



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FORTY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

---

Volume XLVII

THIRD SESSION

Number 65

---

HANSARD

*Speaker: Honourable Wade Verge, MHA*

Monday

March 23, 2015

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

Today we are pleased to welcome to the public gallery a gentleman by the name of Josh Hancott, a world record holder in powerlifting. Josh is from Torbay, and I believe he will be the subject of a member's statement in a little while.

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

**Statements by Members**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today we have members' statements from Members for the District of Torngat Mountains, the District of Burgeo – La Poile, the District of Cape St. Francis, the District of Bellevue, the District of Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune, and the District of Baie Verte – Springdale.

The hon. the Member for the District of Torngat Mountains.

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

I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate the organizers and athletes who participated in the 2015 Winter Sportsmeet in Rigolet on the weekend of March 6 to March 8.

This Sportsmeet brings together athletes from the five Inuit communities of Rigolet, Postville, Makkovik, Hopedale, and Nain, as well as the Innu community of Natuashish. They participate in such sports as cross-country skiing, badminton, ball hockey, and a number of traditional native games like snowshoeing, leg wrestling, and the famous owl hop.

The Sportsmeet can become a family affair, as we saw this year, with three members of the Dyson family from Makkovik participating in many of the events.

I especially want to congratulate the team from Makkovik who finished first overall and was recognized as the most sportsmanlike team at the meet.

Makkovik will now attend the regional championships for badminton and will hopefully persevere to go on to the provincial championships.

I would also like to congratulate Mandy Smith of Makkovik who was the recipient of the individual sportsmanship award.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating the organizers and athletes who participated in the 2015 Winter Sportsmeet.

Well done, Rigolet!

Thank you.

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

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

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

I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Port aux Basques YBC Girls Bantam Team on winning gold at the provincial YBC tournament held at Port aux Basques on February 21.

The four-girl team initially competed in a three-team tournament at the zone competitions in Corner Brook on February 7. They captured gold at that competition which earned them the right to compete in the provincials.

I had the pleasure of attending the opening ceremonies for this tournament and watching some of the games. The excitement and enthusiasm at the Bruce II during this competition was exhilarating. The Port aux Basques YBC did a first-class job of hosting this event.

The girls will now be representing Newfoundland and Labrador at the national competition in Oshawa, Ontario on May 2 to the 4. They are extremely excited to compete at this level and are really looking forward to the trip.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in extending congratulations to the Port aux Basques girl's bantams, Leah Leamon, Ashley Ingram, Chloe Buttery, and Emma King and their coach, Carla Buttery on winning gold

at the provincial YBC tournament and wish them well at the Nationals.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize a world record holder, Josh Hancott.

Mr. Speaker, Josh recently represented our Province, and the entire country at the Arnold Sports Festival in Columbus, Ohio, where he competed against the best power lifters in the world.

He broke four world records: he hit a squat of 573 pounds, breaking the World Record for both Open and Junior Divisions; he bench pressed 374 pounds, breaking the World Junior Record; he broke the World Junior Record total, setting it now at 1,520 pounds!

Overall, at this event, Josh won gold medal for the 74 Kilogram Open and Junior Division; he also won the Best Junior Award.

On top of all this, Josh lifted his way to the status of world champion in his weight class at the International Powerlifting Federation Championships in South Africa last June.

He is also a full-time fourth year Business Major at Memorial University.

He started lifting in his teens; to have broken as many records as he has, it takes great discipline and focus.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join with me in wishing Josh all the best as he competes at the national competition here in April in St. John's.

Thank you very much.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Should the Sergeant-at-Arms need backup, Josh, we will call on you.

The hon. the Member for the District of Bellevue.

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

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

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize Evan Newhook who has been designated as this year's Purple Day Ambassador. Each year, Epilepsy Newfoundland and Labrador chooses one individual as an ambassador for epilepsy in our Province.

Evan is nine years old and is from Dildo. He is the son of Lisa and William Newhook. Because his mother, Lisa, was diagnosed with epilepsy, Evan began to raise money for this disease at an early age.

Several responsibilities of this young boy include: going to each class in his school to inform students about epilepsy. Another project which Evan has undertaken is the creation of a bookmark about epilepsy. Evan wrote all the information and illustrations himself, and these bookmarks are now being sold with the proceeds going to epilepsy research.

March is Epilepsy Awareness Month and on March 26, Evan is requesting that we all wear purple to show our support. He will also be doing an interview this week with KIXX Country to promote epilepsy awareness.

I ask all members of this House to recognize Evan Newhook for his important role as the Purple Day Ambassador, and wish him all the success in his new role.

Thank you.

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

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

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

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

I rise in this hon. House to recognize the outstanding community service provided by the St. Ignatius Knights of Columbus Council 13763. Last year at the Knights' ninety-sixth State Convention, Grand Knight Kevin Organ was extremely proud to accept the Supreme Council Family Award.

I am honoured to extend congratulations to our Knights for also receiving first place in the categories of Family and Council and second place for Culture and Community at the provincial level. Their dedication and outstanding citizenship is also evidenced by their recent accomplishment of being granted Fourth Degree Assembly status.

I commend these individuals for the care and commitment they dedicate to improving the lives of everyone in their community. We thank them wholeheartedly for all their activities, such as organizing family days; working the barbecue during local fundraising efforts; holding dances for local teenagers to raise money for a new playground; and an ice resurfer for the arena; working with youth for drug and alcohol awareness; holding speak-outs – the list is endless.

I ask that all hon. members join me in congratulating these dedicated men for their outstanding service to their community, and I encourage them to keep up the fantastic work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

I rise with great pride to congratulate H. Norman and Sons upon its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Established in 1914, Herbert started his career with H.L. Strong on Little Bay Islands and moved to Woodstock to help them set up a business, purchasing flake-dried salt cod from local fishermen. This led to the opening of his

general store that serviced the surrounding communities.

At the beginning of the year, fishermen were given credit to purchase fishing gear and salt, and in the fall they would sell their salted cod to Mr. Norman and settle their account at his store. The Normans would then pack the fish and ship it to St. John's, where it was sold to city merchants. Over the years, the business grew to include a cannery which canned local salmon, a cod liver oil factory, and homemade ice cream using iceberg ice.

After the passing of Herbert in 1943, ownership was kept in the family. Wayne, his grandson, along with his wife, Evelina, has been operating business for the past thirty-five years.

I ask all members in this hon. House to convey congratulations to H. Norman and Sons, and wish the family well in their retirement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

#### Statements by Ministers

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development.

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize March 23-29 as Unplug and Play Week, and to challenge Newfoundland and Labrador families to take the pledge and unplug and play for at least sixty minutes a day.

Research shows that the majority of young people in Canada are not getting enough physical activity on a daily basis. We live in a world where many of our young people have access to computer games, television, and various electronic devices – with the average Canadian child spending close to eight hours a day in front of a screen. We need to change that.

Mr. Speaker, as a government we recognize the need to encourage young people to get out from

behind these screens on a regular basis, to get up and get moving, playing, and involved in a more healthy, active lifestyle. This past January, the provincial government announced a partnership with ParticipACTION in its new *Make Room for Play* campaign, which calls on Canadian families to step away from their screens to encourage more active play.

Mr. Speaker, some people probably have seen our screen ads, that just being one part of the overall plan, Mr. Speaker.

*Unplug and Play* is a continuation of the *Make Room for Play* campaign, and is another great reminder of how important it is not only for young people but for entire families to put down their electronics for at least sixty minutes a day and get outside for some physical activity. There are some great resources available online at [www.participaction.com](http://www.participaction.com) that will help families and encourage participation in this fun and worthwhile initiative.

Mr. Speaker, we all know life can get busy, but I sincerely believe that monitoring our young people's screen time and replacing it with physical activity is essential for healthy development.

With the support of the Province's sport and recreation partners, the community, organizations like ParticipACTION and, most importantly, parents, I believe we can help our young people get moving. Efforts such as Unplug and Play Week will help develop active, healthy lifestyles and habits that will serve them well throughout their lives.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

**MR. HILLIER:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement and congratulate the minister for promoting physical activity, something that we certainly need to focus on here in our Province.

Mr. Speaker, ParticipACTION, Unplug and Play, Nutrition Month, Make Room for Play,

these are catchphrases that have to be sustainable. We have to be able to measure their outcomes.

Take ParticipACTION for an example; ParticipACTION came into effect when I was at university doing my physical education degree. That is forty-five years ago. The people who ParticipACTION was aimed at are the same people that the Conference Board of Canada talked about in February as suffering from lifestyle diseases. That is what I mean by these programs need to be sustainable and need to be effective.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and talk about failures in government and so on, but I am not going to. We have an epidemic here. We have an epidemic in this Province that needs leadership to solve. We are the forty-eight people in this Province who can step up and do it.

We have people on the opposite side who –

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

**MR. HILLIER:** I challenge people –

**MR. SPEAKER:** I remind the member his speaking time has expired.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement.

This is a great initiative. We all know how difficult it is when we are all plugged in all the time. I know that all of us in this House feel it; however, awareness campaigns are not enough. Government must support the need for more time for real physical education programs and extracurricular sports in the schools and government must allocate resources necessary to make this happen. The well-being of our children and our communities depend on this so children and families can plug in to what is

actually good for them, and this would be good for the economy, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

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

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

I rise in this hon. House to recognize our government's continuing contribution to the future of the fish harvesting sector in our Province. As many know, the Fisheries Technology and New Opportunities Program provides funding to support innovation in the seafood industry and has fostered growth for a number of years.

Mr. Speaker, since its inception in 2007, this program has invested an impressive total of approximately \$13.4 million towards innovative projects in the seafood industry and I would like to draw attention to how this program has specifically benefited harvesters.

In support of the harvesting sector, the program has helped enable such endeavours as research for under-utilized species development, gear assessment and testing of trawls that reduce seabed impact and improve fuel efficiency, underwater camera research to monitor fish behaviour, development of an on vessel whelk sorting technology and various projects related to resource sustainability and occupational safety.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to highlight that one-third of all projects undertaken through the Fisheries Technology and New Opportunities Program has benefited the harvesting sector directly. Specifically, \$4.6 million or 34 per cent of all funding under this program has supported harvesting projects.

