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Speaker: Honourable Ross Wiseman, MHA

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The House met at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Wiseman): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we will have members' statements from the Member for the District of Bonavista South; the Member for the District of Bellevue; the Member for the District of Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi; the Member for the District of The Straits – White Bay North; the Member for the District of St. John's East; and the Member for the District of Torngat Mountains.

The hon. the Member for the District of Bonavista South.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Honourable colleagues, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the members of the Bonavista Peewee Cabot Hockey Team for their recent victory. The team brought home the gold medal from the Subway Classic tournament in Lewisporte on the weekend of February 21, 2014.

There were five teams in total that participated in this event and the Bonavista Peewee Cabots were undefeated in round robin play. In the championship game they faced the host team, Lewisporte. The Bonavista Cabots were down by a goal when they scored with four seconds remaining in the third period to tie the game. The game went on to the overtime period and the Cabots scored the game-winning goal to bring home the gold medal.

Team members of the Bonavista Peewee Cabots, winners of the tournament are as follows: Sam White, Riley Elliott, Erica Dunn, Blair Smith, Bradley Elliott, Jenna Lea Phillips, Mark White, Mark Hollaway, Logan Keats, Cameron Hayley, Adam Martino, Andrew Fisher, Marc Eddy, Liam O'Brien, Braden Skiffington, Nick Marsh, Nick Fitzgerald, trainer Leona Martino, coaches Randy Elliott, Curtis Fisher, and manager Duane Eddy.

Mr. Speaker, hon. colleagues, please join me in congratulating the Bonavista Peewee Cabots for their perseverance to bring home the gold medal.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PEACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize a student from Crescent Collegiate of Blaketown, Isaac Bonisteel. Isaac is from New Harbour and he is the son of Dr. Stephen Bonisteel and Mary Harris.

Isaac is a Level II student who was selected to attend Pearson College, a united world college in Victoria, BC. Isaac has won a \$68,000 scholarship that will cover the cost to attend the college and to complete a two-year program. Isaac was required to submit an application and undergo an interview to be successfully selected.

Isaac's sister Erin was also a student from Crescent Collegiate who previously received the same scholarship amount, \$68,000. She finished her two-year program in 2013 at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick. These are two very positive outcomes from Crescent Collegiate of which the principal, teachers, and staff should be proud of.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Isaac and Erin Bonisteel on winning these prestigious awards.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

In Newfoundland and Labrador, we are blessed with a vibrant, thriving film community. In the past few months, two residents of Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi have been honoured for their roles in

helping to build this important industry. Barb Doran and Noreen Golfman have been integral to the development of film in this Province.

In March, at the fourth annual Women Making Waves conference in Halifax, both received Wave awards recognizing significant impact, extensive reach, and high-quality contributions to the Atlantic Canadian screen industry.

Then, just two weekends ago, both Noreen and Barb were honoured by the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council. The Fortis Properties Arts Hall of Honour Award recognizes a person, group, or arts organization that has made a distinguished lifetime contribution to the cultural life of the Province, and was awarded to Noreen Golfman.

Cox & Palmer Arts Achievement Award recognizes a practicing artist who has made an outstanding contribution to the cultural life of Newfoundland and Labrador over a number of years, and Barbara Doran was a deserving winner of that award.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to join me in congratulating Noreen Golfman and Barb Doran for the richness they have brought to our lives.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a youth in my district, Tristan Earles of St. Anthony. At just ten years of age, he has illustrated the highest degree of caring, compassion and generosity for a young girl he has never met, living in another Province.

After learning about the health struggles of young Ashley Cull, daughter of a St. Anthony native, who became unresponsive, underwent surgery and spent several weeks recovering at a children's hospital, Tristan told his mother they needed to do something to help.

A "Dance for Ashley" was held on March 29, with dozens of local children helping to raise money for the Cull family. Tristan's creativity led the kids to sending a recorded message to Ashley, signing a big get well card, and a rap song, which he performed at the dance.

Tristan brought many people together, including support from the St. Anthony and area Fire Department. The event successfully raised close to \$1,000 and achieved the goal of putting a smile on Ashley's face, knowing that so many people as far away as St. Anthony were thinking of her.

I invite all hon. members of this House to join me in acknowledging Tristan Earles. He is truly an inspiration.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

One of the greatest pleasures of being the MHA for St. John's East is sharing the celebrations of the people in the district. People like Nora Theresa Alteen who, on April 27, celebrated her 102nd birthday at Glenbrook Lodge.

Mrs. Alteen was born on Bell Island in 1912, to Lebanese immigrants Simon and Rose Tuma. The Tumas were integral to the small business community in Bell Island, Carbonear, and eventually Corner Brook, where they established S.E. Tuma Jewellers on Broadway.

Nora eventually married Nick Alteen and with him built another successful business, National Shoe Store, also on Broadway. After Nick's untimely death at age forty-two, Nora raised their six children and stayed in the house they had built together until she moved to St. John's in 2011.

She is a kind and caring woman, grandmother of sixteen, and great-grandmother, at last count, to eighteen.

The family feels blessed to still have Mrs. Alteen in their lives. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, we are all blessed to have such an extraordinary woman among us.

I ask all hon. members to congratulate Mrs. Nora Alteen on reaching her milestone 102nd birthday and in wishing her many more years to come.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate the Members of the Nunatsiavut Government who were successful in the election held yesterday.

The unofficial results are as follows: Nain, Mr. Sean Lyall and Mr. Richard Pamak; Hopedale, Mr. Greg Flowers; Postville, Mr. Tyler Edmunds; Makkovik, Ms Kate Mitchell; Rigolet, Mr. Darryl Shiwak; Upper Lake Melville, Mr. Roy Blake and Ms Patricia Kemuksigak; Canada constituency, Mr. Daniel Pottle and Ms Patricia Ford.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank all candidates for putting their names on the ballot and I look forward to working with all members of the Nunatsiavut Government. I also want to thank all members who have served Nunatsiavut for their service and wish them the best of success in the future.

While Nunatsiavut has seen tremendous progress in the last few years, much work remains to be done. It is very important that all levels of government work closely together to address issues like housing, transportation, communication and justice.

We also have to ensure that the valuable resources that exist in Nunatsiavut are developed in an environmentally-friendly manner and that the residents of the region receive the maximum benefits from those resources.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating the members of the

Nunatsiavut Government on their election, and to wish them every success.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in the hon. House today to discuss efforts by the all-party committee to address inequitable shrimp quota allocations recently announced by the federal government on April 4, 2014.

Mr. Speaker, over the last two days I was joined by the leaders of both provincial Opposition parties to make presentations to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, and the Senate Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. United, we conveyed the concerns and feedback received from fisheries stakeholders, and made recommendations that would achieve better outcomes for all rural communities that depend on economic activity generated by the inshore fleet.

We called on the federal government to rescind previous allocation decisions based on the "Last In, First Out" policy, and establish a new sharing arrangement between the inshore and offshore through a process that is consistent with those applied to other fisheries.

We asked the federal government to ensure that this sharing arrangement considers adjacency and reflects the history of both fleets in the Northern shrimp fishery.

We requested an immediate, full scientific assessment on the Northern shrimp resources, and asked that full assessments occur annually during this time of apparent resource decline.

Mr. Speaker, we also called on the federal government to implement a plan to study the

impact of climate change on the ecosystem and the Northern shrimp resources.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial government is pleased to have the support of members of all parties in the House of Assembly on this key issue of importance to the provincial economy and to our rural communities. I want to take this opportunity to thank the committee members: the Minister of Natural Resources and MHA for the Isles of Notre Dame; the Member for Port de Grave; the Member for Bonavista North; the Leader of the Official Opposition and Member for Humber Valley; the Member for The Straits – White Bay North; and the Leader of the New Democratic Party and Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi for the time and insights they are providing.

I would also like to thank the Minister of Education and MHA for Grand Bank; the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale; the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace; and the Member for St. John's East, all of whom were very active as alternate members to the committee.

Together with industry, the business community, and municipal leaders, this government will press that case in the weeks ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, Minister, for the advance copy of your statement. I was pleased to be part of the delegation that went to Ottawa representing all of Newfoundland and Labrador on this, what is a critical issue, and the presentation that we gave to the Senate committee and, of course, the Parliamentary committee to the House of Commons. So, I was pleased to join the minister and the Leader of the Third Party, the NDP.

I was, of course, as the Official Opposition, one of three members; and today the other two members, in the private member's resolution,

will be speaking to this issue today. It is critical to our Province.

One of the things that was impressed upon at the committee meetings was that this was an all-party committee that was presenting in Ottawa. They felt the level of presentation gave them a better understanding of how important this is to the fishery in our Province.

The all-party committee representing, as I said, the three parties met with the Senate committee, the parliamentary committee, and we will continue to press and do whatever we can as the Official Opposition, and I am sure with the support of government and the Third Party, on this issue. It is important as it has a critical impact, as I say, on all rural communities in our Province.

Before I finish, and as I conclude, I want to especially point out and recognize the work that has been done by the staff in the department in putting this together and receiving the presentations we have in the last few weeks from many of the stakeholders across our Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. I want to say how pleased I was also with the meetings we held in Ottawa and also with the fact that we were able to form the all-party committee. As has been said already, that really impressed both the parliamentary standing committee and the Senate parliamentary committee. The fact that all of us together – and we worked through, we had our discussions after the hearings that we held, and we were solid in the recommendations we presented. There was no dispute over those recommendations.

The commitment of moving forward to follow up with both committees and with the minister,

and the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture made that clear today in the scrub we had, that we will be continuing and we will be following up, is a sign to the people of the Province that when all three parties have their well-being together in a unified way in hand, we can work together. I hope all of this also becomes a model for us as we move forward in this House of Assembly of working together for the good of the people of the Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to rise in this hon. House to recognize today as Municipal Awareness Day in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Municipal Awareness Day is a time to recognize and thank the thousands of women and men throughout our Province who work tirelessly to provide important programs and services to our residents.

Mr. Speaker, during the Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador Symposium which took place last week in Gander, the provincial government, together with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador and the Professional Municipal Administrators, proclaimed May 7 as Municipal Awareness Day. This coincided with the release of our Municipal Council Handbook to councils, and the end of phase one of our fiscal framework consultations.

Municipal governments throughout our Province are holding awareness events in their communities today in recognition of Municipal Awareness Day. As well, many councillors and staff will visit schools to speak with students about the many positive opportunities associated with involvement in municipal government.

Mr. Speaker, I highly encourage individuals throughout our Province, especially our youth,

to become more involved and take a greater leadership role in their towns and communities.

All of us in this hon. House recognize the significant contribution that our elected councillors and municipal administrative staff make to our residents and communities, as well as the rewards involved with being elected to office and giving back to our communities. In fact, many members of this House of Assembly have previously had the privilege of serving on municipals councils.

Mr. Speaker, our government has demonstrated its continued commitment and support of our municipalities and as part of investments through *Budget 2014: Shared Prosperity, Fair Society, Balanced Outlook*, we have allocated \$200 million over the next three years for new municipal infrastructure projects.

We are also continuing our work on the review of the provincial-municipal fiscal framework to identify options for efficient and effective ways for services to be delivered, paid for, and shared in our Province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join with me in recognizing councillors and staff of municipalities throughout our Province for their commitment, dedication and tireless work on behalf of the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy. The Official Opposition would also like to recognize all the municipal councils, the staff and all the support workers who make our towns work so well and provide so many services to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I noticed the minister mentioned the Municipal Council Handbook. That is a good handbook. A lot of municipalities already mentioned that they use it. It is a great guide for them; it gives

them a lot of information. They are very appreciative of that. It was done in collaboration with a lot of municipalities. So that is great for new councils coming in, for new administration staff coming in. That is a positive step.

I noticed the minister mentioned the fiscal arrangement. The minister committed here in Estimates that there will be a fiscal framework by the end of the year, which is great for all the municipalities in the Province to take the burden off the volunteers in the towns that need the extra funds. I just want to comment the minister on that and the government on that, if they come up with a new fiscal framework for all the municipalities in the Province.

I noticed the minister mentioned \$200 million. I checked here and a lot of us – I do not know how many from the Liberal caucus. There have been announcements made for the Liberal districts. I have to say to the minister, there are a lot of volunteers here in the Liberal Opposition who donate their time and energy, and they should be rewarded with some new funding to help with the municipalities. There are more than just PC districts; there are a lot of Liberal districts that deserve that also.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The member's time has expired.

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like to thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. It can be a thankless job sometimes when you are serving on a municipal council, especially when there is no remuneration. Sometimes there is very little remuneration. Sometimes they have to make some pretty tough decisions.

We also want to thank those councillors, mayors, and people who are out there serving on respective councils for the fine job they do. We know their backs are against the wall sometimes, particularly when it comes to water issues, aging infrastructure, and declining populations. We know that there are challenges to be met.

We just wanted to point out to the minister as well that in Estimates – we had a very good conversation in Estimates. He promises me that he is going to be answering a few more questions that I have because there was not simply enough time to do it. He addressed the one problem that we do have out there, addressing water issues that are out there. We will keep on holding his feet to the fire, not only on that issue but other issues as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The member's time has expired.

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, in the media Frank Coleman said that negotiations of breaking the contract with Humber Valley Paving started in earnest in February 2014, but the minister claims that the talks did not start until March 2014.

