteen-year-old Grade 9 and Grade 10 students are performing more poorly every three years than their counterparts in Canada.

When this government took office, we were approximately fifth or sixth in Canada in literacy, numeracy, and science. Now we are managing to stay ahead of Prince Edward Island. For Canada's newest have province, that is not a very good recommendation.

Those are the types of things the Opposition critic would want to know. What information is the minister relying on that government makes such poor decisions that we get such terrible outcomes for our people? Instead of providing that information that is created at taxpayers' expense, the minister prefers to sit on that information. They passed Bill 29, which on the Opposition side we refer to as the official secrets act. It is the way they keep secrets from the people. They create information at the people's expense and then keep secrets away from them.

Types of other questions and information may be something in the nature of the Legal Aid report or the report to do with the sheriff's officers. We all recall that a year or so ago in the last Budget, the first step of government in, to a large degree, shredding a lot of the services of the Department of Justice was to cut the number of sheriff's deputies in St. John's from forty-two to twenty-one. Clearly, without any understanding, without any comprehension, without any appreciation for the fact that these court officers perform not only a valuable service but a service that really subjects them to considerable danger with injury or loss of life.

By that I mean, Mr. Chair, that the people they escort from Her Majesty's Penitentiary – and we must keep in mind that Her Majesty's Penitentiary was actually built in 1859, which is the same year Charles Darwin wrote *On the*

*Origin of Species*. That is how long ago Her Majesty's Penitentiary was built. It was built in the same year –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible) for the survival of the fittest.

**MR. BENNETT:** Yes, for the survival of the fittest. The same year Darwin postulated his theory on the origin of the species is the year we built Her Majesty's Penitentiary.

I wanted to check to see if we even had a government. Actually, pictures of the Legislature and the legislators are hanging on the wall in the outside hallway. Obviously, that was a state-of-the-art institution at that time, but we are five generations down from Queen Victoria now when that was built. Her great-great-great-granddaughter has been on the Throne for over sixty years and we are still using Her Majesty's Penitentiary.

The types of issues that we deal with – earlier today, I posed a question to the Minister of Justice on when two reports would be released. One is the Legal Aid report and one is the report that flowed from the difficulties with the budget, related to the Department of Justice last year, and asked when the two reports would be available. One report that deals with Legal Aid and the other report that deals with the Sheriff's Office. The minister has a short, sharp, straightforward answer – something that we are not accustomed to getting from this government – and it was, yes. Yes, he would release the report.

In the last couple of hours or so, I am advised by a reporter from *The Telegram*, our intrepid legislative reporter, James McLeod, that he has tried to get the reports and they are not available. So within the space of an afternoon in the House of Assembly, we are able to come in here and are not able to get reports. We can go into Question Period and we are told yes, we are able to get reports; and before we are able to go to have a look at the report, it is already in the news media that the report is not available. So you really have to wonder who's running the

government, who's on first, who's on second, and who's on third, and who's doing what.

Other types of information that we have requested in the last few months and have been unable to get, we have been denied access to: On November 21, there was a request made to the Department of Justice for the hourly rate of a couple of lawyers in the Province of Nova Scotia who were hired to prosecute some infamous murder charges in the city. We can see on the one hand that we have let our Department of Justice run down so poorly that our staff are overworked, that we have to hire out-of-province prosecutors to prosecute the most serious crimes in the Province.

A similar request was: What is the hourly rate that we are paying these Nova Scotia lawyers to do our prosecution because we have let our Department of Justice fall apart so badly that we do not have adequate numbers – not that our prosecutors are not capable of doing prosecutions, because for certain they can, we have outstanding prosecutors, but they can only do so much work. Are we told how much we are paying these Nova Scotia prosecutors? Absolutely not.

The government goes back on Bill 29. Apparently, they just flip-flopped on Bill 29 this afternoon, in the course of two or three hours, on releasing the Legal Aid report and the report on the Sheriff's Office. They cite section 27.(1) of Bill 29 that says, "The head of a public body shall refuse to disclose to an applicant information that would reveal... (c) commercial, financial, labour relations, scientific or technical information the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to (i) harm the competitive position of a third party or interfere with the negotiating position of the third party."

Mr. Chair, we have to ask: Who is the third party? I guess the government does not want us to know how much they are paying the Nova Scotia lawyers to prosecute people who are accused of murder in our Province. Why? We do not want them to know how much they are getting paid. This makes absolutely no sense to

me whatsoever, Mr. Chair, but many other things in this government make no sense as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

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

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

It is a pleasure to stand in my place again today and talk about Interim Supply. Before I do that, a lot of things have come to mind here so far this afternoon. I have to note that the Member for Conception Bay South was made well aware of a petition that I had presented yesterday on the state of the library in Conception Bay South from concerned residents. It is not the first time I had stood in my place and spoke on behalf of not only the residents of Conception Bay South, but residents of the Province.

In particular, in this case why people would be concerned about libraries in this Province and the state of libraries in the Province and what is happening with the libraries in the Province probably could be reflected back to the last provincial Budget and what happened with the librarians. Just to give government a reminder here, and the people, I guess, in this particular case, that Budget day is coming up on March 27. We do not know if there are going to be any more surprises when it comes to cuts to various departments and what is going to happen with the librarians who are left behind. Because we do know that we lost several librarians in the Province, several important positions, one of which I can think of, right off the top of my head, happened to be in Gander.

I would like to remind the Member for Conception Bay South of another couple of employees that we lost, librarians who were doing a very important job, not only were they keeping the libraries going but some of them were keeping the communication lines going and running Internet services in Central regions of the Island portion of the Province. These

people were not just librarians or teachers, or people who were looking after books, they were much more than that, but it was this government that cut them.

So, there is no doubt in my mind the reason why people of this Province should be very concerned and should be expressing their concern through the petition format and signing these petitions to keep libraries going. Because it was obvious that the discussion was not happening on the part of government. It was happening, Mr. Chair, but people were not being listened to when librarian staff were cut.

Again, he also expressed the fact that these people were indeed from Gander. Well, Mr. Chair, we do not know if these people from Gander had roots in Conception Bay South or if they had family in Conception Bay South, or if they had businesses in Conception Bay South. We do not know what the connections were to these people.

Well, let me tell you the power of a petition, Mr. Chair, because I also rose in this House last year asking for a fracking moratorium, and government eventually listened. Well, these people who signed the petition as well were not just from the Port au Port Peninsula. I have an example of it here that I was going to stand on my feet yesterday and present during Private Members' Day, but there simply was not enough time for petitions, so this one is probably going to have to be presented next week.

These people signed it from Stephenville, which is great, and we have more signatures from Stephenville, but when I keep flipping the pages here, Mr. Chair, they are from different regions of the Province. I think what the Member for Conception Bay South may have been saying was that because you are not from an area, you do not have the right to comment on something that is happening in another particular district.

What I am trying to say to the House here and what I was trying to say to the member was the simple fact that everybody has the right to speak by petition on something that may be happening to them in the future, or to their fellow man or



woman down the road who lives in that particular area. These are direct concerns.

Mr. Chair, this petition, when I stand on it next week, it is also signed by people – I am looking at it and the address is in Edmonton, Alberta. It does not mean that the issue does not concern them; it does not mean that this issue is of no importance to them. It does not mean that these people do not have a direct connection to this area. Maybe they are ex-patriot Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who hope to come home to their place again.

Mr. Chair, I will also say that there are people on this petition who signed it from St. John's. Now, St. John's is not even in the area where fracking is going to be occurring, but should we tell the people of St. John's – and I will say to the Member for Conception Bay South that if he wishes that the people of St. John's do not have an issue with fracking or environmental concerns in this Province, that he stand in his place right now, stand up and tell the people of St. John's East, in particular who signed this, that they do not have a right to comment about fracking, they do not have a right to express environmental concern, they do not have a right to talk about libraries in Conception Bay South. That the people of Gander do not have a right to comment on libraries or library closings, or the layoff of personnel that government instituted in its last Budget.

Mr. Chair, that is a matter for him to be rethinking his place in the House if he has to question the right of a petitioner to sign a petition and have that voice spoken by in the House. There could be people in his own district who want something to say, who want to sign the petition and want to have their voices heard in the House. That is why we are here. This is democracy. That is why we are here.

That is why, if somebody wants to sign a petition and send it in to me and they want to ask me to present it in the House on their behalf, I will continue to do so. It was no different earlier today when I presented a petition in the House here having to do with a traffic issue in Pynn's Brook. Some people looked at me and

commented on the fact that just because the petition happened to be from Pynn's Brook that the matter did not concern me. Well it does. The people who signed it from Corner Brook and Deer Lake are on either side of Pynn's Brook, they still have to use that road.

If I travel to the West Coast, Mr. Chair, I usually do not take an airplane. I like to drive the car across because I like to talk to people along the route too at the same time. I will have to take that route. Do know what? Pynn's Brook is a direct concern for me. I have family over on the West Coast, family who are deep rooted in the Corner Brook area; areas of Little Rapids and Pasadena, areas of Stephenville. I have a right to know they are going to be safe any time they are driving on that piece of road. That is the whole idea of a petition, is to bring forth concerns and concerns about government. Why shouldn't we?