The program has also supported the development of a great deal of work undertaken by the Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation as well as the Marine Institute's Centre for Sustainable Aquatic Resources in co-operation

with harvesters. Through co-operation and collaboration between harvesters and academia, valuable research is being undertaken and shared for the benefit of the entire industry.

The seafood industry continues to be an important economic driver providing employment in more than 400 communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, providing funding support to processors and harvesters encourages innovation and the pursuit of new opportunities. Our government is proud of the great work that has been accomplished through the Fisheries Technology and New Opportunities Program and will continue to work with all of our partners to strengthen our world-class seafood industry and to support continued economic and social benefits for all the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. SLADE:** I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement.

It seems this government never tires of trying to defend its FTNOP. Innovations in our fisheries sector is most certainly needed; but, several reports, including one by government, have concluded that improvements are required in promoting the program to the small harvesters and producers, as there is no concluding evidence that the program provides equal benefits to the majority of the boats in the inshore fishing section. Government's own reports also conclude that FTNOP is not suited to support a fishing transition from shellfish to groundfish.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the government not to rest on its laurels but to get active in trying to improve this program to meet the needs of those who want to get back into the groundfish business, and ensure that FTNOP benefits not just one-third of the harvesters but at least half. I also suggest that there is little use of innovation

if we cannot market our fish. We know government has a lot of work to do on that file.

Good work, Mr. Minister, but when it comes to our fishing industry, we need to do better than good; we need outstanding.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. I applaud government's efforts to support innovation and the pursuit of new opportunities in the Province's fishery, our largest sustainable natural resource. I am very glad to hear what has been done for the harvesting sector. I know there is more that needs to be done.

I look forward to hearing another statement from the minister on how the other 66 per cent of the programs funding was spent on helping processors. I cannot sit down without reminding the minister once again that one of the best ways this government could best help the fishing industry is by developing a viable provincial seafood marketing plan so long overdue.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate three principals from Newfoundland and Labrador who were recently honoured at the eleventh annual Canada's Outstanding Principals Gala in Toronto.

This year's winners will join eighteen others from our Province who have been recognized since 2005. The winners for 2015 are Elizabeth Churchill of Elizabeth Park Elementary in

Paradise, Della Healey of Mount Pearl Intermediate, and Wilson Warren of All Saints All-Grade school in Grey River.

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

**MS SULLIVAN:** These individuals have all created a safe and caring school environment allowing their students to grow and achieve their highest potential, while providing the guidance and leadership their teachers, staff, and parents depend on. They truly embody leadership, creativity, and innovation.

Mr. Speaker, the Outstanding Principals Awards are sponsored annually by The Learning Partnership, a national organization dedication to strong public education systems. Each year the awards recognize forty principals who have demonstrated innovation, have an entrepreneurial spirit, and are creative in finding solutions and opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, a strong principal is the key to an active and engaged school community. Principals set the tone for the school, provide direction for staff, and ensure our students receive a quality education in safe and nurturing learning environments.

Being named as one of this country's outstanding principals is a testament to leadership and administrative skills, commitment to the school community, and a desire to make a difference.

We are fortunate to have so many dedicated principals and teachers working at schools throughout Newfoundland and Labrador who take the time to nurture and inspire our students.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating this year's winners. They have the qualities of leadership and innovation that influence the lives of young people and the school community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

**MR. KIRBY:** Thanks to the minister for an advance copy of her statement. I would also like to congratulate Ms Churchill, Ms Healey, and Mr. Warren on this recognition. We are fortunate for their dedication to their students and their schools, and we are also fortunate to have so many dedicated principals in our schools as we are to have dedicated teachers; but, we are less fortunate to have a government that is unable to provide proper school facilities for our students and teachers, especially on the Northeast Avalon in communities like Paradise, Portugal Cove-St. Phillips and Torbay.

It is unfortunate that, for example, this government decided to push ahead and tender for the construction of a Grade 5-7 school in Torbay after the school board changed Torbay's new school to a 5-8 school. It is also unfortunate this government appears completely oblivious to school board decisions such as that one.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the minister had the time to do homework on the weekend on this because if they keep building schools smaller and smaller, teachers will have to have confined-space training added to their professional development days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I too, thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement.

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

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

**MS MICHAEL:** I am also delighted to stand and congratulate three more wonderful principals from this Province –

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

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

**MS MICHAEL:** – receiving this national award, this award which recognizes the many roles of principals in providing a nurturing environment for students and guidance for teachers, staff, and parents. We have so many in the Province who do that, Mr. Speaker.

In order to ensure high-quality administration in our schools, it is important that principals, vice-principals, and teachers have the backup they need, including enough support staff. We now know that principals are doing work that secretaries used to do before the staff cuts. That is not fair to anyone in the school environment, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral Questions.

#### Oral Questions

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

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

This weekend a fire destroyed a crab processing plant in Cottlesville on New World Island. It was the economic driver in the area, with over 150 people expected to start work next month.

I ask the Premier: What is the government prepared to do to help those people in this area who are affected by this fire?

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

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

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

I was shocked, as most people were, this morning to learn of the disaster that impacts that entire region, not only Cottlesville but the people in that region. We know there are a large number of citizens in a broad ranging area who depend on that facility for employment for themselves and to provide employment to their families as well.



I can tell you, between the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture and also the Minister of Natural Resources, the MHA for the area as well, we have already had discussions. The MHA and I have had a couple of conversations now as well. We are assessing the circumstances there, Mr. Speaker, the impact it is going to create, and we will be responding to the people in that area.

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

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

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

Well, I am certainly happy to hear that, but I would encourage the Premier to be very responsive. As we know, many of the people in that area right now will be without EI benefits shortly. So a fast and appropriate response, I believe, is what is required.

Mr. Speaker, on December 11, government finalized the Public Service Pension Plan reform. As part of this plan, a board of corporation is supposed to be set up and running, fourteen members, by April 1.

I ask the Premier: Given that this is really just one week away from the deadline, why is it taking so long to put this board in place?

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** Mr. Speaker, as a part of that process, there are two boards that were put in place. The first one is already in place; representatives of both the employee groups and the employers are represented there. The other one, the trustee board, is in the process of being put in place as we speak. Some members have been identified and will be appointed to that board, all at the same time.

The operative thing that the member raised is that it needs to be in place by April 1. It is not April 1 yet. That board will be up and running before the end of the month.

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

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

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

The Supreme Court documents show that since December, there has been ten claims filed against Humber Valley Paving or subsidiary companies.

I ask the Premier: Has there been any claims against the \$1.18 million holdback?

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

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

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

As I noted in the House previously, the mechanics' lien is still in place. We are in the process now of encouraging people to make those claims. We are working with the court system to identify the best process so that people who have a legitimate claim against that contract will be reimbursed for those claims, Mr. Speaker.

This process is unfolding. Over the next couple of weeks, I will have something to announce in the House of Assembly about the full end of that process.

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.

Just for clarification to the minister, is he saying that there are no claims against the \$1.18 million from any company at all?

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

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

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

No, that is not what I am saying. What I am saying is that there is a process in place. We have identified that there are a number of claims that have gone through the court system.

We have had a number of companies that have contacted the government. We are in the process, through my department, to identify which one of those claims are directly connected to that contract with Humber Valley Paving. Some, as we have identified, are related to other contracts that have nothing to do with this particular mechanics' lien.

As we have encouraged people to go through the court system, file their claims – as we fold out exactly what it is going to be, the process we will use with the court system, we will then be in a better place to be able to outline exactly who is entitled to what money and how those payments will take place.

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.

The Auditor General made five recommendations from his review of the Humber Valley Paving contract.

I ask the Premier: Have all those five recommendations been fully implemented?

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

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

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

Out of the five, four were related directly to Transportation and Works. All four of those recommendations either have been implemented or there is a process being put in place to actually address those issues. A response was put back to the Auditor General and we have received favourable response from that.

The fifth recommendation is relevant to a budgetary process and that is going through a line process there. So everything is in place to satisfy the Auditor General.

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.

Recommendation 4 of those five protocols was basically – it just really simply said, “Departments should ensure that normal protocols are followed when dealing with sensitive matters.” It would lead people to believe that there was something abnormal before, but I think we all know that.

I ask the Premier: Will you please table a copy of the protocol that your minister just spoke about?

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

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

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

As I mentioned, we have gone back to the Auditor General and outlined exactly what our process will be that we are putting in place. We are finalizing certain parts of those elements to make sure that the industry is aware of it, that our legal department understands exactly, and outlines exactly the best process to protect the taxpayers of this Province and to protect those subcontractors in any contract we put out.

Mr. Speaker, when everything is in place, I will be ready to table it in this House.

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.

I remind the Premier and the minister that Recommendation 4 does not really require a legal opinion because it goes on to say, “Deputy Ministers should not assume that a Minister will convey sensitive information in a timely manner.”

If the protocol is in place to prevent that from happening, why will you not table it in this House?

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

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

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

As I noted, the protocol process is in place. We are reviewing everything to make sure – we are probably going to go a bit further than what the Auditor General has asked for. We want to make sure that the people are protected in this Province and that those contracts that we have in place are very clear for the subcontractors and the main contractor, the general contractor, to ensure that any monies owed to individuals, the process is in place to do it and that the process used making decisions around that is very clear to everybody involved.

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.

Well, if the minister is prepared to go further as he said, why doesn't he just go far enough and table a copy of the protocol that he says is in place?

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** Well, Mr. Speaker, because of this process and how it unfolded, we have learned that we want to make sure that we have the best protocol in place and we cover every

element of everything we do in contracts. What we are doing here is putting a second lens on it; we are taking a second look.