I ask the minister: Who is right, you or Mr. Coleman?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak for Mr. Coleman. I have not had any conversations with him concerning the termination of the contract – Mr. Frank Coleman. What I can say is that on March 13, after a conversation I had, it was passed on to my officials and it was started then negotiations to terminate a contract.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Maybe the minister can clarify who was involved in those negotiations and those talks, those discussions, about this very contract between February and March? If it was not the minister, who was it?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, again I will say that on March 13, after a conversation, it was passed on to my officials to start negotiations with the termination of a contract. There were many conversations from July of 2013 up to February and March about the difficulties caused by a fire in Western Labrador that caused difficulties for that particular company.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Maybe the minister can clarify. The discussions that he is talking about from July to March – I want to talk about the ones from February that Mr. Coleman spoke about in the media yesterday.

Was that about the termination, the cancellation, of the contract?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak for conversations with anyone else. As of March 13, negotiations were started in my department for the termination of a contract with HVP.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let us keep in mind that previous to this the minister said that this was a discussion or a decision that occurred with him in his department. Obviously, someone else was involved in this decision.

The minister has revealed that Humber Valley Paving first requested an extension on the contract on July 11, 2013; that is last year.

I ask the minister: Who made the request on behalf of Humber Valley Paving for this extension? Who was it?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I will go back to, I think, it was June 24 of 2013 when I received a call in my district that there was an enormous fire. I had just left the district, so I witnessed the 27,000 hectares that were burning. I went back there and, at times, I went back with other ministers during the duration of that fire burning and I witnessed the effect that it was having on business. We were approached then in July of 2013 – that was before I was in the department, but I know that certain departments were contacted about the issues, the difficulties, that was causing for businesses and this particular business happened to be one of them. I can only account for what happened when I was there.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, in the spirit of openness of this government and during the discussion that you had back in July 2013 with Humber Valley Paving about the extension, who asked for that request and was it verbal or was it written; and if

it was written, will you table that in this House of Assembly?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I said on July 11, 2013 there was a request for an extension because of the issues that the forest fire had caused in slowing down that particular project. It was on September 11, 2013 that that was granted, to give them a one-year extension.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the minister: Was this a written request, and will the minister table that request in the House of Assembly?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we get a lot of written requests and they carry a lot of information. This actually was a written request and it has a lot of complex information, financial information, in the document. I checked with my legal staff this morning to see if that could be tabled here in the House of Assembly. I can table the document, but there will be an awful lot of redaction because of the priority information that is in the letter.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a priority how you protect the financial information for the company, not a priority how you protect the finances of this Province. Government granted an extension to work in September. Just six months later, they were in talks with the company to cancel the contract.

I ask the minister: What happened in the period from September, 2013 and March, 2014 that convinced you to let the company out of the contract without penalty? This is a contract that they were previously asking an extension for.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I will not speak on behalf of Humber Valley Paving or any other company here; that is not my role. My role is to speak on behalf of the Department of Transportation and Works.

In this particular case, we were approached to enter into a negotiation to see if we could mutually terminate a contract that a particular contractor felt that they had already lost a lot of money on and they could not carry on with the contract. My duty, as the minister, was to try to get the job completed on time, on schedule, on budget, and keep Newfoundlanders and Labradorians employed, and that is exactly what I feel I have done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well maybe the minister can tell us, when is on time? Because based on the extension of this contract, on time would have been July of 2014. So why is that still not the contract termination?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the member across knows, when it comes to tendering, quite often things change in the tender. When this job was retendered, it was added into another eighty kilometres, plus five kilometres in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay area. When you put out a much larger tender like that, sometimes there is wording that needs to be explained. We had some contractors that were bidding on the tenders come back and ask us, could we get an extension? We gave a one month extension on that, and we expect the job to be finished August, 2014.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When this contract was extended it would have terminated. The job would have been finished in July of 2014, just in a few months.

Why is it – what happened between September, 2013 and March, 2014 that allowed the minister – the minister felt it was compelling argument enough to cancel the contract? What happened?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, again, as I just said, I am not going to speak for a company that I have nothing to do with. My role was to take care of transportation and works. I felt it was in the best interest, and I still feel it is in the interest of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to get this job completed on time, on budget, and that is what my goal is.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister is already speaking for the company. He is familiar with their financial status. He already said it would have been a hardship and therefore he was obviously very intimate and understood the financial situation for this company. He is already speaking on their behalf and protecting them, I will say, Mr. Speaker.

When the story broke in the media, the minister said the contract was cancelled because of issues resulting from a forest fire in Labrador West. However, it is now clear the company cited the forest fire as their reason for requesting a one-year extension. This was in July of last year.

I ask the minister: How can you use the forest fire for an excuse to grant the extension, but six months later use the same excuse, the same reason, for cancelling the contract?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation and Works deals on a daily basis with contractors, companies, and contracts and we are in regular contact with the contractors during the course of the contracts. If they see a problem and they approach government at a particular time during the contract, then we talk to them about that particular problem. That is what we did in July. We worked through that problem. They had another problem in March, and we worked through that problem.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What was the other problem in March?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the other problem in March is the problem that the Opposition has been bringing up here for the past week. The company was in trouble, and they were looking to mutually terminate a contract. We agreed to mutually terminate it so we could move on and get the project finished.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Typically, Mr. Speaker, when a company is in trouble, you do not help the company. What you do is protect the investment on behalf of Newfoundland and Labrador. This is the history of this government, I will say.

At that point, why did you not go and trigger –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BALL: – the bond that would have let you finish that contract on time and on budget?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I could not agree more with the member of the Opposition. It is all about protecting the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. That is what we are doing, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: I had two options, Mr. Speaker. I could have called in on the bonds. If I called in on the bonds, it would take probably two years by the time you get through the process of the bonding agency. You would never know the outcome of what is going to happen.

The Opposition, Mr. Speaker, has put a perception out there –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MCGRATH: – that we were giving back \$19 million and they walked away scot-free. There is \$7.3 million still on the table that has to go towards this project, and if you called in the bond you may not get anything at all. I felt the best interest in the people of Newfoundland and Labrador was to move forward.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister just said that if you called in the bond you may not get anything at all. Did you not check with the bond to make sure that performance bond, that the labour and materials bond was in place and sufficient enough to complete the job? That is part of your due diligence.

Were the bonds appropriate enough to cover and complete that work?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I will answer his question first. Yes, the bond was more than sufficient to cover the work. It was a \$19 million bond for a \$19 million job. That is sufficient in my eyes. There was 60 per cent of the work done.

When you go to a bonding agency, a bonding agency, first of all, will say: Did you exhaust every other option you had before coming to the bonding agency? Our legal advisors felt that in best case scenario, we will get a small amount out of a bond because of the money still on the table. They felt it was in our best case to work

with the company to reach a mutual agreement, terminate the contract, and move forward.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The legal opinion and the analysis on this contract is, obviously, that should be a public document. You have made a decision based on that.

I ask the minister: Will you table the legal opinion that led you to this decision?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have some of the best professionals in our legal staff within government and I trust them very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MCGRATH: Mr. Speaker, upon the advice of our legal staff, we did everything according to the act. We did everything above board, and I have no problem standing by the decision that was made to move forward with this project.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We had a number of ministers who have been involved in this file over the years. I guess the new Minister of Justice will be involved, or should have been involved considering this was a legal opinion.

I ask the minister: Will you table the legal opinion that led to this decision?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, again, as I said, certainly in my department I have the utmost of confidence in the legal staff that I have in my department. We have another full department of Justice and they do a very good job in advising government the best way to go legally. We sought that advice during this process and I have no issues with the advice that we were given.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Mr. Speaker, the minister tabled a letter in the House of Assembly yesterday confirming the release of Humber Valley Paving from their contract. This is the letter I have right here, and strangely there is no date on this letter.

I ask the minister: When was this letter written?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

That letter was written on March 21, 2014.

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in the letter that was sent to Humber Valley Paving in this case and was signed on March 21, the same day it came back to the – really it is unusual, isn't it, to not date a letter? In the undated letter the minister tabled, it says Humber Valley Paving have requested additional compensation for their work. This is

the first we have heard of a request for more money or for additional compensation.

I ask the minister: What additional compensation was requested and what were the reasons?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I said in July 11, 2013, after the devastating forest fires in Labrador West, Humber Valley Paving started sending correspondence to the department questioning for the extension, and explaining delays in the project that they were working on. After they had realized at their fiscal year-end – I cannot speak for the company again, they realized that they had encountered many expenses that they could not get back.

They looked for compensation for that and I did have conversations with Mr. Gene Coleman on that. They were told that they would not be compensated. The forest fire was not on the fault of government, it was an act of God, and, therefore, there was no compensation to be there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Once again I ask the minister, since this is a critical decision that has been made, the minister did mention correspondence from Mr. Gene Coleman, I will get to that later; will the minister please table the correspondence that you had from Humber Valley Paving about the additional reasons and the request for more compensation?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, we deal with contractors every day, and dealing with different issues and problems that contractors have. The issues here that we were having with Humber Valley Paving or the correspondence had nothing to do with their request for termination. It had to do with them making us aware of the fact that they were having some difficulties.

They had lost a lot of finances due to issues outside of their control, mainly the forest fires in Labrador West. They were looking to see if they could be compensated. That is what those letters were about, nothing to do with termination.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: I ask the minister once again: Will you table that request for additional compensation? You did not go through with it, so what is the problem with making that documentation available to the people of the Province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I see no reason to table it because these documents have absolutely nothing to do with the issue at hand. They have to do with a company and, as I said, we deal with companies every day, different companies, different contracts. When you get into issues, then you move forward with those issues. The issues that we have here, the member opposite is trying to say that one is part of another; it had nothing to do with the request for termination of the contract that we are talking about in question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I think without seeing the letter, I am not so sure that I agree with the minister and his interpretation that the people of the Province should not see this document that led eventually to termination of a project. The minister claims that there was no paper trail on several matters about this project. He said that there were no e-mails, there were no letters, and that he received a call from Gene Coleman on March 13 to discuss cancelling the contract. Today, the incoming Premier said that this is not the case.

I ask the minister: Who is telling the truth, is it you or the incoming Premier?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I read the transcript from the incoming Premier and the incoming Premier did not say this is not the fact. What the incoming Premier said is that he did not think that his officials talked directly with the minister; he thought that they would have talked with the officials. He did not say that they did not speak with the minister. I say that I am right; I did speak with Mr. Coleman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When you say you spoke to Mr. Coleman, was that Mr. Frank Coleman or Mr. Gene Coleman?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I think he is trying to fill up his question time there now. If he was listening all week, the member for the Official Opposition over there –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MCGRATH: – he would know that I had made it clear in this House of Assembly that I have never had a conversation with Frank Coleman concerning this; it was Gene Coleman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, government can keep back 10 per cent holdback on any contracts.

I ask the minister: Does this government have a 10 per cent holdback on the contract with Humber Valley Paving; and, if not, how much is left?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

An excellent question from the Official Opposition. Yes, we do have a 10 per cent holdback, it is in the form of a mechanics' lien, and it is all left.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, did government check to see how much money Humber Valley Paving owes to suppliers and subcontractors and if the 10 per cent of the holdback will cover that amount?

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 very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am not really sure how to answer that because I am not an accountant for Humber Valley Paving. I will tell you that as of the date we terminated mutually the contract with Humber Valley Paving and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador we had not received one request that somebody owed money or was owed money from Humber Valley Paving – not one request.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, it is standard practice before releasing a company from a bond or holdback that government should receive a sworn statutory declaration to ensure that all suppliers and subcontractors are paid. It is standard due diligence on projects of this magnitude.

I ask the minister: When you let Humber Valley Paving out of the contract and released their bonds, did you have a sworn statutory declaration?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

What we made sure we have in place is a mechanics' lien of 10 per cent of the project that could cover if there were people who were owed money –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MCGRATH: They have the opportunity to take avail of that mechanics' lien and that is still in place.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a simple question: Yes or no? It is a simple document. It is part of the due diligence.

Do you have a sworn statutory declaration that this would be money that would be used to pay the suppliers and subcontractors on this project, indeed protecting many of the small businesses that you want to protect with Humber Valley Paving? Do you have that sworn statement of declaration on file with your government?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, again, the Leader of the Opposition is trying his best to try to deface the integrity of the department. We have a mechanics' lien in place. It is 10 per cent of the contract. We feel that is more than sufficient for what we need in place.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition, for a quick question.

MR. BALL: Mr. Speaker, what the sworn document does is it lets –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask the member to get directly to his question.

MR. BALL: Yes or no, do you have the document on file, the sworn affidavit?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works, for a quick response.

MR. MCGRATH: I have the mechanic's lien in place, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

The saga of unacceptable treatment of temporary foreign workers continues across the country, and this Province has received a low grade for our treatment of temporary foreign workers by the Canada –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: This Province has received a low grade for our treatment of temporary foreign workers by the Canada Council for Refugees.

I ask the Minister Responsible for the Labour Relations Agency: Will he improve the protection of foreign workers by making changes to labour standards as has been done in other provinces?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to protecting workers in the Province. It does not matter if they are from away or if they are from here, Mr. Speaker. We have labour legislation to protect Canadian workers, Newfoundland and Labrador workers, and foreign temporary workers as well, Mr. Speaker.