Mr. Chair, I can see my time is getting a little bit short here in this first part but I will be more than happy to get up and talk again. I just wanted to clarify that point. That the reason we petition are for those reasons that I already stated.

I find it unacceptable, on any part, for any member who would be losing touch in this House as the reason why we stand up in this House and present petitions that are signed from anywhere, not only in this Province or in this country. If somebody wanted to express a concern when it comes to fracking, when it comes to the roads in Pynn's Brook, when it comes to libraries in CBS, we would be able to stand up without consequence and without having to be chastised because we actually spoke out for people who cared about an issue.

Mr. Chair, I will leave it at that for now. I see I still have a little bit of time left but I think that my point has been made on this. I look forward to standing up again and talking about Interim Supply in the future.

Thank you very much.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

Mr. Chair, I am just going to reply to the Member for Mount Pearl South on some of the things that he said earlier about a petition he presented to the floor on blue zone parking, and a reference to what is government doing. I would just like to talk about that for a few minutes, and then perhaps I will get into a little bit more about what Service Newfoundland and Labrador is doing and what we have done in recent months with safety legislation that makes this Province a safer place for all of our citizens. I will get into that in a minute.

Mr. Chair, the first thing I am going to do here this afternoon is I am going to read a quote from Hansard. It is from a year ago, almost to the day. It says, "Mr. Speaker, it is very easy to sit on the other side of the House of Assembly, to simply sit there and criticize everything. Criticize everything, accountable for nothing, Mr. Speaker. It is very easy to do. It is a lot different to be on this side of the House and to govern and make decisions, strategic decisions, and sometimes very difficult decisions, Mr. Speaker, but you do it in the best interest of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. That is why we do it. That is why we take the criticisms, Mr. Speaker. It is not always popular, but we have to be guided by principles. This government is guided by our principles."

That is the Member for Mount Pearl South there just a year ago. How things have changed in the last little while. I find it ironic that I am over here defending what government is doing and the good things that we are doing, and he is on the other side of the House criticizing the good things that are happening in this government.

**MR. LANE:** A point of order.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South on a point of order.

**MR. LANE:** Mr. Chair, that position has not changed.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Mr. Chair, let's talk a little bit about the blue zone legislation. In 2012, our government amended the Buildings Accessibility Act. That basically just brings more regulations, more enforcement into play and fines into play when it comes to accessible parking in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Society today – and I mentioned this the other day – demands that public places be accessible to all. Everybody in this room, everybody in this Assembly agrees on that principle for sure. We all recognize the importance of embracing inclusion, Mr. Chair. My wife is a deaf educator. The deaf community has been a big part of our lives for many years. I understand the barriers that people with disabilities face. I have huge empathy and I will work as Minister of Service NL to help in any way in my capacity to make life better for those who are facing these barriers in life. This is what we have done in this new legislation.

Mr. Chair, this new legislation basically strengthens the requirement that signs identifying parking spaces designated for use by people with disabilities are clearly identified, permanent, and kept in good repair, and that is a good thing. We have brought in fines to make sure we could enforce and get compliance. For a corporation, they could be fined from \$1,000 to \$25,000 – they are pretty hefty fines, Mr. Chair – individual owners from \$500 to \$5,000, and, again, an additional \$200 to \$2,000 a day for individual owners or corporations who do not correct the issue.

Mr. Chair, that is what we are talking about here. We are talking about businesses out there that are not correcting the issues. We are working towards that as an enforcement body with Service NL to make sure that compliance is happening. I will be getting into that a little bit here now.

These parking spaces are supposed to be clearly marked with permanent vertical signage. It is for new and existing buildings. Enforcement and compliance is done in three ways: regular inspections, response to complaints, and through enforcement blitz and audits. Our technical inspectors can issue orders and ultimately lay charges. This is where the fines come into play if businesses are not out there complying with our orders, Mr. Chair.

The rule is in place: a minimum of one parking space or 4 per cent of all parking spaces. You have to have at least one parking space in your place of business, and a minimum of 4 per cent of all parking spaces. Designs are required to be submitted for review prior to issuing a construction permit. When a new building goes up, the designs have to go into Service NL. Our technical inspectors have a look at them and we approve it at that stage.

Mr. Chair, periodic inspections are performed during the construction. Our inspectors will go to the site and we will inspect the construction of the facility and make sure they are in compliance at that level. Final inspection is required before occupancy. That is a pretty rigid process that we need to go through. Again, we talk about other things as well and the fines that are involved.

Mr. Chair, there is one thing I would like to refer to. This was a letter that I sent to the Member for Mount Pearl South. He asked me many questions about exactly what we are doing. I would just like to quote a few numbers in this letter, my response to him.

Mr. Chair, we did an audit in the fall of 2013 which targeted big-box stores and strip malls in St. John's, Mount Pearl, Clarenville, and Marystown. That was in the fall of 2013. These

building types were chosen because of the practice of removing signs in the wintertime. That is a common practice and we knew that was going on, so we needed to get out there and make sure that they were in compliance.

A total of eighty-one building parking spots were inspected for compliance with the requirements of permanently fixed signage, resulting in fifteen orders being issued. So we are making sure that businesses in the Province are doing what is right and they are in compliance. We are holding their feet to the fire, Mr. Chair.

In addition to that, since we brought in the new regulations in 2012 and early 2013 when they actually came into force, we did 865 regular inspections that were performed between April 1, 2012 and December 31, 2013; that is in addition to the eighty-one inspections that we performed in the audit I just mentioned. During the regular inspections, we issued fifty-six orders for violations of the new regulations, and the audit again resulted in fifteen orders. We have issued over seventy orders during that twelve-month period, Mr. Chair.

So to say that we are not doing our job, is incorrect. We know that there are some issues. One of the ways that we want to get information from different organizations and different people is to reach out to Service NL; give us a call if you see something that is not right.

Mr. Chair, I go around on a regular basis when I am out shopping with my family and if I see something I am not sure is quite right – I take it upon my own responsibility to do that – I take a picture with my iPhone, that government issued. I get a hold of my officials when I get back to work the next day or come back on a Monday and say: Guys, have a look at this. Is this in compliance or not? There are some technical things that I am aware of, but there are some subtleties as well. I have had inspectors go out and have a look at places where I did not think compliance was happening.

I heard the member opposite talk about a number of places that he has seen as well, and he

listed them off earlier. I urge the member opposite that if he wants to get engaged in helping us with enforcement and compliance, take on the responsibility, call our officials at Service NL and they will respond. We will investigate it. Every single phone call that is sent to us, it is no problem at all, Sir. We will make sure that compliance is happening at that level.

Mr. Chair, I have worked very closely over the last two-and-a-half years with the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities in many different capacities. When I was Parliamentary Secretary to Advanced Education and Skills, I was in a different role then, and they had things that they wanted to talk to our department about. Mr. Chair, I spent a lot of time with this organization.

Since I became Minister of Service NL, I have met with them twice; I have been in constant communication with them. We talked about how we are going to work collaboratively with the COD-NL. We told them that any time they run into situations where they see compliance is not happening out there, pick up the phone and give us a call. They have a direct line to officials in my department, and I see that going back and forth. I get copied on the correspondence. We have been very, very open, very transparent in how we are dealing with the organizations that are out there that are advocating on behalf of people who are facing barriers, who are disabled in our community.

Mr. Chair, when I hear the member opposite stand up on his feet and criticize our government for bringing in this legislation, criticize our government for not doing enough, when I have the facts here in front of me to show that we are meeting with the key stakeholders, we are out there doing enforcement, we are out there doing inspections, Mr. Chair, I just flabbergasted here to listen to him get up there and talk like we are doing nothing.

Do you know what? We are out there looking after the people who are facing the biggest barriers in our Province, the biggest challenges in our Province, Mr. Chair. We will continue to

do that. In my role as Minister of Service NL, I will take it upon myself to make sure that we are working with these community groups, that we do the right things that need to be done, and I am looking forward to serving in this role, in this capacity, for the next number of months and I cannot wait to get back to work and do the things that need to be done to make this Province a better place for everybody, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

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

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

I had not planned on speaking this afternoon but after listening to that, I feel somewhat of an obligation to do so.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** You are a good volunteer.

**MR. LANE:** Yes, I am a good volunteer, Mr. Chair.

It is interesting that the minister should suggest that I or anybody else would be doing his job, the job of his inspectors and so on, in enforcing blue zone regulations. I thought as a taxpayer that is why we paid our taxes so government would provide these types of services, and certainly these services are much needed for people with disabilities. I wonder would the minister be asking citizens now to start doing open heart surgery maybe. Perhaps we can ask citizens to start testing the –

**MR. HEDDERSON:** (inaudible) brain surgery.

**MR. LANE:** Well, some members certainly could use that for sure, I say to the Member for Harbour Main.

Maybe we should be doing that. Maybe we should be out enforcing speeding on our highways –

**MR. CRUMMELL:** A quick point of order, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

The Minister of Service NL, on a point of order.

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Mr. Chair, as Minister Responsible for the Highway Traffic Act, we encourage citizens to call in to enforcement officials and let us know if there is something going wrong. One of the key things that have been happening recently, Mr. Chair –

**CHAIR:** There is no point of order.

**MR. CRUMMELL:** – is drunk drivers are being caught more often because of that initiative –

**CHAIR:** There is no point of order.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

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

Of course that is not a point of order.