We respect what the Auditor General has said but we want to take it to the next level and make sure that everything that should be covered in these contracts and the protocol is covered, Mr. Speaker, and that is what we will be doing. When the time is right, I will be tabling exactly the protocol.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, our office received a copy of the functional plan for the new regional hospital for Corner Brook. On page 11 it states that the report includes final direction from the department and the health board. In the media recently the minister stated that he is not prepared to meet with the health care action committee until he receives the final functional plan.

I ask the minister: That copy of the report we received, is it the final revision of the functional plan for the new hospital in Corner Brook?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, I have to let the member know that I am not physic. I have not seen the document he has, but I can say that it is not the final functional plan. The plan has not been finalized. It is very close to being final. We had some final pieces that we have been working on over the last number of weeks, and I suspect in the next number of weeks we will be in a position to publicly release the final functional plan. I have no idea what document the member has, but if he wants to share it I would be happy to review it.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, it is amazing that we get this Freedom of Information from the Department of Health, and you are saying that you have not seen a copy of this report? You wonder why the people in Corner Brook were astonished with the delays, Mr. Speaker.

Apparently you have a teleconference Thursday night with the action committee in Corner Brook.

I ask the minister: Will they have a copy of the final functional plan, as you committed in November, as your executive assistant committed to the group just two days ago?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Member for the Bay of Islands acknowledges that I am in ongoing discussions with the citizens committee in Corner Brook.

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

**MR. KENT:** In fact, I have made it quite clear to the leadership of that committee that on my very next visit to Corner Brook I will be happy to sit down with them again, as I did in December. Once we have a final functional plan, I will be happy to meet with the committee and anybody else on the West Coast who is interested in talking more about it to discuss the implications of that final functional plan.

At this point, the plan is still in draft form. Work is ongoing with Stantec, the consultant who is working on that plan, but I do anticipate that it will be finalized very soon.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** I will go up to the office and get a copy for the minister because he is in the dark about the new hospital in Corner Brook.

In the words it says the final, the final, Mr. Speaker, and I am astonished that the minister – and I wonder why the people out in Corner Brook has no confidence in this government.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the government; the government committed to restart a long-term care facility in Corner Brook this summer.

I ask the minister: When will construction begin, and what is the expected date of the construction of this long-term care facility?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, we have long-term care needs that must be addressed not only in the Western region but in other regions of the Province as well. That is a high priority for our department.

Our commitment to the people of the West Coast was to commence construction on a brand new, long-term care facility in 2015. We will follow through on that commitment, Mr. Speaker. There has been no change to that plan, and we look forward to seeing construction start on the long-term care facility in 2015.

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

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

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

The Minister of Transportation confirmed that the announcement of a new ferry vessel being built in Romania, that tariffs were included in the \$51 million cost. If the federal government does not waive the \$25 million in tariffs, the contract bid for the two ferries will not be the lowest cost bids.

I ask the minister: Do you have a commitment that the tariffs will be forgiven and, if not, will you include \$25 million in the upcoming Budget to cover those costs?

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

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

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

We had a very in-depth process when we went to the market to find out what kind of vessels we needed to service the people of Fogo Island, Change Islands, and Bell Island.

We went through that process and it was determined that Damen Shipyards would supply the best vessels that we needed to be able to service people, with the ice class we needed, and with the horsepower that we also needed, Mr. Speaker.

Built into that, and I have noted it publicly, that there is a tariff because we do not have a trade deal with Europe, as part of the process. My officials have made application to the federal government. I have had conversations. We have outlined exactly where the precedent has been set. We have outlined some nuances why we feel Newfoundland and Labrador are entitled to have the tariffs eliminated.

Mr. Speaker, we will watch and see how that unfolds; but while that is happening, my officials are talking to the federal officials, and in the new year we will then determine exactly where we are (inaudible) –

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

I remind the member his time is expired.

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

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Many months later and the tariffs are still not waived.

Mr. Speaker, there has only been one exception where the federal government waived the tariff, and that was to purchase an existing vessel to quickly replace a sunken ferry. The federal government has never waived tariffs for newly-built ferries similar to those purchased for this Province.

I ask the minister: You still do not have a commitment that these tariffs are going to be

waived, and I ask him why. Why are you still telling the people of this Province that those tariffs are going to be waived, included in this year's Budget?

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

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

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

I will reiterate, we are going to get the best product for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador –

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** – with the best return on our investment, Mr. Speaker. That is what this exercise was all about: to finalize that process.

What I will tell you, there is a process, a federal process, where you make application, you make and outline your argument. We feel that we have very strong arguments as to why these tariffs should be eliminated from the ships that enter our waters.

Mr. Speaker, we will go through this process. I have taken a lead with the federal minister and I have taken a lead with the association of Canadian ferry operators, and we are moving this process forward. Over the next number of months, I will have more to report to the House of Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we learned from this weekend's *The Telegram* that in November of 2014, the former Minister of Service NL called for an external investigation into possible security breaches at the Office of the Chief Information Officer. This followed an incident report submitted by a former employee. The external

investigation was apparently conducted by EWA-Canada Ltd.

I ask the minister: When will this report be released to the public?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Office of the Chief Information Officer.

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** I am delighted he learned about it on the weekend, since it is news that broke the fall. However, the report itself and the critique will be released publicly before the week is out.

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

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

**MR. LANE:** Mr. Speaker, playing fast and loose with the facts is disturbing. This particular incident was reported and according to the newspaper the incident report was acknowledged, but it just sat there. For a full week, no one did anything.

I ask the minister: Is this a standard protocol? What procedures are in place to protect the information that flows through your office?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for the OCIO.

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** Before the member opposite gets all exercised and excited over what might or might not be in a report, why doesn't he wait until he sees the report? This was a renowned organization that came in and did a review. I think the member opposite and the people in the public will find it interesting when they read the report and the critique that was done.

Let me be assuring the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, the excitement expressed by the member opposite and the fears expressed, when they read the report, they will find it is all for nothing.

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

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

**MR. LANE:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, back to my question. The other issue that we have here, as I said, is that this breach was reported, and it sat there in the department for a full week before any action whatsoever was taken.

I ask once again: Is this standard protocol? What procedures are in place to protect the information that flows through the minister's office?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister Responsible for the OCIO.

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** Mr. Speaker, again, we have the member asking questions that are hypothetical. He read a report in *The Telegram* this past weekend. There was a story that broke five months ago, he is only now catching up on it, and he assumes it is all gospel. He assumes it is actually accurate.

Let me tell him and other people, why don't you wait until the report comes out and you will find that this critique that was done, this evaluation that was done –

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** – will assure the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that there are protocols in place. Any time there is a breach of confidentiality –

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** – and there is information that gets released, there is a protocol in place to deal with that. I think this report will show that the Office of the Chief Information Officer has mechanisms in place. There are some recommendations that have been made that have been implemented to improve the system.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, on March 12, Eastern Health released an audit report of their lab medicine program. They noted five key recommendations in the release. What they did not note was on the last page in the last paragraph of the report it stated that there was an issue with low morale and trust within the lab. It required immediate attention.

I ask the minister: It was not mentioned in the release and it was not mentioned at the news conference; do you think by covering up or ignoring the issue it will go away?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, at Eastern Health and within all our regional health authorities we have an accreditation process in place to ensure that all testing practices are both sound and accurate. In this case, the quality assurance procedures within our regional health authority worked as they should and they identified a problem that needed to be addressed. At no time has there been any issues identified related to patient safety.

There are concerns in the pathology lab. That is exactly why we brought in the University Health Network. Eastern Health has a comprehensive plan in place to make changes at that lab to ensure the concerns the member is raising are in fact addressed.

The University Health Network has been engaged and progress is being made, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, the auditor said that staff satisfaction was a critical first step in enhancing the quality and sustainability of the

lab services. The auditor said there needed to be a workplace satisfaction program for the labs. The minister has a responsibility to exercise due diligence to ensure our labs are running properly and efficiently. No one wants another Cameron inquiry.

I ask the minister: Has it been done? When will this program be fully implemented?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, my critic is raising a very important issue. It is one that I have been monitoring very closely. I am in regular communication with Eastern Health about this very issue.

Eastern Health has entered into a management contract with the University Health Network. They are providing a number of things that the member referenced: interim management oversight, educational opportunities for staff. They are instituting process improvement initiatives within the laboratory as well.

All of this work is ongoing and from the reports I have received from Eastern Health, progress is certainly being made. It is an issue that I will continue to monitor. Again, I stress that at no time have there been any issues raised related to patient safety.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, there has been several media reports in recent weeks concerning the conviction of RNC Constable Sean Kelly and the investigation that took place.

In disposing of the case, the judge questioned the appropriateness of the RNC investigating one of its own and referenced the Supreme of Canada case Wood v. Schaeffer, which states: Having the police investigate the police can create the unavoidable appearance that officers are protecting their own at the expense of impartial investigations. It is well-established in

this Province that incidents such as this are investigated by an independent police force.

I ask the Attorney General: In view of the judge's comments and the need to ensure public confidence in the RNC, will you order an independent review of this matter?

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

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

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

My understanding is that the investigation in this case was carried out by a senior officer from St. John's, not someone from the local detachment in Corner Brook, and had no connection with the individuals involved and also no connection with the council.

With regard to the request for an independent or outside investigation; Mr. Speaker, we are prepared to discuss that with the Chief of Police. He was out of town and only just got back, and when he does we expect to have a conversation with him.

Mr. Speaker, in the meantime, it is still before the court, because there are more charges coming as I understand, plus the fact that the gentleman is not yet sentenced. So we will be doing that in due course.

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

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

**MR. FLYNN:** Mr. Speaker, it recently came to our attention that a full 28 per cent of our tourism operators have been left out of the 2015 tourism guide. The tourism guide is one of the first things that a potential visitor will read when planning a trip to Newfoundland and Labrador. Today, nearly one-third of our operators are left out.

I ask the minister: Is he aware of the increasing number of tourism operators being left out of the guide, and can he explain what happened?