Other jurisdictions do have some special legislation around temporary foreign workers. We feel right now, at this moment in time, our

legislation is working very well; but, Mr. Speaker, we are looking at other jurisdictions and seeing what they are doing. We recognize that the Temporary Foreign Worker Program in Newfoundland and Labrador is relatively new compared to other jurisdictions. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are looking forward in terms of anticipating what is needed for the future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the minister: Will he please clarify? Will he make changes to the labour standard so that government can take a more proactive approach to inspection of workplaces and living conditions of temporary foreign workers?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Again, Mr. Speaker, temporary foreign workers have the exact same rights as workers who are from Newfoundland and Labrador and workers who are from Canada. We are making sure – and if any complaints, if we hear anything out there, we will send our people in to make sure they are being taken care of properly, that labour standards are being followed, Mr. Speaker, that labour relations are what they need to be.

Yes, we are looking at where we are going to be, seeing what the future is going to be for this Province because we know we do need more workers in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the minister: Does he recognize that complaint-based labour standards is not adequate and that he needs to take a more proactive approach?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, I had that discussion with my officials just last week. We discussed how Occupational Health and Safety works in this Province. It is a model for the rest of Canada. We are proactive in our enforcement. There are other provinces that look to us to see what we do there.

Yes, when we look at where we are going to be going forward in the future, that is one of the areas we talked about. I agree with the member opposite, there is some work to be done around there; but, Mr. Speaker, we have a very robust department. We have complaints driven mechanisms in place right now. We take any complaint very seriously and we will investigate, Mr. Speaker, in a timely manner.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the minister: If he has been in touch with the federal government over the allegations of complaints concerning the use of temporary foreign workers in this Province?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, we have reached out to our federal counterparts to see what exactly is going on there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, we certainly are looking into the situation. We are going to

continue to monitor the situation. We will provide an update at the appropriate time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, government's answer is that the Auditor General is free to investigate anything that he wishes. The minister knows full well that under section 16 of the Auditor General Act, government can ask the Auditor General to investigate – under section 16(1) of the act.

Will you put forth in a formal request to the Auditor General to step in and look at the matter of Humber Valley?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I said in the House yesterday, I have no problems. If the Auditor General feels fit that he needs to come in and do an audit in this case in my department, I am more than happy to have him come in.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: I think I asked if they would put in the formal request to the Auditor General to do it, as they can do under the act.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MURPHY: I ask the minister: Has the minister discussed calling in the Auditor General with his Cabinet colleagues?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I have discussed this and the Auditor General knows where his access is to all departments in the government. If he feels it is necessary to come in and do an audit here, I am more than happy to have him come into my department.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, calling in the Auditor General was done for the fibre optic deal in November of 2006 and the ensuing report from the Auditor General cleared the air. We need to clear the air on this issue.

Why will you not do it?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Order, please!

I do not like wasting the members' Question Period time; however, I have called for order.

I acknowledge the hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, he asked a question, why do we not clear the air? I feel the air is very clear. I am more than happy with the decisions that I have made.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: If he would like for the Auditor General to come in – if the Auditor General wants to come in, that is his choice and he is more than welcome.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, the ground is shifting daily under the Humber Valley Paving fiasco. There is the release from their contractual obligations; allegations of political favouritism are out there. The minister has said that he became also personally involved in the last couple of days. This is all the more reason to have the contract investigated by the Auditor General.

Why not ask the Auditor General to investigate? Why hide?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if I was hiding, number one, I would not come out and say I was involved. I would think as a minister of a department you are supposed to be involved in all of your files, and that is exactly what I have done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member has time for a very quick question.

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, why do you think that the Auditor General should not investigate this matter where the taxpayers' dollars are involved?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works for a very quick response.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: He is more than welcome to, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice under Standing Order 11 that I shall move that the House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, May 12, 2014.

Further, I give notice under Standing Order 11 I shall move that the House not adjourn at 10:00 p.m. on Monday, May 12, 2014.

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

Petitions.

Petitions

MR. SPEAKER: 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 extreme overcrowding issues in St. Peter's Elementary and Mount Pearl Senior High, a direct result of poor planning by the Department of Education; and

WHEREAS the solution imposed by the English School Board to deal with this now crisis situation will have a devastating impact on many students, families, and teachers at Mount Pearl Senior High, Mount Pearl Intermediate, St. Peter's Elementary, and Newtown Elementary; and

WHEREAS there are other less disruptive solutions which can be introduced to alleviate this overcrowding issue, including capital investment as a preferred option, as well as catchment area realignment; and

WHEREAS the English School Board was not provided with the financial flexibility by the Minister of Education to explore other more suitable options; and

WHEREAS the government has intervened in board decisions in the past, such as in 2005 in Bishop's Falls, reversing the closure of Leo Burke Academy – during a by-election, I might add;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to intervene in this matter, commit appropriate resources to the English School Board and instruct them to develop more suitable options.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is a petition that I have presented in the past. I have a lot of them to present. I have had conversations with many families, certainly in Mount Pearl. I held a meeting with families in Mount Pearl last night. They are very distraught, very upset, and very angry about the decision that was made.

Very pleased – there is a little glimmer of hope, that we have a new Minister of Education. Of course, we know that the former Minister of Education was not prepared to provide any funding to support the family and the students in Mount Pearl. I am hopeful and the parents are hopeful that the new Minister of Education, unlike the previous Minister of Education, is going to actually listen to the people and is going to actually have a sober second look at this and provide the funding required so that we can look at more suitable options for the students, families, teachers in the Mount Pearl school system.

I will continue to stand on my feet now day after day after day presenting these petitions until the new minister listens, and I am very hopeful that he will.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled:

WHEREAS private and community ambulance operators provide ambulatory and paramedic services to the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador and are compensated for these services by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS the contract for ambulance operators expired in March of 2012; and

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador completed a review of ambulatory services in the Province, which review was completed August 2013, and released to the public in October 2013; and

WHEREAS ambulance operators agreed to hold off from negotiations with government until the ambulance review was complete, and showed good faith; and

WHEREAS government's current position in negotiations has been heavy-handed, and will see cuts in ambulance services across the Province;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the government to negotiate a fair deal with ambulance operators that ensures the safety of our ambulance professionals as well as the patients in our Province.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first of these petitions that I have had the privilege of presenting here in the House. I wish I did not have to do it, but unfortunately I have been forced to do it by the actions of this government over the last couple of years when it comes to dealing with the ambulance services in this Province and the paramedics.

We know that the operators showed good faith and said we are willing to sit back, let the review come out, so that we can see what is the best way for us to move forward as we provide these services to the people of the Province. What did we see from that good faith? Well, what we

seen is a government that is sitting down, trying to impose cuts to ambulance services all across this Province affecting people in my district, affecting people all over on this side and all over on that side. It is funny, though; I do not hear much on it from the other side.

We are seeing a cut in emergency services to the people of this Province. It is a reduction in emergency services. It is absolutely unreasonable. I brought this up in Health Estimates and I will give the minister credit. He has only been on the job less than a week and he did his best. I do not expect him to know everything yet.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. A. PARSONS: What I did get out of the bureaucrats in the department was very little as well. We know that up to this point the government has been very hard to deal with when it comes to these negotiations. The fact is they are saying: Here is a new model; you are going to accept it and that is all we are going to do.

What I am saying on behalf of the people in my district – and do you know what? I am going to say on behalf of the people in this Province and on behalf of the members across who have not spoken about this yet, even though it is going to affect their people. They are going to see a cut. Any reduction in emergency services is absolutely unacceptable.

What I am doing is calling upon government, calling upon the Department of Health and the Department of Finance to come to a good deal, one that sees an improvement in services, not a reduction in services and layoffs across this Province when it comes to paramedics. I look forward to seeing that and I look forward to dealing with the new minister. Hopefully things change in the department because up to this point the negotiations have not been very good.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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 conditions 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 patching 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, before Easter break I was up a number of times talking about the very, very serious condition of the highway. On Easter weekend, the transportation workers were called out and they did spend their Easter weekend – I imagine they were paid double time for that. The timing was unfortunate, but it was critical. It was just unfortunate it did not happen two or three weeks earlier. They did once again fill up all of the potholes in the Labrador Straits, but, Mr. Speaker, this is a temporary solution.

Up to now we know the commitment is there to complete Phase I. That is almost done to Goose Bay. We have eighty kilometres that are out to tender right now on Phase III. We know this

minister has said several times that the priority is the gravel road in the southeast from Red Bay to Happy Valley, but at the stage we are going right now it will be 2020 before Phase II and Phase III are complete. The Labrador Straits from L'Anse au Clair to Red Bay simply cannot wait until 2020. We are talking about pavement that has already exceeded its life expectancy by at least a decade-and-a-half. It is cold patch after cold patch.

I call upon the government to address this situation, to get the Labrador Straits on the radar for paving before something very serious happens.

I will continue to stand in my place in the House, Mr. Speaker, and call upon this Route 510 to be paved as soon as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. J. BENNETT: To the hon. House of Assembly for 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, Trout River has become noteworthy worldwide in the last two weeks because a very large blue whale came ashore there with the ice. Right now, there is a team from the Royal Ontario Museum in Trout River who are working on the whale preservation and the restoration. In fact, within the last hour or so I have arranged to meet with the lead individual and the committee in Trout River at 7:00 on Friday evening. The irony is, for all of the good news and the showcasing that Trout River and the Province will get, is that we are going to get a black eye for not having cellphone coverage in Trout River and in the enclave.

Trout River will be able to be seen as a place where wonderful things happen, exciting things happen, and an enclave community in Gros Morne National Park; yet, our provincial government, in spite of petition after petition after petition and request after request after request still has not got around to checking with the private sector to see if cellphone coverage could be extended.

This is a petition from the residents further urging the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to partner with the private sector to seek cellphone coverage.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. J. BENNETT: Thank you.

Orders of the Day

Private Members' Day

MR. SPEAKER: I remind the member that this is Wednesday, Private Members' Day, and it is now 3:00 o'clock. I now call upon the Member for Bonavista North to introduce the motion that is in his name.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is indeed an honour for me to make a private member's resolution today, moved by me, the Member for Bonavista North, seconded by the Members for Humber Valley and Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi:

WHEREAS the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, in allocating quotas for Northern shrimp this year, has reduced the allocations for the inshore fleet disproportionately by adopting a "Last In, First Out" (LIFO) policy;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House calls on the Government of Canada to eliminate the "Last In, First Out" (LIFO) policy of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and to instead distribute more equitably the Northern shrimp quota allocations based on adjacency and historical dependence.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move and to speak today to this private member's resolution to eliminate the Last In, First Out policy of the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and to instead distribute Northern shrimp quota allocations more equitably – and it is a very important word, more equitably – using the principles of adjacency and historical dependence.

Mr. Speaker, during my time speaking today I intend to underline the need for the federal government to rescind the recent allocation decisions by focusing on the economic importance of the shrimp sector and the negative impacts that will result if the LIFO or Last In, First Out policy continues to be applied to quota allocation decisions.

As I start, firstly, it is important to give a quick explanation of the Last In, First Out policy or LIFO. In 1997, inshore harvesters were granted temporary licences by the federal government so they could harvest the shrimp resources in Shrimp Fishing Area 6.

Mr. Speaker, the waters to the East Coast of Canada, between Canada and Greenland down as far as Newfoundland and Labrador, are divided into seven or eight SFAs or Shrimp Fishing Areas. The Shrimp Fishing Area that we are talking about being greatly impacted by

this LIFO decision is Area 6. That area is defined by a line drawn eastward, somewhere between Cartwright and Happy Valley-Goose Bay area, and another line drawn eastward from Cape Freels, which is in the District of Bonavista North, in my district. That Shrimp Fishing Area 6 is where the major, major focus is of this LIFO and of their quota reductions.

Prior to 1997, Northern shrimp was fished exclusively by the offshore fishing sector. To protect the economic interests of the offshore sector, a threshold, at that time, of 37,600 metric tons was established for the offshore. Meaning that the offshore allocation would not go below what they had the year prior to entry of the inshore into the fishery.

Much later, six years in fact, LIFO was mentioned for the very first time in an integrated fisheries management plan, and the reference read, I will read this and then I will repeat it. "Should there be a decline in the abundance of the resource in the future, temporary participants will be removed from the fishery in reverse order of gaining access-last in, first out (LIFO)."

Now, Mr. Speaker, the reference here is temporary participants. In 1997, that is exactly what these new inshore fishermen were. They were temporary participants. They were granted permits each year to enter and take part in this fishery. They were given a quote each year individually. They did not know if it was going to happen the following year, but they knew they had one this year.

In 2003, this policy was first mentioned. I want to also note, Mr. Speaker, that the provincial inshore fleet stopped being temporary participants in 2007. In 2007, ten years after their entry into the shrimp fishery, the federal government provided participants with their regular licences.

After ten years, these temporary participants were given full-time, permanent licences, regular licences; however, in that same year, Mr. Speaker, the federal government changed the way LIFO was referenced. This is how they wrote the reference in 2007: Should there be a decline in the abundance of the resource in the future, new participants/allocation will be

removed from the fishery in reverse order of gaining access-Last In, First Out, LIFO.

Just quickly look, Mr. Speaker. In 1997, temporary licences, temporary permits. In 2003, the first mention of LIFO. In 2007, temporary permits were given full-time, regular, licence category. That is when they changed the meaning of what LIFO referred to. They tried to change it after the fact, Mr. Speaker, to new participants or new allocations.

To introduce LIFO after inshore harvesters have been given access to the resource and then change the wording after the harvesters were given the regular licences, underlines the confusion industry has faced while trying to pursue valuable commercial activity in the shrimp sector, especially in Shrimp Fishing Area 6.