Mr. Chair, we can take this to the ridiculous for sure, but I think the point I am trying to make here is, as I said, as taxpayers we pay for government services. People go to work every day, they work hard, they pay their taxes to the government, and they expect for those tax dollars that the government will provide certain services for them. Certainly one of them, as a society, that we definitely expect is that we would be an inclusive society and that we would ensure that we provide all the services that are required, provide all the access that is required for people within our communities who have disabilities.

The minister, when he spoke, talked about all of the regulations that were passed. Nobody on this side of the House is saying that those regulations are bad. As I have said in the past, everybody on both sides of the House, when those regulations came forward, everybody agreed with them. They were passed

unanimously. They are good regulations on paper, and that is the key: on paper.

Now, Mr. Chair, as I said before, any type of regulations, no matter what they are, if you simply write them on paper but you do not follow up on what is written on that paper, you do not enforce those regulations, then it is really not worth the paper it is written on.

I am not questioning that there may have been some inspections done. The minister says there were some inspections done; I believe him. I have no reason to disbelieve him. I am not suggesting there was not. What I am suggesting, though, is that two years later there are numerous non-compliance issues all over the Province, certainly all over the City of St. John's, the City of Mount Pearl, and Conception Bay South.

Yes, they did an audit. The minister did write me back and he said we did an audit – and they did an audit of, I guess, the big stores. They went to Stavanger Drive, they went to Kelsey Drive, and they went to Pearlgate Plaza – although they missed a couple of Pearlgate Plaza, but they were probably there.

There is no doubt that those particular areas are not 100 per cent, but they are 95 per cent, and I will give them that. That is a good thing. It is a positive thing. I am not disputing it. I am also not disputing the fact that they have legislation that talks about this rigid process for new developments that is now required if you are going to construct a new building and so on. You have to have appropriate space designated for blue spaces and that the legislation applies in terms of having the proper blue zones and the proper signage. It is a good thing. I absolutely agree with the minister that it is happening; it is wonderful. I support it 100 per cent.

I think where we have really fallen down on the job is two areas. The first area where government has fallen down on the job is existing businesses. I would suggest to you, Mr. Chair, that you can drive down through any of the commercial corridors in the St. John's area, whether that be Topsail Road, Kenmount Road,

Elizabeth Avenue, Torbay Road, the main highway in Conception Bay South, Paradise, those areas, and I bet you if you were to start going from business to business to business – and I can speak to this because I did it; I took a full day. I took a full Saturday a couple of weeks ago.

**MR. DAVIS:** (Inaudible).

**MR. LANE:** Yes, I had time on my hands for this important issue, I say to the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services. Yes, I made time because it is an important issue. I took the time to go to these areas and start checking in all these commercial establishments. I would say in many cases one out of every two or at least one out of every three was not in compliance with the regulations. They were not in compliance. This is about providing access to people. We cannot simply say –

**MR. HEDDERSON:** (Inaudible).

**MR. LANE:** I am hearing an awful lot of chirping there from the Member for Harbour Main. Being a bully – we were talking the other day about the bullies; he is going to be a bully. I think the Minister of Education should give him a pink shirt. I wonder if the Minister of Education has an extra pink shirt there from bully day that he can give the member.

Mr. Chair, as I said I think that when you look at all these commercial establishments, you will see that there are many of them which are not in compliance. If I can see it, then certainly the minister should be able to see it. He said he is going out taking pictures every now and then, I say he should buy a new camera. He would wear it out in a hurry.

We had to ask: How many people do we have enforcing this? The minister can correct me, but my understanding is we have a person in St. John's and the next one is one person in Clarendville. So from St. John's to Clarendville – and I stand to be corrected – from my information we have one inspector. Then throughout the Province we have a few more, and they are part-time. They do other things. I

do not know if they are some kind of other enforcement officers and part of their duty is to enforce blue zones; I am not sure what else they do. They are part-time enforcement officers. I am talking about actually enforcing it.

Now, the other piece, which is a real disgrace to say the least, is that we have a number of government-owned facilities, corporations, and agencies which are not in compliance. The minister talked about the fines and how he raised the fines from – I do not know what it was – \$100 to \$400. We all voted for it and supported it, absolutely. How many fines did he issue on government? He should issue it on his own departments, I think. I think he should have issued a few.

I can tell you what to issue. You can issue one to Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. You can issue one to the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission. You can issue a few to Eastern Health because St. Clare's and the Health Sciences Centre are not in compliance. You can issue some to the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation. Issue one over to the Minister of Natural Resources over there; you have to issue one to him. You can issue a couple there to the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills because they have a couple of offices I have checked out and they are not in compliance. You have to lead by example.

Then the other question I have is, in terms of the existing businesses, what did you do to notify them? I ask the minister: What did you do to notify existing businesses of the new regulations? The answer I got was: We did a couple of news releases on this. What? We did a couple of news releases. Basically, we are suggesting that we have business owners here in the Province who are busy trying to operate their businesses, but they are going to have to find time to be scanning government Web sites to see what the latest news release is so they can be in compliance with the law.

I will have a lot more to say about this as time goes by. I have no intention of dropping the issue. As I said the first time I spoke here, I will

do so in a forthright manner, in a professional manner, and I will not be bullied.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Port au Port.

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

Mr. Chair, it is indeed an honour to stand in my place today in this hon. House in the third session of the forty-seventh General Assembly representing the great people of Port au Port in support of 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 Related to the Public Service.

Mr. Chair, what I want to do this afternoon is talk about some of the initiatives of the Department of Advanced Education and Skills. Let me start with our post-secondary education. The provincial government is again leading the way to make post-secondary education more affordable and more accessible.

The provincial government has implemented new approaches to educational upgrades and employment supports to help people get a job. Mr. Chair, in today's global community education is vital for success and our government is committed to accessibility, affordability, and efficiency so that our people have the tools they require to be successful.

Students in Newfoundland and Labrador continue to have the lowest tuition fees in the country; \$2,550 per year for ten regular undergraduate courses at MUN and \$1,452 at the College of the North Atlantic. We provided \$48 million to MUN and CNA to continue the freeze on tuition for the 2013-2014 academic year. Since 2005, \$230 million has been invested to support the freeze on tuition in the Province.

Mr. Chair, we also invested \$23.5 million for the continuation of up-front, needs-based grants and

interest-free student loans, and \$3 million for continued debt reduction grants. This year we provided approximately \$75 million to reduce student debt. These investments in our students are enabling our people to capitalize on economic opportunities and to further position themselves to pursue and achieve long-term success in our Province.

The job outlook, Mr. Chair, for our Province is very strong. Our economy has created high-skilled, high-tech jobs and cutting-edge technologies that are in great demand around the world. In fact, it is estimated that this Province will see as many as 70,000 job openings by 2020. With the developments in large-scale projects such as Hebron and Muskrat Falls, we are building a dynamic, modern economy and realizing that Newfoundland and Labrador is one of the best places in Canada to raise a family, receive training, and build a career.

Mr. Chair, securing a labour force to meet the demands of the future cannot be left to chance. The provincial government has recognized this need and has been implementing measures to help position the Province and our workforce to maximize on emerging opportunities. That is the reason why we are seeing more students attending post-secondary institutions in Newfoundland and Labrador than ever before, ultimately contributing to a vibrant economy.

In the fall of 2013, Mr. Chair, total enrolment at Memorial University of Newfoundland was at 18,678. At the College of the North Atlantic it was 5,754, and at private institutions the enrolment was 2,978. Mr. Chair, workforce development is a dedicated focus for the Department of Advanced Education and Skills. To support the strategic approach of government in meeting the labour market needs of the Province, a workforce development strategy is being prepared.

The strategy, Mr. Chair, will continue the direction to address skills, training, and workforce needs for Newfoundland and Labrador. The strategy will co-ordinate our labour market policies, link industrial development, and employment opportunities to

better align labour supply and demand by highlighting skill shortages and sectors of growth in our Province. Of course, Mr. Chair, collaborating with the employers to recruit and train skilled workers and attracting labour from outside the Province to live and work here in the beautiful Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

While we continue to meet the growing demand for labour in the Province, it is important to note that we have been preparing and investing for several years to meet the anticipated demand, particularly in the skilled trades. For example, the Skills Task Force Report, *All The Skills To Succeed*, released in May of 2007, included fifty recommendations for government, business, industry, labour, and education.

Our government has committed over \$100 million in funding over the past seven years to support initiatives outlined under the Skills Task Force Action Plan. It was allocated, Mr. Chair, in areas of science and technology, programming, training, infrastructure, and apprenticeship. In respect to training and infrastructure, Mr. Chair, the College of the North Atlantic has undertaken a number of measures to address both labour market demands and student demands in this Province.

Allow me, Mr. Chair, to focus a little more on apprenticeship and the different programs offered. Mr. Chair, this year we are investing \$2.8 million in new funding to support initiatives to advance apprenticeship opportunities and support women and other under-represented groups in the skilled trades in our Province.