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

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

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

We recognize, obviously, to remain competitive in the tourism industry. We have a wonderful product here to offer Newfoundland and Labrador, but we must offer that consistency. We have ensured that with a TAP program, a Tourism Assurance Program. Over 70 per cent now have met that requirement. When operators do not meet that requirement, they would not go in the booklet; however, if they do come onside afterwards they would be added to the website, and on a go-forward basis would be in the next year's program.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. FLYNN:** Mr. Speaker, operators are advising that they have been dropped for minor things like not filling in a policy number for their insurance, even though there is no place on the forms to put that on the application. The department should have worked more closely with the tourism operators to avoid damage to their businesses.

I ask the minister: How does he propose to lessen this impact in places like Harbour Breton and Ramea, where no tourism accommodations are now listed in the guide?

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

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

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

Getting back to my point of consistency – and, of course, we have a wonderful product. The member offered a number of places around this Province that offer wonderful products and tourism; however, we must be consistent. The member brought up –



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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** If I can answer, please.

The member brought up with regard to insurance. That is something that is very important, not only for the Province but for the person who is offering that as well with regard to liabilities.

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

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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Consistency is what is important here. We want to make sure that the product that is advertised – we always talk about our advertisements as being so wonderful. The product here has to match those advertisements, and it is through these programs of consistency that we will achieve it.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, Burnt Cape Ecological Reserve is home to thirty rare plant species, including a plant found nowhere else in the world. Government itself calls Burnt Cape one of the most important botanical sites on the Island. However, government cut all interpretation at Burnt Cape resulting in environmental degradation of what is meant to be a protected area.

I ask the minister: How do you justify neglecting an ecological reserve and potential tourism driver for the Great Northern Peninsula?

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

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

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Mr. Speaker, our government is certainly committed to protecting our beautiful landscapes and our ecological sensitive landscapes as well.

With regard to Burnt Cape, we do have some oversight being provided at Pistolet Bay. We have park rangers go down there on a regular basis to make sure that things are not going on down there that should not go on. I might add, Mr. Speaker, that in all our jurisdictions, in all of our areas in the Province where we have sensitive areas that are protected by law, and these areas are protected by law, we want the citizenry of the Province to also take ownership and help protect things that are going on in that area. I have seen that time and time again right across this Province.

Mr. Speaker, we all have a responsibility to make sure we protect these areas. We take the responsibility very seriously as well, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

The Cottlesville crab plant fire has left the 150 plant workers expecting to start work next month facing serious financial difficulties.

I ask the Premier: Will he waste no more time in meeting with community leaders as government develops its plans to help the workers and the local economy that depend on the plants operation?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, it is obviously quite devastating to the Town of Cottlesville and the plant workers involved in the plant. It has been a main economic driver in the region for many, many years and certainly a difficult time for area residents.

I will say to the member opposite, we did not waste any time. I met with the mayor yesterday morning. The fire was still smoldering,

basically, when I had a good conversation with the mayor and certainly committed our support on behalf of government. I spoke with plant workers as well, Mr. Speaker, but I think we need to recognize this is early days. There are still a lot of questions and obviously a lot of concerns.

I have had discussions with the Premier, the Minister of Fisheries, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, so that we are all aware of the concerns and we will certainly work together to support the people in the region.

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

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

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

Last week a mobility-impaired client of the Province's privatized home care system went nineteen hours without care, including food, when her home care workers failed to show up.

I ask the Minister of Health and Community Services: What is he going to do about this callous failure of the privatized system?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Home Support Program provides valuable services to some of our society's most vulnerable people on a daily basis in this Province. In large part, it is a very successful program that provides high-quality excellent care.

I am unaware of the incident that the member is referring to. If she would provide the details to my office, I will surely investigate. If there is any concern around safety or service quality, then we have processes in place, through our regional health authorities, to investigate. I will ensure that happens, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I have been waiting for weeks, by the way, for the meeting that the minister is referring to. I will be happy to have that meeting set up.

Mr. Speaker, there is a policy manual on how to provide home care to people in need.

I ask the minister: What is he doing to ensure that private companies offering home care are following what is in that manual?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, the private home support providers who do great work in our system on a daily basis are monitored. There are rigorous standards in place. We have professionals working in each of our regional health authorities who are engaged in making sure that processes are followed and standards are followed.

To the issue that the member is raising, if she knows of a concern related to an individual who is in receipt of home support services, the onus is upon her, Mr. Speaker, to bring that matter forward so it can be investigated. I sit in this –

**MS MICHAEL:** (Inaudible).

**MR. KENT:** Listen to my response.

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

**MR. KENT:** I sit in this House of Assembly each and every day with the member. I was with her in person on Friday, there was no mention. If she has a concern related to safety, she has a responsibility to this House and to the constituents she represents to bring it forward.

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

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

**MS ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, Kyra Rees needs to change the gender markers on her birth certificate. It is a matter of dignity, human rights, and safety.

Our legislation requires her to have full sex reassignment surgery before she can do that. Other provinces require only a supporting letter from a physician. Kyra has launched a human rights challenge and government has chosen to fight her in court.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Will he show leadership and fix this outdated legislation?

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

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

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

Thank you for the question. It is a very good question.

Our government wants to protect all the rights of every citizen in Newfoundland and Labrador, and we think that is a fundamental priority for our government. We need to make sure that does happen.

I certainly understand that everyone does have the right to be free from discrimination, no matter of their gender, their identity, physically or otherwise. Making sure that we do the right things as a government, we look at our legislation all the time to make sure that we are doing what the people of the Province want.

We are looking at the legislation, Mr. Speaker, I let the member know opposite. In the coming days and weeks, there will be more information about exactly where we are going to go with this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The time for Question Period has expired.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** The Minister of Health, during Question Period, asked for a copy of the functional plan. I brought down a copy and it does not say draft. I have a copy for the Member for Humber West because obviously you never seen it either.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

There is no point of order.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

#### **Tabling of Documents**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Pursuant to Section 8 and Section 10 of the Public Tender Act, I hereby table reports of the Public Tender Act exceptions for the month of November 2014, as presented by the Chief Operating Officer of the Government Purchasing Agency.

Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

#### **Notices of Motion**

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Trinity – Bay de Verde.

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

I would like to introduce the following private member's resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly urge government to immediately consider terminating compensation for parliamentary secretaries.

Mr. Speaker, this motion is seconded by the Member for St. John's South.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Pursuant to Standing Order 63, the private member's resolution just entered will be the one to be debated this Wednesday.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

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

We, the citizens serviced by Curtis Hospital located in St. Anthony, Newfoundland and Labrador, petition the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and Labrador-Grenfell Health to retain the midwives and allow them to continue to perform all their duties at Curtis Hospital.

Our midwives offer services that cannot be duplicated and which cannot be replaced. The level of care they offer and the knowledge and training they have in the area of obstetrics is immense. It will be a great disservice to the people of the area if midwives are no longer able to care for the people here. Privatizing midwifery or waiting five to seven years for regulation, as stated by the government, is unacceptable. We have an operational model of midwifery here in St. Anthony that has been delivering outstanding care for over ninety years.

We urge the House of Assembly to implore the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and Labrador-Grenfell Health to preserve our midwifery services at Curtis Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to table this position in the House, signed by residents of Blue Cove, Anchor Point, Bear Cove, Savage Cove, Green Island Cove, Sandy Cove, Flower's Cove, and St. Anthony. It is a concern for families, for women who are expecting, who

received a level of care previously by having prenatal, postnatal care. For residents who are in low-risk pregnancy, the delivery and use of midwives have been proven to be the most effective means of delivery.

There has been very little action taken by the government. I would like to hear an update from the Minister of Health and Community Services, since the former Minister of Health and Community Services announced that midwifery was under review and that we would see something in a year.

Well, it has been past a year and we still have not heard anything from government as to where they are going. The focus at the time was privatizing midwifery. We certainly would like to see it in a public setting. So, I table this on behalf of my petitioners here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**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 the community of Cartwright will be a gateway to the upcoming Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve; and

WHEREAS the establishment of a National Park Reserve, a tourism demand generator, will significantly increase the potential for tourism development in all communities of southeastern Labrador; and

WHEREAS developing tourism in southeastern Labrador will contribute to the economic, social, and cultural well-being of the communities and people throughout the region;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to finalize the land transfer agreement with Parks Canada so as to allow for the establishment of the national park

in the Mealy Mountains of Labrador to occur before the 2015 tourism season.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, it is sad that I have to stand today and I have to bring a petition on the Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve. This file has been ongoing since 2007. In December when I stood, I understood shortly after that that there was an agreement signed between Parks Canada and the NunatuKavut Community Council. That was initialled. It was called a shared understanding agreement, I guess similar to an IBA.

Nothing has moved forward on this, Mr. Speaker, because they are waiting on the land transfer from the Province. As I said, it has been ongoing. Every day we see press releases and headlines going out talking about tourism and what a wonderful economic generator it is going to be. Mr. Speaker, here is an example of something that is going to really increase the rubber tire traffic. We all know that little communities need all that they can right now to help them become sustainable in some of these tough economic times.

Mr. Speaker, I am urging government to come on, if we are going to promote business and increase opportunity for communities – some of these communities are going to be dead and they are still going to be waiting for government to move. Seven years for a file and seven years waiting for a piece of land to be transferred is unacceptable.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SLADE:** 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 the local service district of Freshwater, Carbonear is expressing ongoing concerns regarding the need to make repairs to

the beach breakwater which has been severely damaged by storm waves and this has caused major concerns to the local service district of Freshwater as it pertains to fire protection and safety; and

WHEREAS this lack of repair by government constitutes a fire and safety hazard to the community since the residents could be trapped in if a fire ever took place; and

WHEREAS the damaged breakwater/roadway is also creating an environmental concern as the Atlantic Ocean has washed over the roadway and out into a freshwater pond where there are fish in that pond; and

WHEREAS this area serves as a capelin run each year which attracts a great many local residents and tourists to the site; and

WHEREAS the federal government refuses to assist with this repair as they deem there is no associated fishing activity to justify investment;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to respond to pleas from the community's residents and their legislative representative to have this breakwater structure repaired so it can once again properly protect the road infrastructure from being more severely damaged and once done, to call upon the government to repair the road.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I am here I think a little bit better than fifteen months, and many times I have stood on my feet here in this hon. House and presented this petition on behalf of the residents of Freshwater. Up until three, maybe four years ago, this road was being taken care of by the Department of Transportation. It was being taken care of by the Department of Transportation, and for whatever reason the Department of Transportation would ever decide on not doing that to this road and splitting the community into two halves, where if a fire took place that somebody could actually be caught inside of that, is absolutely amazing. I cannot believe it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as for the environment aspect of it, you have a pond there on the other side of this road that is infilling now with beach rock and everything else and its inhabitants in that pond. First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, it is about the safety of the people in Freshwater. Up to this point in time, this government has played a deaf ear to it. What they have done is shirked their responsibility to the people of Freshwater, I say, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Humber East – for St. John’s East, I am sorry.