In short, Mr. Speaker, the LIFO policy forces inshore harvesters who have been involved in the fishery since 1997 – if we do the math, that is about eighteen years it will soon be, or seventeen years. These harvesters now have to bear the brunt of any quota cuts that are necessary to protect the stock, just because they are the newest entrants to the industry.

Now they are the newest entrants to the shrimp fishing industry, Mr. Speaker, new to shrimp. Who are these people who are adjacent and historically connected to every aspect of the entire fishery in our Province on the East Coast? New to shrimp, but historically connected to cod, capelin, turbot, seals, lumpfish, crab, and finally the shrimp. Not just one species attachment, Mr. Speaker, attachment historically to the entire fishery.

Mr. Speaker, LIFO was established by the federal government with little consultation and no consensus from the Northern Shrimp Advisory Committee. The policy gives no consideration to the economic or social impact of assigning the bulk of quota cuts to the inshore fleet.

Federal shrimp allocations affect more than 100 communities in our Province, Mr. Speaker, in which provincial harvesters and plant workers reside. If the LIFO policy continues to guide these decisions, it will endanger the economic

well-being of communities, of families, and of the fishing resource throughout most of the East Coast, and even parts of the West Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador.

To illustrate the impact of quota cuts, I would like to note that of every 1,000 tons of quota reduced to the inshore sector in 2014, this equates to approximately \$1.5 million in lost revenue to inshore fishing enterprises. Also, it is a loss of 20,000 person hours of employment in onshore processing plants, with lost wages of approximately \$250,000.

This speaks how seriously employment could be impacted, as well as the viability of fishing operations and plants. It is important to note here that for every 1,000 tons – the same amount – of quota reduced to the inshore sector this year, it equates to over \$2.5 million in lost revenues in the ten shrimp producing plants – large, great impacts, Mr. Speaker.

The quota allocation decisions recently made by the federal government do not give any consideration to this economic impact, and it will affect more than 250 small boat enterprises in the inshore fleet sector, more than 2,200 plant workers, and multiple businesses throughout the Province that supply this industry. Mr. Speaker, this simply cannot be allowed.

Over the Easter break, as our minister referred to earlier today, just before the Easter break he announced an all-party committee to discuss the shrimp allocation quotas for the Northern shrimp. On that committee was the minister himself, the Member for Ferryland. On the government side I had the honour to be there, as well as the members for Port de Grave and Twillingate. The Opposition was represented by Humber Valley and The Straits – White Bay North; and the Third Party, the NDP, represented by the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

There were alternates, as the minister mentioned as well, from Baie Verte – Springdale, Grand Bank, Carbonear – Harbour Grace, and St. John's East who all stepped up and were actively all a part of the meetings that were held. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I think the committee got together four, if not five times over the Easter break, which culminated in a select portion of

the committee travelling to Ottawa earlier this week, returning very late last night, and presented the opinions and the evidence that we gathered.

How did we gather information over the break, Mr. Speaker? Well, we met and we sent out a plea for people who wanted to express their interest of the shrimp fishing industry to the committee and we accepted information from the offshore sector. We met with CAPP, the Canadian Association of Prawn Producers. The inshore sector, we met Fogo Island Co-op, SABRI, St. Anthony Basin Resources, and Torngat Mountains group. We also met with the FFAW representatives, so we had union involved as well.

There were numerous e-mails and letters individually written. As well, there were individual conversations in our districts as we travelled around with people who knew we were on the committee and wanted to get their two cents' worth in to all the committee members individually. Then, of course, we would relay this information back to the committee.

Bonavista North, Mr. Speaker, has a connection to the shrimp industry in the same fashion as most of this Province, as the connection is there. It is not as historically connected. We do not have a plant. There was one plant that applied for a licence back in the early 2000s. They were not successful in getting that licence, but in 1997 about 10 per cent of the fishery in shrimp, or up to about twenty-five to thirty boats, were from the Bonavista North catchment area and fished out of that region.

In 2007, like everybody else, Mr. Speaker, they got permanence. Licences were combined. There were major dollars invested by these harvesters. They borrowed, they invested, and they risked their life savings in lots of cases on the fishing enterprises they were creating, not to realize these licences could be devalued so demonstrably when this LIFO policy could come into effect. The fisherpeople I talked to, the harvesters and the plant workers, I could hear concern in their voices as to what would happen, and the union members in our area were the same thing. Their voices were very, very concerned.

Now, I know, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to finish all of the information I have here at this point, but I will come back to this as I conclude a little later today. Clearly, the issue is of tremendous economic importance in my district and in each and every district in this Province, whether the district is landlocked or on the ocean. There are probably people who either drive the trucks or they fish in the boats. They are connected or they have families who are connected.

That is why the provincial government has been strongly opposing this policy since 2010, and while the government acknowledges quota reductions will be required to protect the shrimp resources off our coast, we feel that the reductions must be shared equitably.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I remind the member his time has expired.

MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SLADE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to the all-party committee's recommendations. First of all, I would like to thank the minister and all of the all-party committee members for spending so much time on this. It was an important issue. It just goes to show that when we stick together, we can certainly do great things for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, just to give you just a brief, the committee met over Easter. They had many, many people come to them: the FFAW, the Canadian Association of Prawn Producers, the Labrador shrimp union company, St. Anthony Basin Resources Incorporated, Fogo Island Co-op, as well as several fishers, and industry.

The term adjacency, of course, is very important to all this that we are doing here now. The principle of adjacency of course is these cuts do not fairly take into account the principle of

adjacency or community viability. In 2007, these inshore licences were made permanent. As a result, millions of dollars were invested by small enterprises.

Mr. Speaker, I was fishing in 1992 when the moratorium was called on cod. Let me tell you, it was quite devastating. It was personally devastating. It was devastating to communities. It was devastating to plant workers. It was just devastating to the Province as a whole. It was very important to recognize that and to make sure that this does not happen with our shrimp resource. It is very important that we do what we have done here, to bring it together, and for all of us to be singing from the same songbook. There is nobody sitting around these tables here, I am sure, wants to deal with another 1992.

Mr. Speaker, these inshore boats that were allowed into it made huge investments into their enterprises. I do know of one gentleman this winter that went and bought another shrimp licence. Just to give you an example of that, if he bought a licence for 100 ton of shrimp and went to the bank on that principle, now his 100 ton of shrimp is probably reduced back to 50 ton of shrimp. So, it is quite a huge thing. The banks certainly do not accept any excuses when they are looking for their payments on the boats and the investments those people made. So, Mr. Speaker, it is serious stuff.

Then I want to talk about the implications as it pertains to the plant workers in the communities. We have a lot of plants around Newfoundland and Labrador that produce this shrimp, cook this shrimp, peel this shrimp, and a lot of workers in those plants. So, of course, the reduction in the shrimp quotas this year is going to have some large implication on some of those workers, and communities in general.

It is a serious issue and it is something that we should all be concerned about, because the cut is in 2014, and maybe, just maybe, it will happen again in 2015 and 2016. So we have to be very, very careful on what we do and we have to make sure that LIFO is completely knocked out of the system, because it is unfair to people who have large investment or have made large investments. So, Mr. Speaker, I would certainly like to pursue this a little further somewhere down the line, and I am sure the Minister of

Fisheries and Aquaculture would certainly like to do the same thing.

Mr. Speaker, it is not just shrimp. This could relate to cod, or crab, or anything else down the line. So, I often have thought about it, here you have people thousands of miles away making decisions that affect fish harvesters and fish plant workers and communities lives, and no consultation. I have a real problem with the consultation process, because in order for us to have a say into it, in order for us to have a say into what we do and how we control our own lives, we have to have a say. Somewhere along the way somebody has to listen and have that public consultation. If there is no public consultation, Mr. Speaker, those people are the people who are making the decision that affect our lives every day.

You have fish harvesters out there who do not know if they should make investments. You have plants out there that employ plant workers and do not know if we should make an investment. Mr. Speaker, it is very, very important that we pursue that avenue, too. What I am referring to there is joint management. I know many governments after coming through this hon. House have pursued that aspect of it. As it stands right now, not yet, but I am sure if we stand together as a group, like we did on the shrimp issue, I am sure we can do great things here in this Province and I am sure we will make the people of Newfoundland and Labrador very proud of us.

Mr. Speaker, we need to be proactive instead of reactive. If not, we will just be back here year after year making the same arguments. We have heard that the type of work we have been doing with this committee needs to continue. People want a say.

Mr. Speaker, as I just said to you about the plant workers and the communities, the communities are directly affected, the businesses of the communities are directly affected, which, as everybody knows, there is a large, large spinoff for communities with regard to the fishery, the plants, and everything else. I heard somebody saying not too long ago – it is unbelievable, Mr. Speaker, when you think about it – when the moratorium was called some years ago, several businesses in Mount Pearl closed. That is how

large of a spinoff – somebody would look at you and say there is no fish or anything in Mount Pearl, but it was businesses that were created to service the fishing industry and there were jobs lost in that, even in Mount Pearl. Of course, we have to be very, very vigilant on that.

The science part of it – and I am very, very encouraged that the committee actually spoke on the science part of it; it is an important piece. Personally speaking, I participated in science since 1996 up until last year, Mr. Speaker. I changed my occupation this year. I did a sample of the survey for the federal government, the cod survey. I started that in 1996 and I have done it up until 2013. The information, it was a great thing because it was the science branch working with the harvester. The harvester could see what was going on. They provided that information to the science branch. Mr. Speaker, again, it is called co-operation and it is what we need to see happen in this hon. House.

Mr. Speaker, adjacency is a long-standing principle that has guided fisheries management in our Province. The Canadian government used the principle of adjacency and community and regional development benefits as criteria in granting the offshore licences to community-based organizations in southeast Labrador in 1978 and granting similar special allocations to regional organizations on the Northern Peninsula in 1997.

Mr. Speaker, when Mr. Mifflin was up there that is when the inshore fleet came into it. Now, in order for everybody to survive at this there has to be a sharing of the resources. There just simply has to be a sharing of the resources. If not, communities will die. I know, in this hon. place, that we all care about rural Newfoundland and Labrador. I know each and every one of us does.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SLADE: Mr. Speaker, the term and the reference we say for adjacency are those living closest to the stock will benefit from it. LIFO takes away that very, very idea. It is not correct and, for whatever reason, either it was snuck in there or whatever the case may be, but there was no consultation on it. In a lot of cases, harvesters were not even aware of it. Because I

am sure, Mr. Speaker, if they were aware of it, they would have certainly not invested a large number of dollars. The shrimp industry, you can spend a lot of money. It is nothing to go out and spend \$1.5 million or \$2 million on a boat, plus the equipment and everything else. There is nobody going to take a huge risk like that if anybody ever had to know that there would be a LIFO policy.

Will this policy come down and be implemented in the crab industry later on? Apparently, the minister can do so at her discretion. Again, Mr. Speaker, it is simply not good enough.

Just to give you an idea on that, Mr. Speaker. Just let me give you a situation on that as I spoke to you about the minister's discretion powers. Decisions affecting industry are largely made by the federal government through the Department of Fisheries and Oceans under the Fisheries Act, 1868.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. SLADE: The principle of the federal statute that manages Canadian fishing resources, the federal fishery minister is accorded widespread, absolute discretion in matters of a fishery under the Fisheries Act. This discretion is often used by the federal Fisheries Ministers over the years and sometimes much to the detriment of our industry and our Province.

Successive ministers have been legally challenged, including a recent victory won by the BC First Nation over their herring fishery after a minister overruled recommendations of our own scientists. It is one of the reasons federal Minister Gail Shea has ruled as she did on the shrimp quota to avoid reducing catch of the FFT that catches the shrimp quota she wrongly awarded to the PEI businessmen some years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I just thought I would speak on that for just one moment. If you use the Last In, First Out policy, the fish harvesters – and I am referring to the sixty-five-foot fleet – are actually not the last ones in. In actual fact, PEI fish harvesters were the last one in, so they would have to be the first ones out. By the way,

they did not receive cuts this year. I have some concern about that too, on what exactly has taken place there.

I just spoke to you a little there, Mr. Speaker, on the importance of science and the fact that the all-party committee has recommended a comprehensive assessment of Northern shrimp science for a full study of climate change impacts is a reflection of the ongoing gutting of budget and services to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, especially in the scientific sector with more cuts expected to come down the chute. Like I said, we have to stay on top of this issue and other issues as it pertains to the cuts.

As I said before, Mr. Speaker, the latest example of a fisheries decision being imposed on us by people thousands of miles away, people who know little of our concerns, lifestyles, and values show why the pursuit of a joint management fisheries board is so vitally important to our prosperity generation over generation for the past thirty-five years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. SLADE: Successive Governments of Newfoundland and Labrador have endeavoured to enter into joint management regimes with the Government of Canada to ensure the effectiveness and sustainable management of our fisheries resources. At best, we can only pressure the federal government to consider our effort and interest amongst others forming its policies.

Mr. Speaker, I am just about down to the last thing. Again, I would like to just say to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, and the all-party committee, congratulations, Sir, and I hope to see many efforts go to Ottawa when it comes to our fishery and the people in our rural communities, and all over Newfoundland and Labrador, because together we can do it, I am pretty sure of it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member across the way for his comments and his insight into the issue we are discussing here today in regard to the private member's motion. Obviously, from his professional career he can speak eloquently to the industry and what his experience has been. Certainly, that is important to hear all of those who have interest. That is how we develop insight and direction in regard to policy that is reflective of the needs of the industry as we move it forward.