Mr. Chair, we introduced the Journeyman Mentorship Program to help increase the number of certified journeymen available to provide required workplace training for apprentices. Journeymen serve as mentors in the effective on the job transfer of technical knowledge, trade skills and workplace behaviour to apprentices. This program will assist and provide a journeyman mentor to eligible employers to support them in the hiring of apprentices in the same trade area as the journeyman.

Mr. Chair, we also increased the ratio of apprentices to a journeyman from one to one, to two to one. It could be three to one if there is at least one of the apprentices who is in the final year of their apprenticeship program, to allow for greater training opportunities for apprentices.

Mr. Chair, we also expanded the Apprenticeship Wage Subsidy program to help provide work experience to apprentices where they focus on first and second year apprentices, including those from under-represented groups such as women and persons with disabilities.

Mr. Chair, the Office to Advance Women Apprentices was created in 2009 to enhance employment opportunities for women so they may advance in their chosen trade within the Province. The office works collaboratively with government, industry, labour, and other key stakeholders to achieve its goals.

The primary mandate, Mr. Chair, is a coaching and mentoring model working with employers, women apprentices and pre-apprentices; a training component that assists employers, unions, women apprentices and pre-apprentices in identifying, addressing, and eliminating barriers; promotion of apprenticeship to women across the Province; a registry database that includes female tradespersons within the Province, and provides statistical data for reporting and enhancement purposes. So, Mr. Chair, we have been busy.

Mr. Chair, through a partnership with the Carpenters Union 579, the Office to Advance Women Apprentices also delivers the targeted wage subsidy for female apprentices. The subsidy is sponsored by the provincial government. Separate funding is provided to the OAWA for the administration of this program.

Mr. Chair, the wage subsidy began in July of 2010; 118 apprentices have been approved and received employment under the TWS program. Approximately 80 per cent of the women sponsored under the TWS, Mr. Chair, began as pre-apprentices and are now working through the second or third year of their apprenticeship.



Two women started the wage subsidy in their third year and are now journeypersons.

Over 280 wage subsidy assessments have been completed for women who have registered, and have been given a marketing letter for their subsidy. Mr. Chair, it is worthy to note that since 2009 there have been over 800 registrations at the OAWA of women who have completed trades training programs; 327 pre-apprentices and 480 apprentices.

Mr. Chair, I know my time has been terminated. I look forward to standing on my feet again sometime during the session to talk more about apprentices, and especially women in apprenticeship.

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

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

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

I am very happy to stand and speak to this bill. I would like to focus my comments today on the whole issue of housing. As we know, it is undeniable because all of us in our offices get barraged with calls from people who are having problems with affordable housing.

It is not just people who are at the very bottom income level. It is not just people who are trying to eke out a living on Income Support. It is affecting working families. It is affecting young people. It is affecting seniors. The housing crisis that we are experiencing right now affects people all over the Province and affects people in a number of socioeconomic brackets.

For middle-class families who have raised their children and expected their children would be able to launch and go off on their own, and even have a life better than the parents who have worked so hard to be able to get them through their college studies, or through the university studies and hope that their children would even do better than they have done. That is also a real problem for these people as well, because their children cannot afford housing. Their children

cannot afford to move out and get on with their lives.

I want to look at some of the issues that particularly affect the people of our Province because of the housing crisis that we are facing right now. Yesterday, I asked a few questions in Question Period about issues relating to housing and I am afraid I did not get any answers. I got absolutely no answers. The interesting thing, Mr. Chair, is the questions I asked yesterday were questions that I had asked almost a year ago, and even then I did not get answers. I find this very troubling, Mr. Chair, because we know the housing crisis is with us and that there is no real relief in sight.

What is missing is an overall housing plan, a housing policy. Yes, we have Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, but that, Mr. Chair, is social housing. That is all it is concerned with, social housing, and then a few little sidebar programs that help people who are in low-income brackets; for instance, the Residential Energy Efficiency Program, which was a fantastic program that helped 1,000 households make their homes more energy efficient. Thereby it is conserving energy and also it helps people economically.

Now, this government cut that in half last year. Why they would do that is beyond me. It was such a successful program. Everybody in this House, I am sure, had constituents who applied for that program. That program was spent almost by the time it opened every new fiscal year. People were lined up for that program. A number of people would get turned away because the program was not sufficient enough to meet the real pressing need. Yet what did this government do? It cut it in half, particularly at a time when now the government and Nalcor are begging people to conserve. This was a program about efficiency and conservation. It makes no sense. It totally flies in the face of logic. It is nonsensical.

I want to look at the implications of a housing crisis that is left to fester on its own with no government leadership, because that is the problem we have. There is no overall, reaching

housing policy. In every province in this country, government takes leadership and has a housing policy. Housing policies look at the market. Housing policies look at development. They look at large-scale development projects. They look at social housing. They look at rent stabilization. They look at efficiency programs. They also look at Crown land and how that land will be used.

We do not have that, Mr. Chair. I have asked. I have asked this government: What is their policy? What are they going to do with underutilized buildings that belong to the public and unused or underutilized Crown land? I have not gotten an answer at all. I have asked them if they will hold onto that land until they have a plan. Once the land is gone, it is gone. We know that. This government has sold off a lot of public land, a lot of Crown land, in the past eleven years and there is no way of getting that back. We all know there is no way of making any extra land.

So here we are in a housing crisis that almost every mayor in Newfoundland and Labrador is talking about. It is undeniable, and it is not going away. Again, because there is no leadership and there is no overall housing policy.

I met with a mayor today who talked about wanting to take advantage of a particular program that the federal government has on the go for affordable housing. So this municipality is going to work with private industry, with builders, to build affordable housing for seniors in his community.

Now, in order to be able to do this project – and it is great project; it is making affordable housing for our seniors. Many of us, particularly in rural parts of the Province, know about seniors living in their houses. It might be a senior woman living alone or a senior man living alone, or a couple and they can no longer sustain the house that they are living in. It is too big, it is not accessible, there are stairs, it is too expensive to keep it going and they need to downsize, but there is nowhere for them to go in their communities. They want to stay in their

communities and they have every right to stay in their communities. We know the prosperity that we are experiencing as a people now is because of the hard work of the people who have gone before us.

This municipality wants to work hand in hand with private industry, with private builders, to build affordable housing for seniors. Now, they are going to be able to access a program where they get \$40,000 from the federal government per unit to be able to build this housing. In order to build this housing, they need land. Mr. Chair, there is Crown land in their community. So why isn't this provincial government getting on board and becoming a partner in this undertaking? Because it is housing that we need for our seniors.

Do you know what is going to have to happen? This municipality is going to have to buy that land. It does not make any sense. This land belongs to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. This is land that this government has not seen fit to have any kind of land use policy or plan. It does not make sense.

This government should get on board on this project, which is very necessary, very needed – it is a fantastic project – and bring that land to the table. That can be part of government's attempt to help with the housing crisis, but no – and municipal funding to help it.

The mayors and the municipalities are willing to do whatever they can. They are willing to become involved in this project. Yet, where is the provincial government? Where is the government who basically has abandoned the people of the Province in terms of the housing crisis? This government is hands off saying not our problem, we have some social housing units and then once those social housing units are used up, we will give some rent supplements that will go to private industry and we will let private industry – they privatized some of our social housing. Because what happens with those rent supplements, the landlords then get to decide who gets to rent; so, in fact, this government has not only abandoned the people,

but they have also privatized part of our social housing.

I do not understand why these rent supplements are not portable and are given to the people so that they can go out and find appropriate housing in their own communities, near their families, near their church, near their doctors, near their hospitals, wherever it is they want to go and then once they find a good place, they can have that rent subsidy. That is the respectful way to do it. That is how they do it in BC; they have a specific program for seniors, a rental assistance program for seniors.

The other group of people, Mr. Chair, are young working families. This government, in their Blue Book in 2011, promised a homeownership assistance program. We have not heard a peep. We have not seen a word. We have not seen anything. I have asked again and again of this government and they have not breathed a word about this promise that they made they made to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador about a homeownership program. This is not giving stuff away; this is making it possible for our working families to be able to stay here and work and build our economy. Where is that promise that they made?

**CHAIR (Littlejohn):** I remind the hon. member that her time is up.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Bonavista North.

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

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

It is indeed great to get back in this House and to stand on my feet again to represent the people of Bonavista North.

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

**MR. CROSS:** Thank you for the reference; I appreciate all of the Tweets yesterday afternoon.

I do not know if I was at the time auditioning for Cirque du Soleil, but some members said I did a good job. My chair is in worse shape today than I am, but I am great.

Now, as dad would say: Heave it out of you. This is indeed an honour to speak to the residents of Bonavista North, to speak to members and constituents throughout the entire Province with some ideas about – my thought today is to think about the great week we have had with some of the announcements that have been on the go, but as well to talk to some things that have been happening for the last year or two in Bonavista North that helped create this image.

This week started on Tuesday as a great day, when all three parties stood together in a unified voice to speak to an issue that I did not get an opportunity to speak to on Tuesday – but that does not mean I have less desire than any of those who spoke – to search for justice and dignity on the part of the missing and exploited females of Aboriginal decent in our country, in our Province, and obviously around the world. Because of a category they might find themselves placed in, they should not become a statistic. We have to let Loretta Saunders be our catalyst and our excitement when everybody joins together to let her life mean something for the ladies of that category who come after her. I commend all speakers who spoke that day.