**MR. MURPHY:** I am 500 miles closer already, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS Tordon 101 contains the chemicals 2,4-D and Picloram; and

WHEREAS the chemical Picloram is a known cancer causing carcinogen; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has banned the cosmetic use of the pesticide 2,4-D; and

WHEREAS safer alternatives are available to the provincial government for brush clearance such as manual labour, alternative competitive seeding methods, and/or the mechanical removal of brush; and

WHEREAS the provincial government is responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of its citizens;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to cease the use of chemicals covered under its own cosmetic pesticide ban and begin using safer methods of brush clearance that will not place its citizens in harm’s way.

As in duty your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, you were closer than what you think when you said I was the Member for Humber East because this petition, ironically, comes from the residents of Lark Harbour and Corner Brook area. They do have a voice as well when it comes to this issue. Of course, if you know the road down to Lark Harbour, there is a lot of brush and everything on the side of the road.

These people are susceptible, Mr. Speaker, to the use of these dangerous chemicals as much as any other region of this Province. We already know, of course, that public safety is fast becoming an issue for this government. We know the government is coming out with new ATIPPA legislation.

We already know that in that legislation, Mr. Speaker, under section 9 there is a good talk – I guess we will call it, a talk that the three members of the committee gave when it came to public health and public safety. Mr. Speaker, that would not be in the report if public health and public safety was not a concern, and I would expect that this government would respond to this petition.

We have been standing on our feet on this particular issue now for the last year and a half. If public safety and public health is indeed an issue with this government, they will address these concerns on behalf of the people who have been signing this petition and sending this in over the last couple of months and years, Mr. Speaker.

I will leave this again with the government. Public health and public safety is a concern. Hopefully, government will address it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS hundreds of residents of the Southwest Coast of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, including residents of the communities of Margaree, Fox Roost, Isle aux Morts, Burnt Islands, Rose Blanche-Harbour Le Cou, Diamond Cove and La Poile, use Route 470 on a regular basis for work, medical, educational and social reasons; and

WHEREAS there is no cellphone coverage on Route 470; and

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

WHEREAS the residents and users of Route 470 feel that the provincial government should invest in cellphone coverage for rural Newfoundland and Labrador;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the government to partner with the private sector to extend cellphone coverage along Route 470.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I present this one today on behalf of the residents of Route 470. I cannot present it on behalf of the residents of Route 480 because those petitions cannot get up over the highway due to weather. It just goes to illustrate the need for what we have. We have rough winters. We have people who are trying to drive. The weather can pick up like that and people are stuck; yet, we have no means of communication along these two major roadways.

I could talk about the economic impact that it has for people who are trying to work, especially on Route 470, the people living along these roads. If they are outside their house, they are not going to get a call from work because there is no cellphone coverage. I could talk about the people down in La Poile who are without power for the land line coverage, but, again, no cellphone coverage.

I could talk about the tourism impact that it has. We have these mobile Apps that are developed. It was brought up today again, our Department of Tourism with their ads and these Apps. The

problem is you cannot use these Apps in many places because of no cellphone coverage. We need to do something else.

Unfortunately, the department is woefully behind. They have done absolutely nothing to get themselves ready. They will not share any information to show: what are the efforts we are trying to take? What are the measures we are trying to take? They will show nothing. I have asked numerous times. I do not know what else you are supposed to do.

It is either they are not putting it out there because they do not want to, which shows their negligence, or they do not have it done, which again shows their negligence and their ignorance. We need to do something. It is a matter of life and death in many cases. Let's hope it does not come to that. We need to do more to showcase these places. We can do a lot better if we had cellphone coverage along these roadways.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS the Family Violence Intervention Court was welcomed and endorsed by all aspects of the justice system including the police, the courts, prosecutors, defence counsel, Child,

Youth and Family Services, as well as victims, offenders, community agencies and women's groups; and

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

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

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have been presenting this petition now for almost two years. The petitions keep coming to my office. Currently, I have almost 2,000 signatures yet that have not been presented in this House. I am determined to present this petition as often as I can until we do have the reinstatement of the Family Violence Intervention Court.

This government is saying that it is listening to the people of the Province. Well, every women's centre, every transition house, every group involved in violence against women has asked the government to reinstate the Family Violence Intervention Court. Every member on this side of the House has asked the government to reinstate the Family Violence Intervention Court. Not on a whim, Mr. Speaker, because the evidence shows that the court worked, and that the court protected. This is not just a program that would be nice to have. This is about people's lives, and the court protected and made the lives of women and children victims of domestic violence safer.

Mr. Speaker, there is no good reason why this court is not being reinstated. Government said because it was not Province-wide. Well, Mr. Speaker, I presented a plan, in consultation with experts in this area in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, on how it could be expanded Province-wide with very little

additional funds, working with existing infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, what would happen is that we would simply reinstate the court in St. John's, hire a court administrator-facilitator, and then use infrastructure that is in Corner Brook and in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, already existing infrastructure that is there to serve the courts, the Child, Youth and Family Services, and the police.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Trinity – Bay de Verde.

**MR. CROCKER:** 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 the road located on Green's Harbour West Side is in deplorable condition; and

WHEREAS small vehicular traffic is having difficulty travelling on this road without incurring damage; and

WHEREAS good transportation infrastructure is crucial to the stability of the community;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to improve the condition of Green's Harbour's West Side road.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is my pleasure this afternoon to stand here in my place and read in the petition on behalf of the residents of Green's Harbour. I want to make a special thank you to Mr. Vernon Simmons for his efforts in bringing this issue to light.



I have met with the Minister of Transportation on this important issue and other important issues in the District of Trinity – Bay de Verde. I do want to thank him for his time and the attention he has shown with regard to the issues facing the residents.

Mr. Speaker, last fall as we were campaigning in the district, we heard day in and day out about the poor conditions of local roads and the need for a better plan when it comes to summer maintenance. On behalf of the residents of Trinity – Bay de Verde I encourage the government to take a proactive approach to road maintenance, not a reactive one in this coming construction season.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

#### Orders of the Day

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I move to Orders of the Day, Order 1, Committee of Supply.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that the House do resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to further consider Bill 44, Interim Supply.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

#### Committee of the Whole

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

We are considering the related resolution on Bill 44, An Act For Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2016 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service.

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

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

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

Thank you very much. I get up today to review the Budget of last year and to look at what government likes to tout as being the great fiscal managers but I think, increasingly, the people of this Province is seeing that government really has an inability to manage our resources in this Province.

When I was here on Thursday, the Minister of Transportation and Works stood up to state very proudly, waving his papers, how much money was spent in Humber East in the schools. I think it really shows the minister's arrogance in that that is his job to provide services to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Because guess what, Mr. Chair? Mr. Minister has that responsibility to look after every resident in this Province, regardless of what district they live in. Believe it or not, the people of Humber East pay taxes the same as any other district in this Province, so they do deserve the service as much as any other person in the Province.

While we are talking about the schools, let's talk about Corner Brook Intermediate School which is now eight months past its opening date, and we really should be looking at this whole series of false dates being given, false expectations given to the people of the Province. I would be ashamed, as a minister, if I had to really cram people into G.C. Rowe school in the small space that they have because of the poor planning and not being able to open the school as promised to the people in Corner Brook.

Then, if you move to health, we have cut 100 beds from the long-term care for the people in Corner Brook. Is this really being fair? As I walked from door to door in Humber East over the past number of months, seniors are stressed by the fact that we do not know what is coming

next. I think the people of the West Coast really deserve some straightforward answers. Listen – when is the hospital going to start construction, when is the school finished, and stop misleading the people with false dates.

The Member for Bay of Islands has spoken passionately about the construction of the new hospital for Corner Brook and the struggles that the people have endured to keep this project on the front burner. I will add that through all of this, the Member for Bay of Islands has done a superb job, along with our leader, Dwight Ball, in keeping this to the forefront –

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

**MR. FLYNN:** – not for the people of Corner Brook but for the people of the West Coast, because this is going to be a regional job.

During that time, when oil was at its highest in selling prices, we should have seen at that point the commitment that you made to the people of Corner Brook, and that that hospital should be started now and the steel should be in the ground now, and we really should be looking forward to an opening of a hospital that was promised some almost ten years ago.

Shame on this government for that. It has been endless excuses and endless delays where people are forced to come out into public meetings and not one being called by government, either, mind you. It has been people who have lobbied for this long and hard. I only wish, sometimes, that the cameras would go to the back of the hospital and see the crumbling infrastructure and the falling cement from some of the buildings on the back, because it is truly an example of why that facility needs to be replaced. I think this is an example of fiscal mismanagement that you have put before the people of this Province.

Some time ago we learned, a couple of months ago, that we were going to go from thirteen obstetrics beds down to six. I have gone in and I have spoken to some of the people on the front lines, some of the doctors and some of the nurses, and they are saying that it is not enough. So, what am I to do now, Mr. Chair? Am I going to go back and advise all the couples on the West Coast when you plan to have a child – just think about it now before you have sex

tonight, that when you plan to have a child, you should really book your bed at the hospital first, because I think that is what we are putting the people down to. We all have to realize that having children is not necessary like planning for a holiday, Mr. Chair.