Mr. Speaker, the motion today is very important in regard to what we have been working on the past number of weeks, the elimination of the Last In, First Out policy (LIFO) of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. As we have talked about, and as we know, we some time ago struck an all-party committee with all parties involved and all members involved.

Over the Easter break we had very good sessions, all collectively, and very good discussions when we reached out to stakeholders in relation to the fishery, all across Newfoundland and Labrador. They came and presented to the committee, thoughts from their perspective on where they stood in regard to LIFO, Last In, First Out and what it would mean to them from the operations perspective, from the harvesting perspective, processing and as well from a community perspective. This is all interrelated in regard to economic opportunity. It relates right down to the SMEs, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in our rural and coastal communities. So it is economical in terms of the regional impact, which is indeed significant.

If we go back and look at the history in regard to access for the inshore fleet to the Northern shrimp, we know when we go back to the mid-1990s, 1996, that temporary status was – that entrance was made, as we have seen downturn in the ground fishery in prior years at that time. There was a need for our inshore harvesters to get access to a resource and to build their enterprise. That was acknowledged, and they

got access to that resource and were able to build out.

With that came investment. Like any business enterprise, certainly the fishery is no different, they had to invest in other enterprises, often bigger fishing vessels, and the type of gear they have on those vessels, all of those kinds of things. They continued work to support the fishing enterprises, then conversely support the processing sector on land, and as well support their communities. Right now, we have about ten plants that process on the Island and in Labrador in regard to shrimp, and five of those, if I remember correctly, mostly deal with just shrimp. The repercussions of what we are talking about today are certainly significant, from a processing sector as well.

As we move on from 1996, when the inshore fleet gained access, it moved along in terms of the Integrated Fisheries Management program with DFO, in terms of how they gave oversight, reaching to the point in 2007 where collectively the federal government and the Province, federal Minister Hearn at the time, and as well provincial Minister Rideout, came together and talked about it. From the federal perspective, they decided they would make these inshore fishers permanent. As we heard recently when we were in Ottawa, they called them regular in Ottawa, but at the end of the day they are permanent. They were brought and allowed to have permanent status in this industry in 2007.

At that time, too, it is very important to recognize there were other initiatives or directions at the time collectively to build that sector and certainly to rationalize it as well. There was the ability at that particular time for licences to be used as equity in terms of raising financing and capital to build their enterprises. There was a combining policy which encouraged rationalization, but also encouraged investment, obviously, when we try to rationalize the industry and make sure those that are left get a better return and can build successful enterprises.

What we argued and the all-party committee argued when we were in Ottawa is a significant key to what we are talking about in regard to the LIFO policy. In 2007, and from there on, those who were involved understood it. It was their

belief, and rightfully so, it was never clear. There was indeed, a lack of consultations on the whole issue. That meant they were stakeholders in the inshore fleet and that meant there was further investments. We are talking about significant investment in vessels below 100 feet, really, anywhere from \$1 million to \$2 million in terms of actual vessels, and a significant investment in the whole process of buying licences and increasing the capacity within your individual operation to make sure it is successful.

We went from in excess of 300 enterprises in the inshore fleet down now to somewhere around 250 and probably 230, if I remember correctly, are active. That is the key point in 2007 from our perspective in terms of that. An investment was made. The acknowledgement was they were regular participants in the fishery, and from that they continued to build their enterprises.

At that time, the resource over those years continued to grow. In 2010, based on the science and based on how the resource was doing, it was recognized that there needed to be some reductions. Those reductions started approximately in 2010. I guess, based on LIFO, which is Last In, First Out, those inshore harvesters who had access – obviously, the offshore was there initially starting in the 1990s or before, and then in 2010 when the cuts came based on the LIFO policy those inshore harvesters that had invested, they were the first out, and special allocations as well received cuts.

They were the ones that received significant cuts, which is so devastating, and what we are fighting against and looking to have that policy readjusted. Because that is what it is; it is only a policy at a point in time. You can argue back in 1996 or 2007 who understand what, of what the reality was.

The reality today is that that policy and the way it is implemented is detrimental to one sector, which is the inshore sector. That is why it can change. It is at the discretion of the federal minister, DFO, exclusive jurisdiction to make that and to make that change. What we have advocated for collectively is that it needs a change. We need to pull back LIFO, LIFO needs to go, and we need to look at the resource, recognizing the biomass and conservation efforts

are required, but we need to look at sharing that equally between the two sectors.

We are not advocating one sector against another; we recognize that there is significant economic return to the Province from the offshore fleet. They have invested as well. We look at employment on those vessels. We look at landing sites, I think it is four or five in the Province, and what that means in regard to work on site and storage and all of those things. We certainly recognize that. That is what this is all about. It is coming to an understanding, a new way of doing things, amending the policy that allows that equal share and allows these industries to continue on, these sectors to continue on, but certainly recognizing that there is a decline in the resource that we have seen in the last couple of years and we need to deal with that. We need to deal with it collectively, not one versus the other. It needs to be dealt with in a holistic fashion.

That is why as well, through the work of the committee, there was significant work done and evaluation done on certain science, certain surveys and assessment and analysis and how important that is. We are going to make good decisions – LIFO goes – and if we are going to strike a policy that looks at how the resource is evenly and equitably distributed, we need to have good science and we need to have a clear picture, certainly for current years and certainly for future years.

As we move forward with the industry and based on the decline in the resource, there may be further changes, but we need to make sure the decisions we make today are certainly based on good science, good policy, and based on the long term for the benefit that are all involved.

When we were in the Commons committee meeting we had questions and discussions in regard to science, how much science is being done, where it is being done in regard to the eight zones from zero to seven. Some of the trial surveys that are being done and the amounts being done are often done in particular areas and certainly areas that are predominantly fished by the inshore and the offshore. We look at SFA 6 in regard to the amount of fishing that is done there, mostly that is where the inshore fleet would fish, some of it done in seven, projections

for seven in future years is certainly not looking good so in six the offshore and the inshore are there, with the inshore doing most of their fishing there.

In regard to the research piece, when we spoke of it, it is very important. There are two methods now, my understanding in DFA in terms of what they do. They do their surveys that are done annually, those would be their trial surveys they would do where they go out and do actual hauls and identify in various areas what the shrimp prevalence is and those types of things. They are set to statistical parameters. That is to look at the volume of the overall biomass.

Then, with those, every two years there is an assessment done. That assessment is very broad, it is very detailed, and it does not only look at the science, it looks at things like catch rates and certainly I think from the perspective of the inventory knowledge that is attained from those that are fishing and brings all of that together. That assessment looks at things, as I said, like catch rates, what is recruitment looking like, mortality, and survey, so that is a full scientific analysis.

Our recommendation when we met and it came out of our all-party committee is that needs to be done every year. We want one done now, certainly to where we are now in regard to the stock and the indications of decline. We need a renewed focus on science and as well on all of the zones from zero to seven.

If we are looking at opportunities or recommendations in regard to how we move this forward with LIFO going, maybe the inshore fleet would do a significant amount of their resource or have a guaranteed amount, we will say, in SFA 6 and then based on what is available in other zones the offshore could certainly fish there to make sure they get what amount would be designated for their enterprises.

That is interesting because I know in the Senate committee there was actually a Senator who did suggest that in regard to what if, looking forward, the inshore had more of an access to SFA 6, and then the offshore would make up what they need collectively in the other zones.

That was interesting that based on their discussion – and I give credit to the Senate committee and the House of Commons committee. They did their homework, a lot of them. They had some knowledge of what we were talking about. Through the discussions it was interesting to hear from them based on what we were saying would this be an option, would that be an option. From that perspective we were delighted to have that interaction and to have that discussion.

That is very important to science. That is why in our recommendations we talked about that in regard to the science piece. First and foremost for this year it is the LIFO policy. As a government since 2010 we have made formal representation to the federal government with regard to LIFO. When the cuts started in 2010 we knew first-hand that this was having a serious effect on the inshore fishery and on Newfoundland and Labrador.

As my colleague mentioned earlier and rightfully so, it is in rural Newfoundland and Labrador in terms of where the activity pretty well carries on, but it filters into all regions of our Province, our urban centres, and our regional centres. It is all about wealth and generating revenue. That is spent all over. That is not just spent in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. He is right when he says that and I agree with him. It is an industry that is integral to Newfoundland and Labrador economy and it is spread right throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. That is why it is so important.

First and foremost, our recommendations were that LIFO had to go and we had to establish a new sharing arrangement looking at the elements of adjacency and historical attachment. As well, as I said, the research piece is significant. We have to look at that and make a commitment to it from a stock assessment point of view every year. Then on long term look at collectively the whole ecosystem, the interaction of our species, whether it is shrimp, crab, and cod, whatever that is.

In one of our committee meetings as well, it is interesting, I do not know if it is the Commons committee or the Senate, they asked about seals. That is part of the whole ecosystem, too. We have 8 million seals now and how they interact

with the whole ecosystem is extremely important. On a go-forward basis we need to take that broad perspective in terms of all the species in the ecosystem and how they interact.

So, to conclude, certainly it is a great motion to bring forward. Collectively we are working together, all members in the House of Assembly, on this initiative. We need to continue our efforts with DFO, and we will continue to do that in terms of pulling back the LIFO and making sure that we can move both sectors forward with a fair and equitable distribution of that resource. It is so vital to Newfoundland and Labrador. It is certainly worth all of us fighting together, and I congratulate the hon. member for bringing the motion forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): I recognize the hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

I am very pleased this afternoon to be able to stand and speak to the motion that is on the floor. It is very good to follow the minister who laid out very clearly what it was that we were doing in Ottawa the last two days. So I would like to pick up on a couple of the points that the minister has made.

Probably the thing that is the most disturbing about the decision made by the federal minister – and we all understand that she has the right and the discretion to make the decisions that she does make, but probably the thing that is the most disturbing and that really upsets us is the fact that we see a real lack of understanding on the part of the minister of the importance of the inshore shrimp fishery. We almost see an, I don't care attitude from the minister. I am not saying she does not care, I am saying it gives us a sense of not caring about what is going to happen to rural and coastal Newfoundland and Labrador because of the decision that she has made.

The word that comes to mind, and we have used over and over in the committee, is the word

equity, and the word that goes with that, equitable, the adjective. What has happened is a decision that looks at only one sector of the fishery and makes that sector pay at this moment, and actually has made it pay inordinately over the past few years.

In the offshore and the inshore, we know we have people from this Province who are working. It is not just in the inshore that we have employees from the Province. We know on the offshore shrimp boats there are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, even on the ones that are not owned by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We know that.

We know we have two ports where the offshore transships the shrimp they harvest, shrimp that goes to Russia and to China. We know those ports where you have the transshipment going on are ports that benefit from the economy of having that activity happening in the community. We know we have people employed in those communities, and we agree with that. That was presented to us by the Canadian Association of Prawn Producers.

What we have to also recognize is even though that industry does benefit the Province economically, and it does, even though people are employed in that industry from the Province, we know that is true, we also have to build into the economic picture the scale of impact on communities of the decision made by the minister. When we look at the scale of impact on the communities of the decision made by the minister, we see that the inshore is being affected much more than the offshore.

We also see when we are saying that, we are talking about basically whole communities that could crumble economically because of the decision that has been made by the minister. That is the issue we have to deal with. That is why the number one recommendation that was presented to the two committees in Ottawa on May 5 and May 6 was that we have to eliminate LIFO.

We have to eliminate a policy that DFO put in without consultation, naming it as a policy in 2003 and 2007. We have to have that stopped, because LIFO in and of itself means the inshore fishery. It was the explanation by the minister

and by the mover of the resolution that gave a background as to who came in first into the industry, and we know it was the offshore, and when the inshore was brought in and LIFO therefore as a policy, deliberately attacks the inshore.

Now, in 2007 – and the minister has spoken to what happened in 2007. In 2007, when the harvesters in the inshore were given permanent quotas, they thought they were now on an equal footing with the offshore when it comes to being in the industry. They had no reason to believe they were going to be treated inequitably. The very act of DFO changing from temporary quotas to permanent quotas was a sign that they were now in the industry on the same footing as the offshore. What they have found out is that, in actual fact, is not the case. Not in the eyes, anyway, of the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

When you look at what has happened to the inshore over the past four to five years, you see an inordinate change for them, a cut year after year after year that has resulted in the inshore this year now being cut to a point where they are even below the recognized threshold for harvesting, a threshold that was set back in 1997. They are now below that threshold. In actual fact, Mr. Speaker, from 2009 to 2014 the inshore has lost 56 per cent of its quota.

Now, this is devastating. The cut this year, which is having almost like the final push, as it were, is the thing we are most concerned about. This year, the cuts that are being made are being shared, yes, by the inshore and the offshore, but the inshore is having to take 90 per cent of the cut that is being made, and the offshore only 10 per cent. In actual fact, in one of the exhibits we presented to the committees, it is very clear in a bar graph that we presented to them that there has been very, very little change for the offshore over the years. When you do the math, you find that the offshore per cent change has only been 10 per cent.

A case was made to us by the offshore, by the Canadian Association of Prawn Producers, why this was an okay situation. We are not trying to pit, as a committee – as members of the committee we talked very carefully about this and we have it in the presentation – one sector

against the other sector. That would not be the way to go and that should not be the way to go because in a lot of the cases we are talking about the Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are being affected. However, we cannot expect one sector, and especially one that is so based on coastal and rural communities, to take the whole burden while the other sector just continues on its merry way with hardly a change happening to it.