Today as well, Mr. Chair, was a great day. It started in the morning with a lot of excitement. The Open Government Initiative announced by the minister this morning for the Office of Public Engagement – and I notice that the OPE, if you look at it, Office of Public Engagement and if you put NL after it, or Newfoundland and Labrador, it is open. We are open for business and we are quite open to ideas and points that people want to make.

What I did also feel very proud of this morning, Mr. Chair, being a good Bonavista Bay boy, when we were standing down in the lobby the picture that was there on the Banner Bug and up on the screen was a picture of my district, of the Barbour Living Heritage Village in Newtown. It

is a very picturesque place, one of many picturesque places around this great Province.

It sort of got me thinking that this place in Bonavista North, this little corner of Newtown, which is called the Venice of North America because it is a connection of seventeen islands – and they do actually have a gondola that you can sit in and be pushed around down there at the Barbour site. There are many other attractions there as well, but this photo slide that we saw this morning – as well as two years ago the Barbour Living Heritage Village was the center of the tourism campaign. It was on the cover of the brochures in 2012. It really got me thinking about how important this place is.

It was also referenced by the Member for Exploits a few days ago when he talked about the good work that was done. I look back at a copy of Hansard from then, some notes I took from there, and he referenced that the Barbour Living Heritage Village received support this year to the tune of \$115,000 from IBRD in our provincial government. That was put together with some money from ACOA and a bequest from a lady from our area.

I really want to get into how this connection gets together in a few moments, but this whole idea of the Barbour Living Heritage Village, it has been sort of a center point for our tourism for a couple of years. It is a jewel in the crown for all of Newfoundland but it is a proud place in Bonavista North.

To realize that back on December 5, I was accompanied by the then Parliamentary Secretary for IBRD, he accompanied me to Newtown to make this announcement. He stood for fifteen minutes without script. He threw it to one side because he was so familiar with the place and so familiar with what he wanted to say and whatever. He praised this government and praised the current Premier and the current Administration for about fifteen minutes. I wonder where things are with short memories.

I just wanted to let everyone know that with the investment from IBRD into this picturesque group –

**MR. LANE:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** A point of order, the hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

**MR. LANE:** Mr. Chair, that was a great investment and I still support it.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** There is no point of order.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista North.

**MR. CROSS:** No, this is a great investment, Mr. Chair.

A tourism group, a not-for-profit group in a community led by the Cape Freels Heritage Trust Inc. has operated this site for two decades now. It is really the third largest employer in New-Wes-Valley behind Beothic Fish Processors and the actual Brookfield-Bonnews Health Centre. Not too many people would realize that.

There are also many, many buildings that have been reconstructed or reinstated at that site. It is the centre for culture in the New-Wes-Valley area, that section of Bonavista North, but it also has a building there that actually houses a schooner indoors, inside, where you can go in the building, which used to be a recreation of an old cod liver oil factory, but you can walk inside, stand and have a re-enactment on the deck of a ship while standing on a wharf indoors. Then you can go downstairs and actually be in the hull of the ship, the schooner that would either be going to the ice or going to the Labrador fishery – a great, great part of our history.

The investment done by this government came at a request because the group itself received a bequest from a lady – this sort of speaks and is connected to Interim Supply, but it is connected to our Throne Speech as well. This lady who left Pool's Island many, many decades ago, travelled to the United States and actually settled there. She became very wealthy. When her husband passed away she moved back to St.

John's, and then in her will she left some bequests to the region she left.

One of these was a \$20,000 bequest. One of the big, big developments that are happening at this Barbour Living Heritage Village this year – and the construction is actually underway now – is the construction of a viewing kitchen. The Rita Love Memorial Kitchen is being created whereby people from all over the world who travel to Newtown can actually see jams and pastries being made in the traditional way.

It all started from a pilot project from about three years ago, where one lady prepared 600 pies in about eight or nine weeks in one little oven and sold them through the dinner theatre and actually on site at the Barbour site. It shows the initiative and the creativity, and all of the things recognized from this little project, that applies to our entire Province. All of these patrons will experience that when they come to the Barbour Living Heritage Village.

My ten minutes is running out very, very fast. I had a lot more I would like to say, and I would probably like to get up a bit more later on.

I want to connect back to the Throne Speech just for a second, while I am concluding. The five pillars in our Throne Speech for this year: perseverance, sacrifice, social justice, responsible investing, and the principle of open government, are all very, very important principles that we carry on as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians for centuries. With these five to guide us – each of us individually, but all of us together – then we are all making our mark and have the ability to make our mark on this Province. We can continue that into our open government initiative, but every single one of us collectively and individually can offer advice to people who are willing to listen and willing to hear.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to speak to the Interim Supply bill.

Speaking of a century, I have a very monumental event that is happening in my district: 100 years of the International Grenfell Association by a great visionary, Dr. Wilfred Grenfell. He realized that by creating a charity they could deliver the needed health care, education, social services, and also look at the economy that is needed to serve people in a region.

This man was a visionary and the services that were provided were not government funded, they were not driven by government, and they were built up. They did things like farming, craft, and textiles. They took care of people through an orphanage and through boarding schools. They trained people and brought experts from all over the world to service the people of the North and in Labrador. These are very important initiatives that happened. This type of administration was built up and grown over time because it was planned, and that is something that is very important.

That administration was turned over to the provincial government in the 1980s. Since then we have certainly seen how the administration of health care can change, and not necessarily for the best. Sometimes there is great power in people and how they are able to have control of their resources.

We have seen through the Grenfell board that previously was there, and then as that amalgamated into Labrador-Grenfell Health, the loss of vital services and how they are administered in the area. Just recently, the failure of the government to implement regulations in midwifery is going to see the loss of midwives who have been delivering babies independently on the Great Northern Peninsula for close to 100 years in a hospital setting. There was an agreement in principle in place. Even with hospital insurance established in the 1950s, it continued until just recently.

The Minister of Health said the insurer states that we need to protect the clients. Well, in my view, insurance does not protect; it compensates. We need the regulations in place. We absolutely need them and they need to move more quickly than what government is willing to do. It is having an impact when it comes to having cost-effective health care in the Province and just the health outcomes. Midwifery is really important to the people and all the people who are served by it.

Moving forward, when we look at how this charity established the first sawmill over 100 years ago in the Canada Bay region, a great lumbering town of Main Brook, Roddickton, Bide Arm, and those areas, they developed and they thrived. Right now we are seeing where the economy changes when you are looking at a downturn in newsprint and we are not seeing that innovation that is needed to keep the economy moving forward because Roddickton-Bide Arm could successfully have a pellet plant operation.

As well, with the fibre that exists in the Central area, there should be a pellet plant there. I have been a big advocate of looking at biomass and the green economy whether it is done locally or whether export. These types of things should be done. Why would government be dragging its heels? They own the land, they have the tenures, and they issue the contracts and the permits. They are hindering economic development. It is the government that is hindering economic development in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Another area, when I listened to the Member for Port au Port get up and speak, he talked about post-secondary education, apprenticeships, and all the investments that were being made. Well, I just go back to the Throne Speech: "Our employment, training and apprenticeship initiatives have prepared many for the 70,000 jobs that have started opening up across our province." That statistic has been thrown around time and time again, it has not been updated, and it said many because you are not looking after the apprentices in many forms.

If we take, for example, and we have seen it in the media, there was a big loan issued to Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, yet there was never a contingency to say they should look at hiring millwrights, that we should be training apprentices here, and that they should be able to get that training. Why wasn't it made a contingent that we would be training our next generation so they would be able to have skills, jobs, and that work experience to train them here?

The premise of the whole Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy was that we would encourage youth who have left to come back and those who are here would want to stay. I wish the Minister of Innovation, Business and Rural Development would have gotten the ability to issue his Ministerial Statement as he said earlier today. He did read that out because we do, we need to have those initiatives to encourage and engage youth to act in an innovative way. It is so important.

If we look at NATI and we look at the tech sector here in the Province, it is \$1.6 billion in revenue. We need to look at addressing that, we need to look at the labour shortage that is here and how we deal with that because that is key. It is key and we need to look at that in tandem with entrepreneurship because we do not want to be losing our population. We do not want to be losing that youthful population. Some of the decisions that government has been making have been flat out hindering our economic development and retaining youth, especially in our rural regions, especially when it comes to looking at forestry jobs, when it comes to looking at skilled trades, and when it comes to looking at encouraging young people to get into midwifery, and using that as an option.

I have midwives in my district who are licensed who are working in the North because they cannot get a job here. They would love to. We are sending our youth away. Government is all about acronyms. Well, government is a big promoter of SOYA, sending our youth away. Right now we need to look at innovation, business, and the rural economy.

Two of the things I have been saying heavily since I have been a member here in the House of Assembly are looking at advancing telecommunication and advancing transportation. They are key pieces. It is simple. Today, the questions I asked in the House of Assembly were around broadband, around the Internet. You need to provide basic services to people. Government has been unwilling to provide at least – stating proprietary information. We cannot let you know that this community has broadband and this community does not. We are unwilling to release that information.