Since 2007, the West Coast has been misled. They have been promised a hospital. I think the minister has to, hopefully, go out very soon and meet with the action committee on the West Coast to take a serious look at and give them an honest answer of when this is going to be done. Because the only thing we have heard every time there has been a by-election or election, is just that the hospital is going to start.

The government has spoken numerous times about diversification of the economy. Well, after a decade and more of being in power, I believe this government needs to tell the people of Newfoundland and Labrador how well they have done on this score. During a time of unprecedented wealth coming to our Province, we have to ask, did this diversification actually happen? We have to ask, are we better off today than we were ten years ago?

I think the greatest threats we have as a Province is the loss of our human resources to provinces like Alberta, Ontario, and so on. What really surprises me – even though as a government we preach that we are serious about rural economic development. I had spoken to a senior bureaucrat some time back and I said to them, what in the name is the Province going to do when we have lost so much of our fishing interests?

At that time the senior bureaucrat said to me, there are two options. One is we can do the resettlement like we did in the 1960s and physically take the house and move it to another cove; or, we will let it die a natural death, which meant that our young people would leave the community, the school would close, the post office would close, the churches would close, and finally, you would have to move out.

Members across the House can laugh, but in actual fact that is what is happening if we can get out. It is unfortunate that this has happened, because without consideration, without consultation this government took away every

bit of funding that the rural economic boards had to put support and plans in place for economic diversification. Mr. Chair, it is clear to me that the direction this government has taken is to leave rural Newfoundland and Labrador to die a natural death.

At the recent pre-budget consultations in Corner Brook, the Chair of the session, who happened to be Minister Crummell, was told by representatives from the greater Corner Brook Board of Trade that regions outside of the Avalon Peninsula, especially the West Coast, have not enjoyed a fair share of the benefits from the royal resources that were infused into our economy over the past decade. After unprecedented wealth, I have to ask: How much better are we off now? Certainly, on the West Coast and other regions of the Province, we can see where there is a deficit.

This government has taken – unlike Texas, I guess we could call it, who looked at the oil from the ground. We have looked at oil from the bottom of the sea. What we have taken is our oil from the sea, but we have really wasted almost \$20 billion into projects as we go across the Province and we see very little benefits from it.

It is amazing that the second largest city in the Province, not the minister going out to the West Coast, but he sent one of his junior ministers after he cancelled the meeting there. I think it is a little bit surprising that you would see such representation sent to our second largest city in the Province and sending the junior minister there.

Mr. Chair, I could continue, but I look up and I see my time is expired. I think I have highlighted a few of the activities where I think this government certainly lacked in the past ten years.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

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

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

It is interesting, as I listened to the Member for Humber East talk about the woes of the West Coast and how this government has not treated the West Coast well, and that the West Coast and other parts of the Province have not veered well from the prosperity that we have enjoyed in the last ten years. I have to wonder where the member has been.

I know he is not originally from the West Coast. He is originally from Labrador, but he has been on the West Coast and had an exposure to the West Coast and other parts of Newfoundland and Labrador long enough to realize that in the last ten years – if you just think about it for a moment. In the last ten years, when he says that we, meaning the people on the West Coast and other parts of the Province, have not gotten any value and benefit from the prosperity that we have enjoyed as a result of increased revenues from oil and gas.

I ask the member, and I ask the members of this House, if you consider what we have invested in the last ten years – for example, let's take infrastructure. When we made significant investments in long-term care in Corner Brook and the West Coast, where do you think that money came from? When the people of Newfoundland and Labrador have enjoyed what has amounted to about \$700 million on an annual basis in tax reductions –

**MR. JOYCE:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** A point of order, the hon. the Member for Bay of Islands.

**MR. JOYCE:** I will just let the minister know that you were a Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health when you cut 100 beds in a long-term care facility and there are people who still cannot stay in Corner Brook because of the decisions you made.

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

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

The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

**MR. WISEMAN:** You can always tell when you hit a nerve when members start jumping up on points of order that are not really relevant, Mr. Chair.

Let me continue. Is the Member for Humber East suggesting that the people on the West Coast did not enjoy the tax reductions that have been provided by this Administration? Is he suggesting that those tax reductions were only applicable to certain parts of Newfoundland and Labrador? Every resident of Newfoundland and Labrador got the benefit of those tax reductions.

When he drives on the roads, on the highways, is he suggesting that there has been no investment in transportation infrastructure on the West Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador? Would he suggest that there has been no investment at all on the West Coast? I mean how foolish and how ridiculous is it to suggest that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, regardless of where you live, have not benefited from some of the increased revenues we have had in the last ten years.

I am going to ask the same question that he asked. He posed a question: Are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians better off today than they were ten years ago? Absolutely yes!

He talks about \$20 billion that have been wasted. Let me tell you, I will not account for every five cents of the \$20 billion but let's take a couple of items. We have put some \$6 billion into infrastructure in Newfoundland and Labrador, building schools, building health facilities, building transportation infrastructure. That is six of the twenty.

Look at what we have done with tax reductions. That has accumulated in the last ten years to over \$3 billion. That is nine of the twenty. That is almost one half of it.

Look at what we have done with poverty reduction. When we came to power ten years ago we had one of the highest rates of childhood poverty in the entire country. We made a commitment, that was something that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians should not be proud of. That is what we inherited from a Liberal Administration, but look at what we

have done. Look what we have done in the last ten years.

Our Poverty Reduction Strategy has been touted as being the leading strategy in the entire country. We have policymakers, we have academics coming to Newfoundland and Labrador to talk with us because they want to understand how we did it. They want to learn from us when it comes to an approach to poverty reduction. Look at the data today compared to what it was ten years ago. That is another notch, that is another chunk of the \$20 billion.

I could go on, Mr. Chair; look at education. When we came to power back in 2003, individuals going to school had to pay fees, they had to pay taxes, and they had to pay their books. We have eliminated all of the taxes, all of the fees, and the cost of textbooks for all of our children going to the K-12 system. That is another chunk of the \$20 billion. That is another chunk, I say, Mr. Chair, of that \$20 billion.

We will not be long getting to the \$20 billion. I heard an echo from the other side talking about the Cameron inquiry. Do you know what the Cameron inquiry was all about? We had to call an inquiry into what was happening at testing in this Province because it was something that happened on a Liberal watch.

The issues investigated by the Cameron inquiry were not issues that happened in the health system during our watch, I say, Mr. Chair. I happened to be the minister who called that inquiry, so I will take credit for calling the inquiry.

We called the inquiry because we wanted to get to the root of the problem. We wanted to get to a better understanding of what happened with lab testing in this Province on a Liberal watch. We found out about it. We now understand it. We have made significant investments in improving diagnostic services in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We had to invest to correct a problem and a legacy of the Liberal Administration, I say, Mr. Chair. Just look at the timelines. Anybody who has ever read the report on the Cameron inquiry, look at the timelines.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. WISEMAN:** The issues that happened and the issues that were identified in that report all started before 2003 when we assumed power. Who was in power when it happened? It was the Liberal Party.

Don't stand in this House talking about and raising the Cameron inquiry as if it is some boogeyman and something that we created as the Administration. We fixed the problem. We investigated an issue, better understood it. We took some of that \$20 billion that people keep talking about and invested it in improving diagnostic services.

When members stand in this House and start talking about mismanagement of money and where did the \$20 billion go –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. WISEMAN:** It does not take long. I have only been on my feet for some six minutes and I have already accounted for \$13 billion of it.

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** The list can go on. I just started and I am only about one-third through the list of investments we have made to account for that \$20 billion.

Mr. Chair, members opposite may stand and start talking about \$20 billion. They should do their research. They should better understand what has happened in this Province over the last twenty years.

Mr. Chair, very clearly, in the last ten years, we have made some significant investments in infrastructure and significant improvements in infrastructure –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

I ask the hon. members if they have a discussion and they wish to have a discussion, if they would take it to either outside the Chamber or in a quiet area.

The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** Thank you for that protection.

Members opposite obviously get a little bit sensitive when they are criticized for their party that they are a part of today when they were in power less than fifteen years ago and the kind of mistakes that they made and the mess that they handed off to us. They are a little bit sensitive when I remind them of that reality, and they are a little bit sensitive when I remind them about the investments that we have made –

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Humber East, on a point of order.

**MR. FLYNN:** The Minister of Finance just got up a few minutes ago and he said we provide free books for every student in this Province. That is misleading the House because that is not accurate, Mr. Chair.

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

The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

**MR. WISEMAN:** Let me correct myself, Mr. Chair, all students who are in schools that are covered by the Schools Act – and I apologize if the member opposite got a little bit sensitive to my misstep or my misspeaking about those who are covered by the act.

Mr. Chair, my time is starting to run out and, no doubt, I will get a chance to stand on my feet over the course of the next few days and I will account for the other \$7 billion that we have been talking about. I do want to take the time, in my last couple of minutes here, to thank the

people of Newfoundland and Labrador who participated in the consultation process as we travelled around Newfoundland and Labrador. It was an effort by a number of Cabinet ministers who travelled to various parts of the Province to engage people in a discussion.

We had a tremendous response with our dialogue app, a number of people have signed on, provided their comments. We have received reports and submissions by a number of people and that information is available online. For those who are interested, we released on Friday past a summary of the comments we received in our survey. We did a telephone survey of some over 400 people a couple of weeks back and we asked several questions and we have posted the results of those questions online, together with the community consultations that we did.

There are a number of very specific questions we asked during those discussions and we, again, posted the responses to those questions online – interesting comments from many people, varying points of views around what government should do with the upcoming Budget, what might be a strategic response to some of the issues that are facing Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I say, Mr. Chair, I want to thank everybody for their participation in that process.

**MR. JOYCE:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** A point of order, the hon. Member for Bay of Islands.

**MR. JOYCE:** I did not want to interrupt the minister but when the minister said that we should do our research – on the radiation unit, we did do research. That is why there will be radiation in Corner Brook for the people of Western Newfoundland, Mr. Chair, because of research on this side.