This was the position we took with the two committees, with the parliamentary committee and the Senate committee. This is what we tried to get them to understand, that you just cannot look at economics from the dollar-sign perspective. When you look at it from the dollar-sign perspective, you can say: Well, the offshore is more valuable, as CAPP says. They say it is more valuable because the workers in the offshore make bigger salaries. They say it is more valuable because the money they make by sending their catch to Russia and China, where they want head and skin on, is a more valuable resource when it is being sold; that means the offshore is more important.

I think the conclusion we came to on the committee is we have to look at the coastal and rural communities. When we look at the coastal and rural communities where we still have ten plants that the inshore is dealing with, we are looking at communities that can actually die. The Fogo Co-operative, for example, will lose all of its quota. The Innu Nation will lose all of its quota.

Mr. Speaker, however, at the same time – and I am sure the federal minister would prefer we not say this, but it is a fact – that we have in her plan communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, whole communities, losing quotas and other communities that are going to be so badly affected we know that plants are going to have to shut down because there is not going to be enough shrimp to harvest, while that is happening the company based in PEI has not lost anything. They are going on their merry way.

That is why we had to get into the whole issue of adjacency. What does this new sharing arrangement mean when it comes to adjacency? The second recommendation is calling on the

federal government to ensure that the sharing arrangement considers adjacency and reflects the history of both fleets in the Northern shrimp fishery.

This is something we have presented to the committees and really hope that the parliamentary committee of the House of Commons is going to speak to the minister about because the adjacency issue is a key one and it does not seem to be one that in the eyes of the minister should be considered at all. The only principle she seemed to use in making her decision was the LIFO principle, which in our books is not a policy or a principle. It is not a principle. It is a policy that DFO arbitrarily put in place and now the inshore fishery is suffering from.

The challenge we had in Ottawa yesterday and the day before was to try to get the MPs and the Senators to understand what is going on. One of the things I mentioned in both of those hearings was back in the 1980s when Michael Kirby as a Commissioner did his big study on the fishery. One of the things he warned against was using the fishery – I am paraphrasing now – as a social program just to keep places going in Newfoundland and Labrador. He said we cannot make the decisions based on that.

At the time I protested against Michael Kirby saying that and I still do. I accept what he is getting at but you cannot underestimate – right now in today's time with what we are dealing with – the economic benefit of the communities that still exist. You cannot underestimate the economic benefit of the coastal and rural communities that are still not only benefiting from the harvesting of shrimp and the harvesting of other species – you cannot underestimate what they also give back to the Province's economy. You just cannot make a decision based on the dollar sign in one small compartment. You have to look at the whole economic picture in which the decision is based.

Having done that, it was hard to tell. We have been asked by the media today and we were asked yesterday what do we think is going to happen. You certainly saw glimmers of understanding in some members of the committees. You could tell by body language and the questions they asked that some of them

really did understand the importance of the impact on the rural communities.

We also tried to get them to understand that as we continue in the industry we understand, we know that the resource is being depleted. That is why we have to start taking steps on more than one level to try to understand what exactly is happening.

If cuts have to continue to be made they have to be made in an equitable way. We can find ways in which maybe we can slow that down. I think the minister has referred to that and I think the mover of the resolution referred to that as well. That is looking at different ways in which the allocation throughout all eight of the shrimp fishing areas – that we look at all of the allocation being used.

Right now the offshore has access to all of the areas, but only concentrates itself on one area because it is more convenient for them to do that. Whereas, we know that there is shrimp all over, in all eight areas, that could be accessed. So there has to be a look at the reallocation, total reallocation, and there has to be a look at the fact that LIFO just cannot be the answer. We have to make sure that everybody is going to contribute to maintaining the resource as long as we can and everybody is going to bear the brunt of cuts when they have to be made, not one group more than the other. It is the life of our rural and coastal communities that we are talking about, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure to have a few moments this afternoon to speak on such a very important issue for the Province and, indeed, for the people I represent in the District of the Isles of Notre Dame, certainly as an MHA representing their concerns. As a former Minister of Fisheries, Mr. Speaker, this is a very, very important issue.

Again, it is a pleasure to speak to the issue around the shrimp allocation, particularly around the LIFO policy, and to be a part of the voice that is coming from this House and, indeed, many around the Province that are strongly advocating for the federal government, who is responsible for this decision, to reconsider the LIFO policy, to take into consideration the implications of such a decision and to find a better way, to find a creative way, an innovative way, a solution that minimizes the impact of this decision, that recognizes the value of the shrimp industry to this Province.

Mr. Speaker, that has been the position, I guess, and the arguments put forth by the committee. I do want to commend the committee and certainly the Chair of the committee for the work that he has been doing and the support from the House of Assembly, from all members. Because we recognize, and I think we can all stand and speak individually how we represent some of our rural communities and fishermen that we know, but at the same time, whether you are in a rural community directly impacted by the shrimp fishery, we all acknowledge in this House the importance of the fishery to the Province, the economy, and particularly to some of our mainstream areas.

You can go to Clarendville, you can go to Gander, you can go to Grand Falls, you can go to Corner Brook, you can come to St. John's, Mr. Speaker, there is no question the contribution and the value of the fishery is seen each and every day in these communities and we know that. Maybe not so much in the good times, but I can tell you in the downturn of the fishery, when the fishery is in decline and it is uncertain for a season, you can feel the impact, not only in our communities but right across this Province, Mr. Speaker.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about a few things about the fishery. For me, I have friends in the fishery. I know people from my district who have made significant investments. I think of the Baggs, the Browns, or the Baths; I think of the Bests over on Fogo Island and the Pentons. These people are all in the fishery, providing for their families, and making significant contributions to our community and the economy of our region. It strikes home the value and importance of the fishery, and I think

that is one message we are seeing here with an all-party committee, a focus. We are parking the politics. It transcends politics. It is about who we are, it is about our place, and it is about the fishery and what it means to our communities. That is not lost on any of us.

Mr. Speaker, certainly during my time as Minister of Fisheries, you see the attitudes, the approach, and the discussions about the fishery in the Province. One area is a respect for the fishery. Some would argue it has been in decline. It has certainly been challenging over the years. We transition from one fishery to another, but I think it is times like this when we all can come together, galvanized and united in a position to support the fishery, support some of the issues, and support the people involved in the fishery.

I think that is where we bring it back to a level of respect that it deserves, not only the fishery and its contribution to the Province, but certainly the people who are in it. The fishermen day in and day out are met with many challenges, but certainly our plant workers as well, and I will speak to that a little later, Mr. Speaker. These people as well depend on that for livelihood and income for their families, but as well their place in the fishery, the people in it, and what role and contribution they make to our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly acknowledge as well the work of the FFAW and Earle McCurdy. His people have had a strong voice on this issue as well. Again, I think it speaks to that we are all aligned here and that we can be aligned on very important fishery issues in this Province. It is important that we do so, and perhaps a message that we need to do so more often.

Mr. Speaker, this whole discussion around northern shrimp allocation and how it is being done, the LIFO policy, the issue of Last In, First Out, basically the message is saying if you were the last to get in and we are going to do cuts we are going to take from you first. Our position, the position of the committee, government, and people of the House is that there has to be a better way to do that. There has to be a more fair and equitable way to allocate the shrimp, recognizing that the shrimp industry is a \$187 million industry in this Province. There has to be a better way to share that.

That is not to put one aspect of the industry against the other, the offshore against the inshore or vice versa, Mr. Speaker, because there is value to the Province. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are fishing offshore. I can speak specifically to Fogo Island Co-op who depends on that offshore allocation. That is important as well, and we are certainly not denouncing the offshore in our position with this, but we are trying to protect an entire industry, something that is sustainable and something that can benefit long-term for our communities.

Mr. Speaker, we are asking the federal government to change the LIFO policy. The LIFO policy was brought in for a reason, no question, but the reality is that things have changed. The fishery has changed, the challenges have changed, the required investment has changed, and the challenges in our fish plants have changed since the LIFO policy came in. I think that speaks to the reason it is important to revisit those policies, and we do it. Past governments have revisited policies, we have revisited policies as a government, and I can assure you future governments will revisit policies. It is not unprecedented for governments to revisit policy.

I think in this case, with the changes we have seen, the challenges to get plant workers, and the need to provide them with as much work as possible to keep them in the plants, to keep the plants going, to give fishermen somewhere to deliver their product, to be able to get it processed, to create revenue and economy, and to drive the economy in our communities, that is a real challenge in some of our fish plants. I have two fish plants in my community focussed on shrimp alone. That is on Fogo Island and certainly in Twillingate. That has changed, but as well the fishery has changed.

The level of investment from some of those fishermen I just named and many others; they are out reinvesting in the fishery. We have promoted that as a government, we have promoted it as a Province, we have fought the battles with the federal government, we have won the battles on CETA, and we have the reduction in the shrimp tariff, a prime market in Europe. We have fought the battle to get the

hope and optimism in the shrimp fishery, Mr. Speaker.

Fishermen are reinvesting and fishermen are buying quotas at large numbers only to see an opportunity for revenue to pay off those quotas, Mr. Speaker, but when there are cuts in the quotas they do not get that same revenue. They are reluctant to make investments in the future, which is a cause for concern for the sustainability of the industry and the sustainability of our plants and communities. Likewise, currently, with the reductions, and the reductions are to stay with the inshore fishery, there are fishermen who have made significant investments in the past year based on an allocation. Now they are confronted with that and it is really a challenge for them and their families.

These are the kinds of things we want elected members, whether it is this House or whether it is the elected members in Ottawa, to be sensitive of. That is what we do. We represent people first and foremost; then we can represent issues, Mr. Speaker, but it is people first and foremost. I think that is the position our committee has put forward. That is the plea we have made to the federal government, to understand that the decisions they are making are not just about the fishery and a reduction in shrimp and it is not just about following a policy. There is a whole lot more.

I talked about the fishermen, their investments, and being able to meet their bank loans, Mr. Speaker. I have talked about their challenges. It has not been easy. I can speak for my own district; it has not been easy in the fishery. We have seen crab decline, significant investments to buy quotas, and then there is a decline in the quotas through no fault of the fishermen. As a result of that they have less revenue. These are the reasons our committee has put forth to support fishermen, to support an industry where we fought hard in CETA to open up a shrimp market, to get rid of the 20 per cent tariff, and to provide for a better future and better incomes for fishermen.

I have mentioned plant workers. It has not been easy being a plant worker. Many of us have toured plants. I have toured the plants and see five or six women who have been working thirty

years in the plants stood there with their rubber boots on, Mr. Speaker, standing there for eight and ten hours picking through the shrimp. It is amazing. I do not know how they do it. It is incredible. I tell you, if you get a chance to walk through you get a great appreciation for the commitment of a plant worker and the challenges.

Do you know what? Like many of our industries they are an older workforce. They are an aging workforce. They are looking for ways to get out, but they have to plug through it, Mr. Speaker. The challenge to find new workers to come in behind them is only going to be greater if we cannot guarantee them opportunities in the plants and if we cannot guarantee them secure, seasonal employment.

When you get these kinds of cuts, Mr. Speaker, it is difficult. I know the plant in Twillingate will have three shifts coming in rotating through. People on the third shift – do you know what? I know the company that is in Twillingate, Fogo Island, and no doubt the companies around our communities are committed to trying to support their workers. It is a struggle to get that third shift through. Now it is going to be greater when you cut 20 per cent of what they are producing.

There is a message in that, Mr. Speaker. It is going to be harder to replace those workers because we cannot secure the seasonal employment for them. It becomes a bigger issue than just changing a policy.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make that point and to make the point about the challenge to find workers for our fish plants. It speaks to the economy is strong, better, and more opportunities. We all acknowledge that, but we cannot discount the value of the fishery in our communities, the value to the economy, and the value to the Province.

That is a message here that our committee has taken to Ottawa. We have stood firm; we have stood united. I have even asked the people of the Province; do not discount the value of the fishery. It is critical to our communities.

Mr. Speaker, when I talk communities I talk directly about fishermen and plant workers, but I

can talk about the business community. A former student of mine just bought a significant investment and bought a restaurant in Twillingate, a great young fellow. He is going to do an extremely good job of running that business, but he is not going to be successful in that business unless we have a successful fishery.

We can go to any of our rural communities, and that is how we survive. If we are not going to have a successful fishery and there is a concern, then people are reluctant to invest in small business. That is what is driving our economy, we know that. So if you are reluctant to invest in small business, you take away more jobs. The cycle is there, and that is the impact on our communities.

If you speak to the different organizations in our communities, they will tell you, Mr. Speaker, when you are fundraising it is easy to do when the year is good in the fishery. If you have a bad fishery in rural communities, the fundraising goes right down. That has an impact on everybody, our kids, our children, the opportunities for seniors. All of that is wrapped up in the fishery.

It brings me back to the point of understanding the fishery and of respect for the fishery and the commitment that we need to make, and we have made, and we need to continue to make, but a commitment that the entire Province needs to make, because it does indeed impact every one of us, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have just a couple of minutes left, but I wanted to reiterate the point about respect and the value and what it means, and why we all stand united and park the politics and stand on issues that are fundamental to the future of Newfoundland and Labrador. No matter where you are living, Mr. Speaker, the fishery is what we were born of, and I still say it is what we will die of, especially in our rural communities. So goes the fishery, so goes our communities. We cannot lose sight of that.

I am fortunate in my district, Mr. Speaker, we have a strong tourism industry, a growing tourism industry, both particularly in Twillingate

and Fogo Island, and that is tremendous. The economy has never been stronger, but I think we all recognize, core to that economy, what drives that economy is the fishery. The optimism, the investment, the attitudes around the community, it is all better when you drive by the fish plants and there are 100 cars parked by the fish plants, or the boats are coming in and out of the harbour. It makes a difference.