That is ludicrous. To say you are an open government, to claim that you are an open government, and unwilling to make that information available is a bit ridiculous to me. It is ridiculous to the eyes of the public and the people of the Province. It is somewhat of a mockery to be honest.

If we look at the fact that government said in this very House – in this House – they would supply all of the government buildings in Newfoundland and Labrador. They have that information; they had it two years ago in Estimates. The IBRD, it is there, quoted. The deputy minister I believe, Mr. Meade, had said: We have this; we will provide it right away.

It is almost two years later. They have not provided that information. It is a real failure and it really shows. This government that got elected back in 2003 the first time promoted on accountability and transparency. It is eleven years later and now saying we are going to be an open government.

The Question Period today certainly showed that government is not willing to provide information on reports, whether it be aquaculture reports for sea lice. You have to pay \$19,000. The average person who wants to look at making sure we have the highest stringent information – it should be made available.

Why are we not releasing it? Right now, there is a strategy in place for when we look at mapping and when we look at how we want to get a better

technology in Newfoundland and Labrador in telecommunications. We can do it. There are various forms. There can be satellite telecommunications.

I have made a submission to the CRTC for intervener status to make the case, because in the United States rural areas are not being gouged. They do not have to pay high fees and be capped. They are able to get good service through satellite, where they are able to get the equivalent of broadband Internet coverage.

Why are we, in Newfoundland and Labrador, willing to accept less? The technology has been deployed. We are just unwilling to look at advancing our economy. This government is unwilling to do this. It is just unacceptable. We are not going to be keeping our talented youth. We are not going to be keeping the skilled people. We see megaproject after megaproject where people get laid off on a regular basis, where there is no guarantee or consistency for long-term meaningful employment in many sectors. Where are those strategies in place? We need to see it. We do not see that vision.

Dr. Wilfred Grenfell had a vision. He built an empire there in the North and this government has been set on taking it down bit by bit by bit. That is unacceptable, I say.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

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

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

I appreciate the opportunity to get up and speak to Interim Supply in this session of the Legislature. I am pleased to be here to represent the historic district of Ferryland and the people of Petty Harbour – Maddox Cove, right down the Southern tip to St. Shotts. It is a varied regional area in terms of activity. A part of my district, as people know, is part of the City of St. John's right to Bay Bulls. Then further down, right to St. Shotts, various industries and

manufacturing. The fishery is a significant part of my district as well, in terms of inshore harvesters, processing facilities in Witless Bay, as well, Cape Broyle and Aquaforte.

Just across the board, the fishing industry, and as the Minister of DFA since October, I knew about the fishery obviously before that from my district, and being involved in my district; overall, the breadth and scope of the industry and what it means to this Province, what it has meant for generations and sort of what it means today, and certainly for future generations and what it holds.

Our focus as a government has been to build that industry. It has transitioned, as we know, with the downturn in the groundfish industry and what that has meant in terms of transformation of the industry and the transformation in many areas from groundfish to shellfish, the crab and shrimp and how that transition has happened. Still, it is certainly significant in terms of numbers. Almost close to 19,000 people are engaged in that industry; most of it, or a lot of it in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

It is also important to note, too, Mr. Chair, it is significant in terms of spinoffs, in terms of small and medium enterprise, supply, development in various regions of the Province that supply the industry, which is so important.

Transportation; I know Harbour Grace is where goods are frozen there in terms of being stored. I look at St. Anthony in terms of shipments out of there with Eimskip. When you look at the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador, it is certainly diverse and very entrenched in the economy in many ways. Again, as a Province, we recognize that and work with industry to continue to grow all sectors in terms of the fishing industry.

This year, we released just a little while ago the industry report for 2013, a document that looks in detail at all of the species that are harvested by us, harvesting quantity, the volume, and the amount of return from that production value. This year it is close to \$1.1 billion in terms of production value and in terms of the industry.

That is related to our wild fishery and our aquaculture industry. That continues to grow. This year we record \$197 million from the aquaculture sector, which supports all regions of the Province, the South Coast and the Connaigre Peninsula. In the Stephenville area with a state-of-the-art hatchery, it is a huge investment and growth to the industry.

Just in the past couple of months we have gone through looking at our whole Aquaculture Strategy. We went through a renewal process and we went through an extensive consultation process with industry and stakeholders looking at where we have come to date, work we have done, and success we have had with our industry. There have been some challenges.

Now, as we look forward, the information we received, I think there was somewhere in excess of 120 presentations we received, and from that we will move forward working with industry and look at things that were identified: biosecurity, health management, and infrastructure. We have worked in terms of building infrastructure in the region, especially in the South Coast, in regard to containment, but also secure infrastructure, wharves, and those types of investments to make sure we can be on the leading edge in terms of moving that industry forward.

I have certainly made a commitment working with industry. I had a chance to speak at the Aquaculture Association in Gander a while back. I had great discussions with those who were there in terms of where we are today, the success we are having, and how we continue to move that forward. From that, I think all agree, there is potential for growth, but at this point we have to make that assessment of where we are and how we need to build that infrastructure to parallel that growth, as I said, in areas of biosecurity and health fish management.

Bay management we brought in at the end of last year. We had all industry agree to a bay management plan that was signed onto, which will look again and support the continued health of the industry in regard to fallow areas and in terms of various regions of harbours and coves



and where we allow cages to go in. All of those things make for a solid and sustainable industry, and that is what we are looking for.

As I said, this year, it is \$197 million in regard to that industry. We, as a government, have invested approximately \$25 million. That has leveraged approximately another \$400 million. We know from discussions with industry that there is future growth, they can see it, and future investment. Again, we want to parallel that to make sure we have the right infrastructure in place, the right policy and programs in place to support that growth, because this is all about sustainability and long-term success.

We will continue to work with the industry and work with all stakeholders and move this forward over the next decade, and continue to build and see the success we have. There are close to a thousand people employed, and that does not mention all those – it is much like the wild fishery – who support the industry, SMEs in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, providing those services and goods which employs people. That has trickled down in terms of the industry and how important it is.

On the wild side of the fishery, CETA, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the EU, we were very interested in making sure that we can get access to a huge market in the EU. Twenty-seven states make that up. There is a vast consumption of seafood in those states in the EU. It is a huge opportunity for us. Prior to CETA, and until it comes into force, there are tariffs anywhere from 7.5 per cent to 20 per cent, and there are caps on what can go into the EU.

Shrimp, once it gets to approximately 20,000 tons, there is a limit on that. After that it gets hit with heavy tariffs. So from a business model perspective, and sending that into the EU, there are huge restrictions in doing that. What we see with the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement now, we will see that tariff come down. Another important aspect of it is we will see the removal of end-use restrictions.

Right now, Mr. Chair, products going in that have been sent from this jurisdiction are not branded. There is no secondary processing done with them because it does not allow it. We will see that removed with the coming into force of CETA, which allows activity to go on in our plants in rural Newfoundland and Labrador for secondary processing, for branding, made right here in Newfoundland and Labrador products by a Newfoundland company. That leads to further activity in processing plants in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We have already heard a few critics talk about small operators, and somehow this will negatively affect the small operator. Nothing could be further from the truth. The reality is we have small processors now; I have met with them. They compete nationally and internationally. They do that now. When CETA comes into effect they are welcome to continue to do that. What will happen is they will have other markets to compete in. If they want to go into other markets, into the EU, they are capable of doing that. Any time there is greater competition for any product that only bodes well for all concerned.

We are very proud of our small processors and the work they do in regard to exporting into various markets. As well, under CETA we were very successful in negotiating a very good fund with the federal government, a \$400 million fund. The federal government invests \$280 million; we will invest \$120 million. A component of that as well is to look at marketing.

I have already had discussions with some small processors and asked them for their input into what they think we can do, and how we can help them in terms of identifying other and more activities in the EU to help them grow their businesses. As they grow, the return for the harvester improves, the jobs in the processing sector improves in terms of the season and pulling those number and variety of seasons out in terms of the amount of time that is used in those processing facilities.

We believe in trade agreements. Just recently Canada and the Republic of Korea announced a trade agreement. It is the first time Canada has entered into a trade agreement with a nation country. That holds good possibilities for us as a trading Province. We look forward to that again allowing our products our seafood, which we believe and we know is second to none, in the international market.

I had an opportunity the weekend past to be in Boston for the first time as the Province's Fisheries Minister. I saw first-hand where our seafood is in the market and how we are competing. We will continue to compete. We see the fishery as a priority in this Province, Mr. Chair, and we are going to continue to support it. It is a great industry and it is going to be for generations to come.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

I am happy to stand here today and speak to Interim Supply. It is my first opportunity to do so since we have gotten back. I am very happy to do that.

There are a number of things that I want to discuss here, and being the health care critic there are so many things we can talk about. It has been mentioned that 40 per cent of our Budget goes to health care. We all know that is a huge amount.

You hear a lot of talk from the other side sometimes about all the money we spend. The problem is that a lot of these issues are still there and getting worse – wait-lists; we are getting the worst bang for our buck. There are a couple of things I am going to put out now, these are things that we are going to talk about this session and we are going to bring up. We think that they are the right ideas that need to happen.