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

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

The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

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

Mr. Chair, through you, I would like to speak to the people of the Province who may be tuning in today. They may be wondering why we are able to discuss such diverse subjects. It is because it is a money bill, so members will get up and speak to whatever is the area that interests them the most. In my capacity as the critic for Child, Youth and Family Services that is what I will be discussing today.

The government likes to throw around large numbers of windfall profits that came from oil revenues that they had nothing to do with generating. They are entitled to do that. There is no issue with them doing that, but the issue that I am more concerned about is how well they have done in protecting the most vulnerable people of our Province, the children of our Province.

One document that I am referring to is referred to as a minister's mandate letter. It is dated December 8, 2014, so it is just a few months ago. This is a letter from the Premier. The Premier is a former Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services. Hopefully, if time permits, I will have an opportunity to go into his sorry reputation as the minister, his sorry results as minister.

The briefing letter, or the marching orders it was referred to in the newspaper, says the Premier says to the minister: "The most fundamental responsibility of society is to ensure the safety and well-being of our most vulnerable children and youth and provide an environment for all children to grow and thrive."

Under child protection, he goes on to say: "Under your leadership, your department will continue to build the best possible child protection program and ensure a system of continuous quality improvement."

He also says: "In consultation with the Child and Youth Advocate, you will develop and introduce legislation considering the request of the Advocate regarding mandatory reporting by all department and agencies of government of deaths and critical incidents involving children and youth."

Mr. Chair, a report was provided by the Child and Youth Advocate and it is available for

people who want to read it. It chronicles the record of five separate cases under this government that the Child and Youth Advocate examined. Mr. Chair, the first one that I will refer to is called The Child Upstairs... “Joey’s” Story. The reason this is important is because this government has a policy whereby child protection workers do not actually need to see every child when they go to a home. They can go to a home on a report. The report can be from a teacher or a grandparent or the child himself or herself, something bad is happening, and the child protection –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

I remind hon. members – and this is the second time – if you want to have a private conversation, could you please take it outside the Chamber because we have other members here speaking to Bill 44.

Thank you.

The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Mr. Chair, thank you very much for that.

I do not mind the ongoing – the people listening cannot catch it on microphone that government members really are not interested in child protection. They certainly are not interested in hearing about child protection.

In the case of “Joey’s” Story, in 2006, the Child and Youth Advocate undertook the investigation after learning of a court sentence imposed on Joey’s parents for failing to provide the necessities of life. While all four children in the family were apprehended, it was Joey, the youngest, who was deemed to be in the most severe condition. Joey required hospitalization.

The Advocate went on to say, “The primary deficiencies identified in the system were: 1) non-adherence to policy or lack of policies/protocols; 2) lack of communication and collaborative practice between the stakeholders, and 3) an ambiguous records management system and lack of documentation.” In short form, most people would take that to mean they

did not know what was going on, they really did not care, and they did not talk to each other. Consequently, the children suffered.

Eight recommendations came from that. The minister has been so busy patting himself on the back that I hope he has a good chiropractor to get him straightened out because he is sure going to need it. Eight recommendations were made and five of the recommendations have been implemented.

Now, this is something that goes back to August 2011. Over that time, we have had five Ministers of Child, Youth and Family Services. The two that were not implemented, one was Recommendation No. 2, “Policy must be developed by CYFS to direct that all children in a family be critically observed during a referral and during every home visit.”

Mr. Chair, when I have spoken to regular people, parents, people who have any inclination to be concerned about a child, when you explain to them that this means a child protection worker can show up at a home on a referral, on a complaint, and the parents are going to produce some of the kids but not all the kids, then the children protection workers will have satisfied the government’s policy – if, in fact, there is a policy because the policy does not require them to see all the children individually. That child could be in the attic, could be in the basement, could be buried in the backyard, and the child protection worker would not know.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services, on a point of order.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** I understand the member has ten minutes to go on, but before he speaks about such topics, I would love to be able to give him a briefing from people in the department. He obviously has no idea he is insulting our workers, particularly our front-line workers, our social workers. Disgusting – disgusting; get your facts right.

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

The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

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

As an aside, I have been well-briefed by members of the department, and the ones I was briefed by did a good job within the resources that they have.

However, when the minister refers to a briefing, that brings me back to the issue of briefing books. The minister is still sitting on briefing books, even though after the Wells report was done I made an Access to Information request so I could receive the briefing books, because this is one of the top secret departments in government. They really do not want anybody to know what is going on. They do not want you to know the bad news, and that is probably why they could not figure out last year how many children died on their watch. They had to keep going back and checking to see how many had died, and then we were somewhere approaching three dozen dead children, and no adequate information, no adequate feedback, and the government still does not require that child protection workers see every child when they visit.

If this were not true, why would the child advocate in 2014 just a few months ago say – and this is in bold, red, highlights – “Policy must be developed by CYFS to direct that all children in a family be critically observed during a referral and during every home visit.

Mr. Chair–

**MR. S. COLLINS:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services, on a point of order.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Mr. Chair, as I pointed out in Question Period two days ago or a couple of days ago, that is underdeveloped, but right now I believe that has met those requirements. It is a matter of semantics, not of practice. Those children, youth, are being visited in the homes. So, when he says that it is completely untrue, he is making politics of it – disgusting.

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

The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

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

Actually, I am only just beginning and to let the people watching know that ultimately I will get through explaining the sorry record of this government on child protection and secrecy, and while our children are not safe under the watch of this government – and the reason I know that is because we will continually have opportunities to debate for ten-minute increments until Interim Supply has passed and all through the Budget. So one way or the other, this information will come to the people of the Province, what this government is doing, or rather not doing in child protection.

As for the government has no policy – their comments were in June, 2012 – now this is almost three years ago. The Department of Child, Youth and Family Services reported that new child protection legislation and new policies and procedures were implemented, but we are not seeing the visits. We are not seeing the guaranteed visit. Isn't every little child in every home, where there has been a complaint made to a child protection worker, entitled to see that child protection worker and show that worker the bruises, if there are bruises, malnutrition – a properly qualified worker to be able to interview that child and make sure that child even exists, is alive, because that may be the only chance for intervention in a positive way that will provide an opportunity for the child to be apprehended and properly cared by. I believe that the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador have a much higher concern and a much higher regard for our children than this government has demonstrated to date.

There are significant other issues to be pursued. The next recommendation of the eight that is not implemented whatsoever – so the minister may think that out of eight recommendations here if he does five and he gets one partly done and two not done at all, well that is kind of like getting about sixty-five or seventy on your test. That is good enough in our education system because minister will say well we give them adequate education.

We have gone from providing first-class education or excellent education to inadequate education. Now we think that when we see most of the children most of the time, that is good



enough. Mr. Chair, it simply is not good enough.

Thank you.

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

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

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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I did not plan on getting up today. I was up just a day or so ago, but after the hearing member across the way I felt I had to get up. As I had said on my point of order, I stood twice, it is absolutely disgusting to hear him play politics with such a sensitive and important issue as child protection.

It really bothers me, Mr. Chair. It particularly bothers me because I am well aware of the work that is underway in the Department of CYFS. I am well aware of the progress we made and the improvements we have made.

When we are talking about CYFS we are not talking about me as a minister, we are not talking about my deputy or my ADM; we are talking about the front-line workers. We are talking about social workers. It is particularly troubling during Social Work Month, March, when we are celebrating the great work by social workers – over 1,500 registered social workers in Newfoundland and Labrador – and this is the type of rhetoric.

As minister, I am interested in results.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible).

**MR. S. COLLINS:** If the Member for Bay of Islands would please keep his mouth shut, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Bay of Islands.

**MR. JOYCE:** I ask the minister to withdraw. Plus, it was not me who was speaking. The minister should stand up because if the Member for St. Barbe is just saying that every person

who comes to the home should be checked, should be seen physically, that is policy. That is not the social work. That is policy.

I ask the minister to withdraw his comments, please.

**MR. S. COLLINS:** I will withdraw my comments, Mr. Chair. I ask that all members across the way please pay attention while I am speaking because it is very important.

As I was saying, Mr. Chair, Social Work Month being March –

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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Again, please, Mr. Chair. If I could please have some protection, I would like to be able to finish my thoughts. As soon as they are finished I will continue.

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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will proceed if I can get by without any further interruptions.

Mr. Chair, it is very important to know the amount of work that has been going on, and you only have to look at the announcement that came out just a short time ago with regard to the recommendations made by the Child and Youth Advocate. Again, as I had said in Question Period only a few short days ago, the member opposite, my critic was nowhere to be found, and it is odd that he was nowhere to be found. It is because I believe –

**MR. J. BENNETT:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** A point of order, the hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

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

The minister keeps saying that I was nowhere to be found. In fact, if he represented a rural district and lived in a rural district like I do, he probably would not be here, but considering he lives in here and does not even bother to live in

his district, that is a good reason not to be around.

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

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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Ironically enough, unlike the member who spends a lot of time in Ontario, I spend a lot of time in my district when I am not in this House doing the people's work.

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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Do not bring up district related matters because I am sure the member does not have a great one, as will be evident in the next general election.

Anyway, I digress. I would like to be able to go back to what I was saying with regard to the –

**MR. J. BENNETT:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** A point of order, the hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** The minister is not telling the people that in fact my leader, the Leader of the Opposition, actually looked after and handled this issue. That is how important this issue is to the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition actually stood in for me when I could not be here.

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

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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Absolutely, there is no point of order. I would say they had the Leader of the Opposition do it because the inept critic is not able to handle the issues. It is oh so clear when he stands today and he speaks to those recommendations and not having the awareness of them.

I would like to go over the recommendations and the story that it was, Mr. Chair. What we had is when the Advocate released a report – it was a good report. Any time you get feedback,

obviously, it is good. With regard to the results that we have seen, I am very proud as the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services, and I would like to point out what the results of that report were. Obviously, he spoke to some of those just a short time ago.