As a government, as elected members, we have to be firm, be firm with Ottawa, stand up and make sure we are heard, Mr. Speaker. We have done that. We will continue to press on behalf of the people in our communities that we have to protect our fishery, we have to insist that changes have to be made, that as the industry grows and new challenges come about we have to be willing to meet those front on, Mr. Speaker.

The LIFO policy I think speaks to an area where Minister Shea and the federal government, Minister Moore, all of these people need to recognize the need to make some changes. I think if they do that, Mr. Speaker, if they work with us, will soon realize collectively, when we take on fundamental key issues important to Newfoundland and Labrador together, I believe we can triumph. We can win. We can make a difference. That is what this issue is about, the fishery. Whether you are a plant worker, whether you are a fisherman, whether you are staring up a restaurant, Mr. Speaker, or you are a kid going to school, the fishery is key.

From my district in the 3K area, I have a lot of people with a lot of investment, a lot of people I know, a lot of friends, Mr. Speaker, they need help with this and I certainly commit that as a member of the committee and as the MHA for the region, we are going to continue to press this issue and work together to make sure the fishery remains first and foremost for us in this Province.

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, for the opportunity to speak to the motion put forward by the Member for Bonavista North.

The shrimp fishery, the Northern shrimp fishery specifically this year, as well as the Gulf, has received cuts. The impact of cuts, and to this motion we are talking about the Northern shrimp, has a devastating impact and will on all those who are involved in the fishery, and it transcends.

As the member opposite for The Isles of Notre Dame had just talked about is that this impacts not only the inshore harvesters, it not only impacts the plant workers, it will impact community. It will impact specifically small business owners, whether they are in the retail, whether they are in wholesale business, and that has a trickle down impact. That is something that when we look at the significance of the announcement that was made to the cuts to the Northern shrimp, we have to look at taking action as a people and as a Province.

The Leader of the Official Opposition had requested and asked for an all-party committee. It is great to see the all-party committee formed, led by the Minister of Fisheries here in Newfoundland and Labrador, and joined by all parties in this House as we came together and listened to various stakeholders. They are quite broad when we look at shrimp, when you look at the offshore sector, when you look at special allocation holders, when you look at inshore, when you look at processors, when you look at plant workers, there is a broad dynamic.

When we look at the policy that is being talked about here in LIFO, well then we need to look at the overall impact and what that means to each individual. It has a significant impact specifically this year to those inshore harvesters in Zones 6 and 7 specifically. Those are the hardest hit. Zone 6 had nearly 10,000 metric tons. That is quite significant. Zone 6 goes to Southern Labrador, the Northern Peninsula, and other parts of Northeastern Newfoundland and Labrador.

We want to talk about, just to put it in context, what this means. I received a letter from the Great Northern Peninsula Joint Council. It was

addressed to Minister Shea, the federal minister. It pointed out that the shrimp fishery is the lifeblood for many Newfoundland and Labrador communities.

The inshore fleet provides employment for upwards of 3,000 people on boats and in plants. The proposed quota reductions for the inshore fleet will have devastating impacts – it will. Whether it impacts somebody outright or marginally, people are going to feel the impact. Other members across the House, and here, my colleague who is the Fisheries critic for our caucus, had pointed out the impact and what that had meant, whether it is in an urban setting, or whether it is in directly with the harvester themselves.

Business will have impact. They are already in areas that are already feeling the pain of outmigration. The Minister of Natural Resources for his district talked about how there is a strong tourism industry in Twillingate and Fogo. That is good; we need to have a diversified economy. He also pointed out that the fishery will be what we came in with and likely what will go out.

We need to make sure when we look at the fishery that it is dynamic, that it is changing, and that we understand that in time of diminishing resources, which is happening with the shrimp fishery right now, we need to make sure that with policies that are put forward from the federal level that maybe there is not one blanket policy that makes the best solution, such as LIFO. Maybe there needs to be other alternatives, creative solutions.

I think when we look at and we listen to other stakeholders – people who we listen to, the Fogo Island Co-ops, the Torngat co-ops, the SABRIs, and we listen to industry, we listen to the FFAW. Everybody has an idea and some suggestion. Maybe coming together on a more common level, as the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace talked about, is that we need to have more dialogue, and we need to have more discussion as to where we go forward. What policy can we put forward?

The Minister of Fisheries talked about a number of suggestions we could go forward with that may make it a more equitable and a more

balanced way as to how people and community, those who are in the inshore, those who are on land, and those who are in community investing back those dollars, can make sure they are not as adversely impacted as they are. I have in my district, and my colleagues like Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, St. Barbe, as well as Torngat Mountains, we have those harvesters who are in our district who are going to be adversely impacted based on these cuts.

If we just look at the economic activity that the Leader of the Official Opposition had talked about, we want to talk about that every 1,000 tons of quota reduced in the inshore and what it equates to. If we monetize that, it is approximately \$1.5 million in lost revenue in inshore fishing enterprises. That is per 1,000 tons. That is a lot of direct dollars. It is a loss of 20,000 person hours of employment in onshore processing plants, with lost wages of approximately \$250,000 per 1,000 tons. That is a lot when we translate the overall cuts that have happened.

It is over \$2.5 million in lost revenue to the ten shrimp processing plants per 1,000 tons. There are four of those on the Great Northern Peninsula. There is one in Labrador. Whenever you take away cuts, plants are going to feel the impact. These cuts to the inshore and the landings that happened, if there is not access to some other form, whether it is an industrial shrimp quota that could be processed, then you are going to see where the business case is so much difficult for a plant to remain viable and survive.

That is why we need to look at how we maintain and sustain our rural communities so there are those jobs and so the small business can thrive. We are going to see it, like members opposite had talked about. There is not necessarily that security right now for those who would be working on a third shift. That will mean jobs for those people.

The quota allocation decisions do not consider all the economic impacts on our rural communities. Right now, we have already seen a rationalization of the inshore where there was around 370 or 365 licences and now we are down to about 265 or 270. Where the inshore had, through new policies, purchased additional

enterprises, they have paid, in many cases, a premium for that quota and when a cut comes, that allocation is now dropped significantly, but those bills still need to be paid. So it makes the business case and the viability of their enterprise less and less and less. That is quite significant for somebody, for the fisher that only has that resource, that shrimp resource; they do not have an alternative. It also has an impact for those who may have an alternative species, but if the cut is so significant, they might now be able to fish that species.

Is there a way – what solutions can we have so that there can be a balance? That is something that needs to happen. That dialogue needs to happen. As it has been stated, the landed value of shrimp harvested in 2013 was \$187 million.

Now if we look at Zone 6 – I just want to put in context how important the shrimp fishery is, in particular, to the Northern Peninsula, particularly my own district. In the St. Anthony Basin Resources region, we have seen anywhere between 40 per cent and 56 per cent of that areas landings landed in those ports. Those sustain the plants on the Northern Peninsula, but also truck that material to other plants as well to support the economy. That is quite important, too, to make sure that when we look at all the players that are in the industry, how the decisions that are made – if, for example, the Minister of Fisheries had said, is there a way where more of the inshore can tap into the area 6 to bring more of that resource and have greater access and then maybe potentially there is another area or other access to quota for others to avail of.

We also have to look at the stakeholders and how the resource, how the policy impacts the community, such as the Fogo Island Co-op, how a cutback impacts them. How a cutback impacts a place like the Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company that has been successful for a very long time. How it would impact an organization like St. Anthony Basin Resources Incorporated – a social enterprise that sustains communities, for seventeen communities. Also, when they do that, they have been able to get \$16 million reinvested into the community in infrastructure that has created other jobs, such as a cold storage, such as a pallet operation, such as being able to keep getting a processing plant, and then in other industries, in aquaculture,

diversifying the economy, and creating further jobs. We have to look at the economic value of all the players that are involved in the industry and our resource, and how that resource can make sure local dollars are able to come back into our economy and how that can further then be spent and recirculated, because that is key.

This is why I feel that looking at moving forward on policy – and the policy in the resolution talks about based on adjacency and historical dependence. These types of definitions, these types of words, need to be defined because they will mean different things to different people. In principle, when we move forward there is not a one-size-fits-all policy. As the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace was talking about, what if certain policies are applied to other fisheries? What impact will they have? Having some form of consistency is important.

There are better solutions that can be put forward. Maybe that needs to continue with dialogue, whether it is through the all-party committee or whether it is with the federal minister and the minister responsible in Cabinet, Rob Moore, as the Fisheries Minister had talked about. That dialogue needs to happen. Those partnerships need to happen.

As the Leader of the Official Opposition, as the Fisheries critic here, and as we have all said, as the Caucus has all said, we need to look at the joint management piece. This motion, this resolution, is nonbinding. It is saying: Let us remove this policy and get a more equitable policy. Let us make sure, Minister, as we move forward there is a plan in place so there is a broader dialogue, and so the policy can be changed and that we can implement a policy that works for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

That is something we all want. We want something that makes sure the benefits are maximized and that there are long-term and clear, sustainable actions so the people who are involved in the industry can make investment decisions and so that people in community can make sure they are making the right decisions as they are moving forward.

We need to definitely look at the science piece. That is definitely one of the recommendations that were put forward. It was the third recommendation put forward in the committee. The minister talked about the necessity of looking at a full assessment, because this was not a full assessment. If we do not have a full assessment, we do not look at science and maybe we do not question some of the process as to how we came about. Maybe it can be improved. Maybe all of these types of cuts are not necessary. We have to have a broad understanding of science and that is why that recommendation is so important.

Moving forward, we need to look at having a full plan working with the federal government. We have not had that dialogue with the federal minister as to how this decision moves forward. We need to make sure that dialogue is there.

Moving forward, we need to see how we are going to build a sustainable fishery. In order to get to that sustainable level for shrimp or any other species, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians need to have a greater say. That is why we need to go forward with joint management on this issue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am certainly pleased to have a few moments to stand in the House today and join all of my colleagues in speaking about this very important motion we are debating today. Just a reminder for those who are paying attention to the debate, what we are talking about here today is at least what appears to be – we will see in a few minutes – a united front, a motion brought forward by a member of government caucus and seconded jointly by the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Leader of the New Democratic Party. What the motion does, if supported in this House and I have every confidence it will be unanimously supported, is

call on the federal government to eliminate Last In, First Out, commonly known as the LIFO policy, within the fisheries and to look at a more equitable distribution of the allocation.

Mr. Speaker, the first thing I want to talk about a little bit is the all-party committee. It has been referenced a number of times. Much of what I am probably going to say here this afternoon has been referenced by other members, but first of all, I just want to acknowledge the work of the all-party committee. I had the opportunity, on the direction of the Premier, to actually lead the forming of that committee and I want to thank members of both Opposition parties, the Third Party and the Official Opposition, for participating. They were very co-operative and the committee did a lot of great work. There were a number of members from both sides of the House who served on the committee.

I think it is very important because there is debate that happens in this House from time to time, probably more than time to time, where we are at odds with each and our politics put us all in different spots for whatever particular reason. There are also times when we come together, when issues are far more important to the Province and they rise above the foray of the narrower political banter and debate we have in the House of Assembly.

This particular issue is one of those issues where there is a common front and a common coming together. That is what the all-party committee did, Mr. Speaker. It demonstrated to the public that we all believed collectively this is an opportunity for us to stand up, to take a position, and to demonstrate to the Province that we are prepared to fight on their behalf.

As has been said many times, particularly – I enjoyed all the speeches, to be frank. The Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace always catches my attention on this issue because, of course, of his background as a former harvester and somebody who spent a lifetime in the industry. I always listen intently to the Member for The Straits – White Bay North because his district is one of the hardest hit by some of these cuts and, of course, my colleague the Minister of Natural Resources. What people seem to forget sometimes, when we are talking about the fishery and when we are talking about the

allocations coming down from the federal government, is that there is a face on these communities in the Province. It is not just numbers we are dealing with.

I have to say I spent more than a year as the Minister of Fisheries. It seems like eons ago now. If there is one great frustration that I continuously experienced it was what I thought was my lack of ability to move forward on any movement whatsoever with the federal government on moving them off some of their policy directions. It is a real frustration when we are in a Province where our control is limited to the things that happen once the product hits the shore, the processing side of things and the packaging side of things.

When it comes to the quotas, the distribution of quotas, the allocation of quotas, and the cuts and reductions in some cases, it is totally a federal jurisdiction. Albeit I think we all recognize, both all of us here in government and members opposite who have served in other governments and perhaps with other parties, you still tend to wear the issues. Whether they are a federal responsibility or not, we still tend to take the brunt of the criticism. That is a real frustration. I think what probably gets me most out of it all is that there tends to be decisions made at the federal level that have such a dramatic impact on our Province and on our rural communities in particular, sometimes without any real thought of what impact the decisions are going to have.

There are a couple of numbers I want to share for people who are tuned into this debate as an example. What we are talking about in this particular quota reduction, should there be no changes from this point forward and should we not collectively be successful in convincing the federal government of the error of their ways in this particular decision, is a 20 per cent reduction in quota. Of course, the piece that sparks the debate here today is the fact that of the 20 per cent there is a 10,000 ton quota cut to the inshore harvesters and only a 1,000 ton cut to the offshore.