One of them is smoking cessation. Smoking cessation is something we have asked questions about in the past and we think it is good policy. It is being used in a number of other provinces and the results that we are getting on the investment now, what you are going to get in the long run in terms of savings and health care is astronomical. We have seen other provinces do it. They have had success.

Again, this is a Province that gets about \$135 million a year revenue from smoking, yet we do not have the foresight to see the forest through the trees and invest some of that and try to reduce the number of people smoking and reduce the number of people who are suffering from cancer and COPD. There are so many conditions.

This is one of the things that we are going to talk about in more detail. I have not heard much out of the government on it. I know they have been asked. I know that different groups and advocacy groups in this Province are asking about it, but so far there is not much in reply. We will be making that an issue.

One that somewhat fits under my – I have asked questions about it, but it also covers Service Newfoundland and Labrador, and that is bike helmet legislation for children. Again, you will never find a more common-sense piece of legislation anywhere. It is done in so many other provinces. There are immediate results; 30 per cent reduction in ER visits by children. If that is not enough to make you do it, I do not know what is.

We have brought it up. I think the minister should put it on his agenda if he has not already done that. I am a little worried because he has already told us that we should go out and voluntarily take care of blue zones ourselves. We should deputize ourselves, go out and handle this ourselves. The volunteer secretariat, go out and you handle the blue zones because I cannot do the job. That is what I got today from the commentary.

Bike helmets are a good piece of legislation, it is a good idea, and it will save children's lives.

One of the buzz themes that this government tried to ram down everybody's throat last year was safe and caring communities. Safe and caring, let's take care of our kids. Well, what better way to do it? Again, it is a government that flogs it off on municipalities and say you guys go ahead and take care of it.

There are roads and there is twenty-four hour snow clearing; these are issues all over the Province but especially in mine, and I want to bring those up. We have had a number of petitions and we continue to raise that issue. We talk about cellphone coverage. Again, it is another huge issue all over the Province that we need to address.

One of the big things I want to come back to, and this, I think, really needs to be addressed here, and that is the spectacle that we saw in the lobby of the Confederation Building today: the Open Government Initiative. It was a great piece of pageantry again but like many things this government does, there is a lot of hype and not a lot of action.

I think we proved that when we stood in the House today and asked our questions: If you are so open, if you are so transparent, why don't you provide this information? Here is just one example. The Minister of Fisheries was just up. Again, he stood up and he answered some questions, but one specific question was: Why won't you provide a simple aquaculture report, a sea lice monitoring report? It is simple thing. I mean, it is a big issue in this Province. He said: Yes, we will give it to you, for \$19,000. If that is not ridiculous, I do not know what is. It is easy to say open and transparent but it is another thing to live by it, and this is the thing that this government clearly has not done. They are trying to turn it around now, but it is just not happening.

We asked how much money was spent on marketing and advertising by this government in the last year. Now, that should be a simple request. I am assuming when we get to the Budget coming up that it will be a line item in the Budget. I would assume the government should know what they spent. One example, it

is funny – the hockey game was on Saturday night a couple of weeks ago and we are spending that money during prime time and that is fine, not a problem, go ahead; if you have a wide audience to get your information out to, well go for it. Somebody called me and said: I tried to access the government Web site; it did not work. It is like many things this government does. They talk about it, but it is not actually working. They put more money into hype than they did into substance. Again, therein lies the problem.

Government Web sites: Let's hype them up, but they did not actually work or do the job so it is a waste of money. That is where we keep going: This is a waste of money. There is a lot of waste going on over there.

We look at this Open Government Initiative, and this ties in with this whole Bill 29 review. It is funny because it was not that long ago we were here doing a filibuster and our new Premier is on record in Hansard saying: This is a waste of time – this is a waste of time. If anybody does not believe me, our Premier, if we want to know how he really feels about Bill 29 and the review, he said the debate on it, which I thought did wonders in enlightening the public on what this government was trying to ram through without letting them know, he said: It is a waste of time. Maybe he has changed his mind. Maybe there is a flip-flop here, but again this is not a government that persists in flip-flops. No, I cannot imagine that this is a government that would do that.

We come back and there was so much defending of Bill 29, so much defending; we gave lots of information. Today was the perfect example. We had a press conference in the morning that cost \$4,566, which equates to about 350-odd hours of home care. It was a big press release and lots of talk. We are open, we are transparent, we are an open government and then we come in the House and we ask questions: Okay, you are open now; how about you give us this report? Well no, no, no, we cannot do that. My God, we cannot live up to what we actually said we were going to do. It is almost like the fine print. We ask the question. We stand up and we say: Well, how about this

report? We have lots of them. There are lots of them that have been done, paid for with taxpayer money, and never released. We say: Why don't you release this since you are so open and transparent? They will say: We are going to release this – and then it is almost with the quiet voice – but not right now.

It is fine print, and that is the problem. There is a proviso and there is a caveat on everything they do. We are going to be open and transparent, and there is a little asterisk down there, but not every time because we are not entitled to that information. Why should we have it? I think we should have it since we paid for it. I think we should have it since they say it is our information and it is our money.

This comes back to the entire hypocrisy that surrounds this sitting government. They rammed Bill 29 down everybody's throat, defended it, and then when it comes back, yes, do you know what? The vast majority of citizens think this is ridiculous, draconian, and backwards. They say: My God, maybe we better start listening.

I am going to give them the benefit of the doubt. I am going to say: Do you know what? Maybe you will turn. Again, actions speak louder than words, and I tell you what, your words today did nothing to make me believe you are going to change. I do not think you are able to change. It is a fundamental change; you guys cannot make it. This government cannot do it. They do not want to do it. They do not want you to see what they are doing.

It is funny. The Confederation Building out there (inaudible) to say it is shrouded in secrecy. It is literally shrouded out there now with all the tarps over those nice blue windows, but they have been figuratively shrouded in secrecy. They talk all they want about Open Government, but until we see some actual change it is the same old, same old, asking for marketing money.

We asked today about a \$650,000 report that was sent back to a defunct committee that has not met in years – \$650,000 – and they said: No,

do not question us on that. You ask for the report and you cannot get it.

I have to tell a little story. After this spectacle, this charade they played today with everybody that nobody is falling for, I was up in a government department. They said: What was going on down in the lobby today? I said: Well, that was the Open Government Initiative. They said: What is that? I said: That is where government says they are going to be open and transparent now. They said: Oh, that is new, isn't it? This was a government employee saying this and I thought this person hit the nail on the head. This is new. It is new for this government to be open and transparent, but the problem is we have not seen it yet.

I would say, look, great announcement today. I think it was a lot of hype. I think it was money that was better spent elsewhere. Let us see some actual action. Let us see you release some of the reports you have been hoarding and not giving over. Instead of charging ridiculous amounts of money, put the money where it should be, hand over the information, and live up to what you say you are going to do.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

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

I am glad to be able to stand here, have a few words, and speak about some of the good things that are happening in government. The member across the way there is wondering who my barber is. All I can say is I am glad it is not the same barber he is using, I can guarantee you that.

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

**MR. MCGRATH:** I will take my head of hair over his any day.

Anyway, Mr. Chair, I am very glad to be able to stand here. I think the first thing I would like to address has nothing to do with the economy or anything, but with the weather that we have been having this year. I think, as the Minister of Transportation and Works, we have been dealing with a very adverse and difficult winter this year. I know some of my colleagues were on Open Line today and they were talking about the conditions in the Strait of Belle Isle. I think first of all I would like the people who are using that service to know I am very aware of the conditions there. I empathize with them; I understand their frustrations and I understand the difficulties.

Just for the two members, the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair and the MHA for the North Coast, I would like you to know that four days ago I did put the Air Foodlift Subsidy back into action there. Hopefully the retailers on the North Coast and South Coast take advantage of that and use it. I remind the retailers to take the savings they get from the subsidy and pass that on to the consumer. That takes care of some of the food issues we have.

Another thing that I thought – and I had a chat with the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair – is that maybe some contingency strategies need to be put in place. If this is the weather, this is what climate change is doing to us, when this government put the service in on The Straits, the year-round service for the ferry service on The Straits, it was put there weather permitting. The weather this year is not permitting a lot of service there. I empathize with that and I hope it is going to get better soon. The government will continue to work with the people on the South Coast, the Straits, and in the North Coast to try and provide them.

One of the other things I have been doing as the Minister of Labrador Affairs in the last while, especially in the last year, since October, I went back as the Minister Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs and I built a very good relationship with the Nunatsiavut Government. We meet on a regular basis. Last weekend, actually, I had the pleasure of flying with President Leo and we had a very general conversation talking about

some of the things that are happening. Of course, the housing issue on the North Coast is one of the big issues that we have been trying to address.

I mentioned the other day, when I stood up and I was speaking about Aboriginal women, when I was in Winnipeg. As the Minister Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, I get to participate and be one of the ministers that sit on the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group. That is a group of ministers who are responsible for the provinces across the country and the Territories who represent Aboriginals throughout Northern Canada. The housing issue is one of the biggest issues that come up at these meetings. When we were in Winnipeg in October the housing issue was a major issue. I am there again in May, I think it is in Winnipeg again, and that issue will come up again.

So I was very pleased with conversations I had with my colleague, the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills. He is also working very closely with the Nunatsiavut Government on the North Coast. We will work together to see what we can do there. We will continue to advocate with the federal government to try and recognize the Northern communities in Labrador as part of Northern Canada, which right now are not subject to the subsidies that are offered there to the Aboriginal communities. We are going to continue to work on that one.

One of the other things that stand out to me is the Medical Transportation Assistance Program that has been in place since 2007. We have seen some improvements in that since 2007, but we still need more improvements in it and we will continue to do that. There are some glitches there.

I feel that putting the air ambulance in Happy Valley-Goose Bay was a very good decision. We now have a full team in place for that air ambulance and it is proving that the availability of that service is now better where it is utilized in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. I think that was a good move by the government to make that move. I also feel that we will continue to advocate to try and improve the ground travel

for the Medical Transportation Assistance Program.

The little things, like paying up front 50 per cent of the Medical Transportation Assistance Program at the beginning; for a lot of people that is a huge help because they do not have to pay that money up front. That is a huge benefit to a lot of people. I know if you are in Labrador and you have to travel for medical reasons, especially if you are receiving cancer treatments, it can become very expensive.

I have personal friends right now who are here in St. John's – a friend of mine, his wife is battling cancer for about six years now and they have had to re-mortgage everything that they had because of the cost of getting from Western Labrador to St. John's. They certainly have found that the Medical Travel Assistance Program has helped them a lot. There is always room for improvements. As you heard this morning, this government, with our Open Government Initiative, we are all about listening and we are about working with the people.

As many snide remarks as you get from our opponents across the way, as they laugh and find that amusing, I think we have proven how open we are and how we are listening. The thing is now we are acting. The difference with us is that we are not just listening; the difference is that we are acting upon it and we will continue to do that.

As I said in a conversation I had earlier, perhaps we are not saying what it is you want to hear and that sometimes can be an issue if you do not hear – one of the other things, because my time is running short and I would like to certainly boast a little bit about my district. We do not always get the opportunity to stand up and talk about our own districts. I am very pleased to say I was up to the new medical facility in Labrador West about three weeks ago and did a tour at the facility. It is a state-of-the-art facility, an absolutely beautiful building. It is a \$90 million medical facility that will be opening this year in Labrador West, and it has all of the modern-day equipment that will be necessary.

Again, this government is listening. They realized the need in the industrial area such as Labrador West for a new medical facility and we have acted upon that. We also have the new college which opened a couple of years ago. As we all know, Wabush Mines is going through a tumultuous time right now while the mine is in idling. Again, through Advanced Education and Skills, some of the things that the department has done to come in and help with the college and increase some of the services that are offered in the college to help the people right there on the ground – for example, if you went and did one of your block training, normally there is a period of time that you have to wait and what we have arranged now is that you can get into the next block right away.

We are trying to arrange now – when we are offering curriculum within the College of the North Atlantic in Labrador West, we are sitting down and we are saying what are the needs within Labrador West, and that is the courses that we will be offering within that college, the courses that are needed for the population that is there right now.

We had 400 displaced workers with the idling of Wabush Mines. I am very pleased with the way the government has reacted there. There was a story in the local paper – and I am running out of time – from the Leader of the Third Party and said how she stayed away from my district to let things settle down. You do not stay away until things settle down. If you are good government official, you get in when the people need you. Do not stay away until it settles down.

This government did not stay away, this government was in there the next day, and we have been there every day since. We have new programs in there. We are doing very well. Like I said, Mr. Chair, my time is out now, but I am sure I will get another opportunity to stand and boast another little bit about what this government is doing as an open government and as an active government.

Thank you very much.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

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

I certainly appreciate being given the opportunity to stand in my place and have a few comments on Interim Supply, Mr. Chair. This morning I was wondering what was going on down in the lobby, and my colleagues told me that it was a new plan for the government to be open and transparent. So, I listened to the speakers and then I said that I would go into the House and that we would ask questions on openness and transparency.

I think it was our leader who asked some questions on the cost of the big do in the lobby this morning, Mr. Chair – in excess of \$4,000. It could have bought almost 400 hours of home care. That could have bought 400 hours of home care.

So I kept the options open, Mr. Chair; I gave the government a chance. We went into Question Period and my mind was made up when we asked for the numbers on marketing and advertising. It is not a very secretive issue. We wanted to know what it cost. Mr. Chair, the Minister of Municipal Affairs stood up and said that it was an extreme request and could not answer it. Not only was it a waste of money what went on this morning, but the people of the Province lost out. They lost out on what this money could have been spent on.

Mr. Chair, I was glad to hear my colleague, the Minister of Transportation and Works, stand up just before me and talk about what they have done. I read their press release on housing and I always give credit where credit is due. I commend the ministers and the President of Nunatsiavut for working together and finally realizing that yes, we do have a housing problem. I brought it to this House since March of 2012. I am really glad to see that area of need has been recognized and there are plans in place to address it. I believe it is starting off with a session on housing in Nunatsiavut.

I go back a couple of years ago, Mr. Chair, and it kind of ties in with probably the situation in Hopedale that is a bit different than anywhere else in the Province. Hopedale is a community that sits on contaminated waste. Some of it is 100 per cent contaminated. Some areas in town are 100 per cent contaminated, but the best terminology we can get from this government is that it is an impacted site.

To me, 100 per cent contamination with PCBs is a contaminated site. It is not impacted; it is contaminated. I was glad a few years ago that the provincial government took the initiative to move some of the homes that were sitting on contaminated sites in Hopedale, with the exception of one. There is one family who cannot afford to move, but they are still sitting on a site that is contaminated 100 per cent. I would like to throw that out there in case the minister does not realize it. I know it was good to see families move.

Mr. Chair, I would like to talk about transportation and just a couple of issues. The minister mentioned the subsidy on the food being airlifted into the South Coast. It is good to see that. The only problem now, if you can get the people back home to eat that food, it would be very much appreciated. Last spring we asked the government to provide provisions for airlift for passengers in my district. We waited twenty-one days after the ferry service was announced, twenty-one days before the minister decided, yes, maybe we should put an aircraft on.

Mr. Chair, you have people stranded on the *Apollo*. They were stranded last fall; they are stranded again now. These people are stranded according to the definition in the dictionary. I will gladly give it to the minister. They cannot afford to wait the time it is going to take for the minister to realize we do have issues with transportation in Labrador when it comes to ferry problems.

It is so good to see the minister act when a ferry goes down. In twenty-four hours there is air service there. Fogo Island, twenty-four hours, there is air service. Wonderful, and I fully

support it, but this minister is responsible for Labrador.

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** I have seen him stand in the House time and time again and talk about how proud he is of Labrador. Well, Mr. Chair, the people of Labrador are asking for support and I hope the minister gives it to them.

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Now, Mr. Chair, I would just like to talk a little bit about another commitment this government made that I fully support, although cautiously: the new ferry for Northern Labrador. I am looking forward to it, but cautiously optimistic was the word I used and I am going to tell you why.

Mr. Chair, the *Northern Ranger* and the *Astron* have been doing the ferry and the freight service delivery to Northern Labrador for some twenty-six years. Both vessels are getting old. We are seeing in the summer that these vessels are causing a lot of problems, more so the *Northern Ranger* in the last two years. I was glad to hear an announcement of a ferry. I look forward to April 30 when we can see some more movement on this.

Mr. Chair, the new ferry, according to what the minister is looking for, can carry nineteen passengers more than the *Northern Ranger* – nineteen more. This is why I keep saying I am cautiously optimistic because I have seen the dock in Goose Bay with sixty-five people waiting to get on the *Northern Ranger*. That is the wait-list. We have wait-lists because Northern Labrador is expanding. Development is going on, populations are rising, and people want to go there. When you have a vessel that can take nineteen more passengers, there is optimism, but I am cautiously optimistic.

This new vessel, roll-on, roll-off, Mr. Chair, is also going to do the freight run. This new vessel is going to be able to take twelve containers more than the *Astron* – twelve containers more. When you add up the amount of freight that goes

aboard the *Northern Ranger* that is also destined for the North Coast, and you put it in containers, it will fill up nineteen containers. What we are going to have is a capability of freight delivery that is six containers short of what we have now.

When we look at the problems – I talked to the minister many times last fall when the deadline was coming close, and I know he did what he could, Mr. Chair. We did get the freight through, but it is the amount of freight that piles up on any given day after the fifteenth of October. I have seen the delivery of some of that freight in Makkovik. I have seen a pop can coming off the *Northern Ranger* in bales and bins and boxes, or whatever they could, Mr. Chair. This is freight that came off when the temperatures were at minus twenty, that are perishable, when it was in the warehouse in the middle of October.

I think there is room for improvement. I look forward to an improved transportation system, and I look forward to that improvement starting on the South Coast tomorrow, Mr. Chair, with the *Bond*.

Thank you.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

At this time 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 ask leave to sit again.

Is it the pleasure of the Committee to adopt this motion?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay'.



Carried.

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman):** The hon. the Member for the District of Port de Grave.

**MR. LITTLEJOHN:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Committee of Supply 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 stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.