Let me lay it out a little clearer so people understand what we are talking about. For every 1,000 ton allocation of quota that is lost, there is \$1.5 million of revenue lost to our inshore harvesters, our enterprises. In layman's terms,

because not all of us in rural Newfoundland call them enterprises, we are talking about boat owners and their crew. We are talking about the people who get up every single day at 2:00 o'clock, 3:00 o'clock, or 4:00 o'clock in the morning and go out in the worst kind of weather to try to earn a living. We are talking about \$1.5 million alone lost to that group. We are talking about a reduction for employment purposes, the onshore piece, our fish processing plants, of 20,000 person hours or approximately \$250,000 in lost wages. We are talking about revenue to operators in the area of \$2.5 million.

Mr. Speaker, those are high numbers and those are what I call impact numbers. I know, having lived through the last seven years I have been elected, at least, on the Burin Peninsula we have gone through the ups and downs in the fishery. We have gone through the Burin and the Marystown plant closures, for example. In my own district, we went through the Fortune fish plant closure. I can assure you there is no harder impact on the community than when we see job losses in industries such as this.

I have been very fortunate in my district and on one piece of the Burin Peninsula. Right now in Grand Bank we have a good operation with Clearwater Fine Foods doing a predominantly clam operation there. In Fortune, as members would recall, we had the reopening of the processing plant there just last year and lots of good things happening there. We have a different operation again in St. Lawrence where they are doing crab, primarily, but also sea cucumber and whelk. As any number of members have said today in their commentary, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing better than driving through the community and seeing the parking lots full of cars and people working because what that means is people are earning a living and they are spending money in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

This particular cut we are debating today will affect 250 enterprises – 250 enterprises, Mr. Speaker – in rural Newfoundland and Labrador and 2,200 plant workers. Just think about that for a moment – 250 enterprises. The Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace would know better than I would, but I suspect you are talking anywhere from three, four, five, six, or seven members on some of those enterprises. You do

the math: six or seven times 250. Then you are talking about 2,200 plant workers who potentially are going to be negatively impacted, meaning obviously no work or reduced amounts of work in this fishing season because of the quota cut.

All we are saying, Mr. Speaker, by the work of the committee and by the debate here today, there is nobody in this House, nobody in this Legislature, nobody in the Province who is not tuned in to science. We recognize the errors of the past. We recognize when we went through the cod moratorium that it is important to pay attention to the science of the fishery. It is important that we not overfish. It is important that our quotas be set to reflect what we can take out of the ocean and what the species can sustain. If we continue to overfish and we continue to neglect any advice, it is not going to sustain itself and there will be nothing for the future. We accept that we have to pay attention to science and we have to pay attention to good management of the resource.

What we are talking about here, though, is an inequitable cut or an inequitable allocation of the resource this year where the inshore harvesters have taken the brunt of everything. We are talking about an \$11,000 quota cut, of which only \$1,000 come from the offshore harvesters and \$10,000 from the inshore fleet. I might add what we have not said a lot about is that of the seven fishing areas, the offshore harvesters have access to all of them and the inshore harvesters have access to only one.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to continue to advocate and support this motion, but I want to just go back to the all-party committee for a moment. I think the minister touched on it a few moments ago, and I think it bears repeating. The committee travelled to Ottawa after an extensive amount of work was done in Newfoundland and Labrador, discussions amongst members of this House here and also meetings with stakeholders, the FFAW, Mr. McCurdy, and others in the industry who have far more knowledge, I submit, than most of us in this House when it comes to the fishery and the stocks and running of the fishery. While we are at odds with them on occasion, we do rely upon them for their advice, their stewardship, and their support at times like this. Mr. McCurdy and all kinds of

other groups had significant input into helping the committee formulate recommendations and to arm us with some information to take to Ottawa. Off the committee did go and they made representation on behalf of the Province.

There were four recommendations brought forward that I just want to touch on very briefly, Mr. Speaker, four recommendations. First of all, the recommendation – or what was pointed out, I should say, was that there was no consideration given to differences in the areas of access. As I said a moment ago, the inshore fleet has access to only stocks in area 6 and 7 while the offshore fleet has access to all seven.

Mr. Speaker, secondly, the concern was raised, and it has been raised here on many occasions for other species, that adjacency is not considered when you talk about LIFO principle; there is no consideration of adjacency. Third, it was presented that LIFO ignores the inshore private sector investment and contribution to rural communities that are so important.

I think that is one that cannot be underscored enough, Mr. Speaker, because we stand and we talk a lot about the booming economy in Newfoundland and Labrador – and I do not think that there are too many people unbalanced who would disagree that, for the most part, there are a lot of good things happening in Newfoundland and Labrador; but I think all of us recognize in this House, Mr. Speaker, that the economy of rural Newfoundland, without exception, is heavily dependent on the fishery and it will be for some time to come.

So we have to find a way to convince those who make the decisions in Ottawa to recognize that if you are making decisions that will impact a community like St. Anthony or St. Lawrence or Fogo Island, for example, you have to recognize that they are not communities where they can fall back on other particular industries. That is just not how rural Newfoundland and Labrador is made up. They are primarily fishing communities where we have a group of harvesters who go out to make a living and when they bring the product in, we have processors on land who provide jobs for members in the community.

That is the way of life and, in my opinion, for what it is worth, I do not suspect that there will be a lot of other industry in rural Newfoundland and Labrador other than the fishery. You will get some odd examples. I had one in Grand Bank, Dynamic Air Shelters, it is a great company employing anywhere from eighty to 120 people on occasion, fantastic; but if you go around the Burin Peninsula, you will not find many other fishing communities where that exists. I submit to you that most of us who have rural districts have the same thing, that it is primarily about the fishery, so we have to be mindful of that and we have to convince the federal government to be mindful of that.

I want to say thank you for the opportunity to speak to this motion today. As a former Minister of Fisheries, it is certainly again a great opportunity to echo my frustrations of the past in dealing with the federal government. I want to thank members opposite for seconding this motion. I look forward to all of us standing united on this particular topic today and going forward with a continued fight on the federal government until we achieve the results that we need for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I recognize the Member for Bonavista North to close the debate.

MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I guess in the next ten-plus minutes I will try to summarize and conclude the few comments that I sort of spoke about in the beginning but did not get a chance to finish.

This joint committee – we can understand and appreciate how a joint management could work. The comments that came from the Member for Carbonear first when he spoke and he talked about adjacency but he also went right into the joint management, I think the perspective that member brought to that committee and brings to this House is very important because he has a different lens to look at it with his participation in the fishery. He referred to that, in this case, we are all singing from the same songbook. That is exactly what we were doing here. We

need to do that to protect the huge investments that some of our participants have.

I also would like to respond quickly to the Leader of the Third Party. The word that she used was so reassuring to me. Even though the word itself is “disturbing”, it is not what you would typically use as a reassuring word. The fact that she looked at that as the way that the federal minister’s outlook on the inshore fishery was very disturbing, and if that continued. She also quite nicely defined equity to the point that 90 per cent of the cuts that are made are not equity. She referred to these statistics when she went through. She also made reference that with the offshore sector there are also people who will not go unscathed because of this. They will experience some cuts. Depending on the amount that ultimately comes out of this it is still fair, or fairness is the main part.

I also go back to the Member for Carbonear when he was talking. He talked about the unfairness of what was happening. I looked at LIFO and I stuck new letters on it as he was there because I usually play around with words. Really what the federal government has done has lifted the inshore fairness out when they have taken out this with the LIFO policy.

The Member for The Straits – White Bay North spoke about the impact on this industry, the trickle-down effect, and the economics. He always adds to the economic dialogue that we create here. He went on to talk about the joint council letter that was written from the Northern Peninsula of the impact and shows that there are other players in this that have interests in this as well as the committee. He also reiterated joint management very, very well.

Then to our three ministers who spoke on this. They were current and two former Ministers of Fisheries. They bring quite a bit of knowledge to this that probably does not come from every person because they are steeped in this day in, day out, every single day. They get more briefings and more knowledge for all this. The wealth that they bring to this, especially when our minister was talking there about reaching out to the stakeholders and how their impact is very important in this, and what the meaning of permanence has with regard to the use of these quotas being used as leverage or collateral for

financing the enterprises and how that would impact now because the quota is cut; how this actually goes back and impacts the collateral that these fishers and these harvesters would use to finance their licences.

Then both of the other former ministers who talked, they talked about their background and their districts and how this was important, but they also both referred to parking the politics. How this committee and this resolution today is parking the politics. We are all standing hopefully with a united voice to send to Ottawa and to challenge them to work with us because we are not going away is the message that we should be sending up to them.

Now, not only did we get a little feedback there from the ministers, but I also had a little tweet from a friend of mine at home. He referred to when I spoke at one point. I just want to go back to when I said, talking about LIFO, talking about the shrimp harvesters from the offshore and the fact that the inshore shrimp harvesters are not so long connected to the shrimp fishery but they are connected to all the fisheries in the Province.

Do you remember I listed and said they are new to shrimp but historically we are connected to the cod, the capelin, the turbot, the seals, the lumpfish, the crab and the shrimp? I had a tweet that said, do not forget the flatties. They are also there. That was just the way I was making a quick list. It was not an all-inclusive list because I am sure there are others there too, because we have to talk about urchin and we have to talk about ocean cucumber and all the rest of it.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, this issue is of tremendous economic importance, not only in my District of Bonavista North, but in every district that has been spoken of here today. We all alluded to the fact that in a downturn in any fishery you will see the impact even as far-reaching as in the middle of our greatest urban regions, because they are the sort of economic nucleus of the area but everybody comes in from outside. This is where most people come for service and come to spend a lot of the money they are earning.

That is why our provincial government, Mr. Speaker, has been strongly opposed to this

policy and it has been speaking up for this since 2010. It is not just new with this committee now. In this case, because the cuts have started in 2010 and have moved forward to the point that we have such a drastic impact on this fishery, then what we have is this bigger demand now. We have this all-party resolution, but also an all-party committee that went to visit in Ottawa to send a message that we want fairness, we want, ultimately, joint management, yes, but we are not going away.

I think as the Member for The Isles of Notre Dame mentioned, the thing is this has impact everywhere. It is every part of our districts. It is the fishery that brought us here, and the old saying 'you dance with the one that brung ya'. So you have to support and sustain that fishery, because it is renewable if we manage it in the right way.

While we acknowledge that quota reductions will be required to protect this industry, we also know that all of these cuts cannot come in one sector. A more equitable distribution of the shrimp resource among inshore and offshore harvesters, based on principles of adjacency and historical dependence, are a more fair and more equitable way to distribute that. Achieving this fair distribution of the resource to both of the Province's valued fleet sectors is vital to the prosperity of this Province in the future – and this was mentioned by several.

It has been tremendously beneficial to be able to approach this issue using the all-party approach. We parked the politics. Mr. Speaker, I want to take an opportunity to thank every member of this hon. House for listening to us today in this debate, but also to thank the two leaders of the parties on the opposite side for seconding this motion, because that is the signal that sends the strength from this message.

Working together and in collaboration with industry and stakeholders, the business community, municipal leaders, everywhere around this Province, that is our best chance. That is the best way to achieve the best possible outcome for our communities. Not just our shrimp harvesters, but as that expands right into all of our communities that rely on these shrimp resources as well.

Just in my final concluding comment, a moment or so, this is a very personal moment for me today, when I look back, I guess, that I am able to stand here to do this. That the name Eli Cross, every once in a while still comes up when I visit different parts of the communities. There is an old codger somewhere in the community and says, 'Skipper Eli, I knows 'e, if you're 'alf as good as 'e, you're the best kind'.

That is my grandfather, and he was one of the floaters. He skippered a schooner at age twenty-two or twenty-three to the Labrador fishery from the East Coast of Newfoundland. They went by sail, only the stars and the winds and everything to guide them. His nickname was the bawk. Now, in other parts of the Province you call the bawk a hagdown, but in this case he was called the bawk because he sailed in all weathers. They are out in all kinds of weather, those birds are, and that was his nickname.

He was a captain in his early twenties, so the fishery is in my blood. The fishery comes right down through. He skippered *The Eva*, then he got a little larger boat, *The Cactus*, and finally he had the Russell, we called her, but the name was really *The Roy Algar R*, and the R was the Russell. They all got increasingly larger so he had to move into Badger's Quay.

My father, who has the ability to be home now – and I am sure there is a little twinkle in his eye as he is listening. He was a fisherman who sailed with my grandfather at thirteen to the Labrador and who later went on to become a teacher. At age forty-three, thirty years later, he became an MHA. Today, like I said, at 81-and-a-half, he is home.

I might be a second-generation MHA; I am also a third-generation fisherman's boy, as the Member for Cape St. Francis alluded to earlier. It is very, very strong in me, in my heart, that today, this motion is very important that we stand together. I respect that we are parking the politics and hopefully we are all standing together for what matters for this Province.

This is one simple message to Ottawa: We are not going away. We want fairness. We want equity.

Thank you for your time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader, moving adjournment.

MR. KING: Normally, the Speaker does that on Private Members' Day.

Let me say before I conclude, Mr. Speaker, I appear to have offended our Fisheries Minister when I talked about listening to the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace and listening to the Member for The Straits – White Bay North and the Member for The Isles of Notre Dame. I also did listen to the Fisheries Minister and the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi when they spoke, so let me clarify that.

AN HON. MEMBER: The Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace (inaudible).

AN HON. MEMBER: He is setting the record straight.

MR. KING: Maybe.

That being said, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, the House do now adjourn.

MR. SPEAKER: I accept the Government House Leader's longwinded motion for adjournment.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

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