There were 179 total, and that was across all government departments. There were ninety-nine recommendations that specifically dealt with CYFS. Of those, eighty-eight are complete. They are done, so we do not have to discuss those. There is another ten that are under development, and the Advocate has said in her report that obviously she sees the progress in those. They are considered under development. They are not considered, not done or whatever the case, but they are under development. So she sees the progress.

We have two left. Of those two, one, as the member alluded to, is with regard to all children being critically observed while a social worker is in the house. We have come to a place now – I am meeting with the Advocate tomorrow, actually. I have quarterly meetings we have set up since I have taken this position. We have met quarterly, and those have been very fruitful. I am meeting with her tomorrow. We are going to go over that. I am going to make sure that satisfies her; I believe it will. So then we are down to one.

When the member gets up and says children are being critically observed while in the house, social workers, it is clearly not true. It has always been the case – and when you talk about reports that have happened in the past, the very reason this department, the very reason I stand here as the Minister of CYFS, is the creation of the department came out of many of these reports and we saw the deficiencies. I acknowledge upfront everything in the past has not been perfect. The reason it has not been perfect, there are a number of reasons, but we are looking at addressing those. Through these recommendations and the good work that has been done, obviously, that is taking place.

With regard to that one, I had said in the House the other day that it is more to do with semantics and wording as opposed to practice. To question our social workers in saying there might be a child in the attic or a child buried in the

backyard, how disgusting, Mr. Chair, how utterly disgusting. Again, that does not insult me as minister. I am not out critically observing these children. I am not in the homes visiting the parents. It is our social workers; it is our front-line workers. So to say a comment as gross as that, I really take offence of it. I really do, I have to say.

Again, I am very happy and very pleased with the work the department has done with regard to the ninety-nine recommendations. Once we have this one figured out, and I believe we are at a place now – and I will be able to confirm after I meet with the Advocate tomorrow. I believe once we get that – there is one recommendation the Advocate considers not satisfactory with regard to the work done, and that is with regard to youth who are receiving services.

The Advocate is of the opinion that for each program the youths receive, he/she should have a separate worker. Our clinical opinions and our expertise in the department would say that they should have one worker for the continuity. We have gone back and forth with this, and I am really hopeful we will be able to meet some middle ground. Again, it is clinical decision versus clinical decision. So there are opinions, both very well informed. I respect, obviously, where the Advocate is with her thoughts.

We have ninety-eight done, I am very confident, or in progress. We have one remaining, and I am very confident. Again, we both had the same intentions. We both had the same with regard to where we want to be at the end of the day, and obviously it is with regard to the best possible care for children and youth. I think we can get past that one more.

We have a case of ninety-nine recommendations. I am very confident we are going to have 100 per cent compliance. Either they will all be done or they will be in progress to the satisfaction of the Child and Youth Advocate.

I would like to paint a picture for the public, because people watching the House of Assembly, obviously, they do not tune in perhaps every day. They do not read everything that is in the paper, or they do not know all the inner workings that happen in a department. So

it is very important we put out a picture that is accurate.

Again, I go back – and not to hark on it, but I go back to our front-line workers. We have some of the most capable people working in Child, Youth and Family Services, our front-line workers. They operate under very challenging circumstances. We talk about how stressful our jobs here in the House are as legislators, as ministers. It pales in comparison to what social workers see on a day-to-day basis.

The most vulnerable people in population, the most challenging situations, and that is what they have to work in. It is very easy for us to sit on our high horse, as the member across the way does, and criticize the day-to-day operations of the department, in particular the work done by front-line workers. I take great offence to it. I say that there is great work happening in the department and great work will continue to happen.

I understand where we were. Our government understood where we were. That is why this department was created, to address those deficiencies. When you look at the recommendations put forward by the Child and Youth Advocate, I think that speaks highly of the progress.

I hope to stand in the House in the very near future to be able to say 100 per cent compliance, either done or in progress. I think that is where we need to be. That is my goal as minister. Also my goal as minister is to support our front-line workers who, I tell you, go out of their way each and every day to do some of the most fantastic work you can possibly do. It is very challenging, but I hear it is very rewarding. I have seen it firsthand, when I have travelled the Province and spoke to our social workers.

Before you get up and preach and you tear down some credibility, I would ask any member, whether it be on either side of the House, to make sure you are well informed and what you are putting forward is particularly – you know it is fine to get political with Transportation and Works, or it is fine to get political with the fishery perhaps. People say it is full of politics, those types of departments. When you are dealing with Child, Youth and Family Services

and you are dealing with some of the most vulnerable people in society, I do not think there is any room for politics, Mr. Chair. That is all I ask from the members opposite. That is all I ask for the public. Let's remove politics from it. Let's get back to the basics.

As I said, if you look at what has happened in this department, just from the creation of the department to now, there has been some fantastic work by some fantastic people. I, as minister, will continue to stand in this House. Any time an ill word is spoken, I will stand on my feet every time to defend our front-line workers because I believe so rightly in what they do each and every day.

With that being said, Mr. Chair, I will take my seat. Thank you for the opportunity.

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

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

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

It is good to get up and talk about Bill 44 and Interim Supply again. I guess I will first start off in my remarks; my thoughts are still with the Member for Bonavista North. I think that all members of the House, our minds are still with him as well. We wish him and his family all the best as we wait for his return.

Mr. Chair, I wanted to get up on my feet today and talk a little bit about where government is potentially going to be going in the future, knowing that we have been tackled with the problem of low oil prices. I guess in that particular context for some, low oil revenues are a problem; for others, I guess it is an opportunity; others say great, prices are low.

Mr. Chair, I think I speak for all consumers out there on the consumer perspective that whenever you are dealing with low oil prices, it is a good thing. For the people who are shipping out product from this Province who know about the price of goods and services, especially with the low Canadian dollar, it makes things a little bit better on that particular end.

Things are great when it comes to low oil revenue and what it does, but we are also seeing the quick effect of the crash in low prices, the immediate drop to the provincial revenue, and it shows a problem – I cannot say that government was not cognizant of the issue, because it had to deal with a quick problem, the financial collapse in 2008. We also have a collapse of oil prices in 2001. It has been an ongoing issue. What we had, even since back at first oil in 1997, we have taken that money, we have put it into general revenue, and we have spent it. The only thing that we had to show for it was the small bit of government savings, I suppose, the \$2.3 billion that went towards the Muskrat Falls Project.

So, in some ways I guess you could say government had a little bit of money in the kitty, and other times we just took it and put it into general revenue and spent it. Some people would argue that over the last ten years, \$20 billion; I argue that from 1997 we got a lot more revenue than \$20 billion that we are dealing with in "a shortfall". It can go all the ways back to 1997 at first oil, the parties can, and ask that same question: What did we do with the oil revenue?

The big question is now what do we have to do in the future, and how are we going to address the shortfall in oil prices in the future? Because there are predictions out there as late as today. We got into this a little bit on Thursday's session; what do we do if oil prices do not come back? How do we meet the expectations of a population, or how do we meet the expectations of a growing, aging sector of our population? How do we meet the health care needs of a population if we do not have the revenue to deal with it? How do we meet our future revenue generation needs if we keep having a declining birthrate? These are the two biggest challenges right now that government has to deal with directly when it comes to population.

The second big challenge, of course, alongside the equation of the aging population and growing our population is going to be: How do we grow our revenue? How do we increase our revenue? How are we going to deal with that? These are questions, hopefully, government is going to have a policy out in the next Budget, and when the next Throne Speech comes along, that we are going to be able to stand up in this

House of Assembly and be able to talk about that. Because we have not been taking about it, as far as I am concerned.

We have not come up with any policy ideas as regards to growing population. I guess some people would say that we have tried to tackle it when it comes to throwing a \$1,000 cheque out there for people who are going to try to expand their families, that sort of thing, but we are still going to be having to maintain infrastructure, that sort of thing, when we are at a time when we are going to have declining revenue.

I just wanted to touch on the one thing about the possibility of prices not coming back. The latest story is coming out of Saudi Arabia, even the Saudis now are predicting that the price of oil will never – will never according to one story that I have been reading today – never come back over \$100 a barrel. That, for some people in the financial markets may be disturbing; but the reality is with the new ideals around producing, small-time producers, frackers, if you will, with the frackers coming into the markets, the Saudis are predicting the same thing I think I talked about with the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale the other day about the possibility that if the price of oil does increase, then we will have the frackers back online and that is going to drag the price down again.

We know how responsive the United States is to getting oil out of the ground now. We know they are ready to go and if the price of oil goes up, we know that wells are going to be back into the ground and they are going to be pumping and adding to capacity again.

We know we have issues when it comes to that. We know those are questions that are going to have to be answered by this government on how – and this is a long-term thing. Like I said, the most important questions we have to ask is future revenue generation growing the population and looking after the seams that we have here in the Province – in others words, health care and education is well connected with that. We know what has to be done.

Mr. Chair, one of the things that I was musing over last week when government was dealing with the whole question of everything was on the table. When the Premier said that, it kind of

turned my ear to the ground to hear what was happening. One of the things that I was thinking of is that possibility that government is going to be going down – the road they are trying to go down, is part privatization of some services.

I want to touch on P3s because it is something that other governments in this country have done, and to the financial demise of those particular provinces too I feel. The other day in the House of Assembly when we were talking about who was responsible for putting various governments in the hole, one of the arguments that came forth was from government and they mentioned how Bob Rae had put the Ontario government in the hole and, at the same time, Her Majesty's Opposition here was saying the same thing and all agreeing that the New Democrats put Ontario in the hole. Well, Mr. Chair, there is an Auditor General's report that came out in 2014 talking about P3s that actually had some pretty good evidence of why the Ontario government is in the shape that it is in now.

It is sad; it really is. Dalton McGuinty was the Liberal Premier at the time and he was succeeded eventually by Kathleen Wynne. The Auditor General's report for 2014 talks about the use of P3s and the P3s system that they are using of getting government services instilled. In other words, paying it off in the future, if you will, has a financial cost on it of about \$7 billion, about an extra \$7 billion over getting it built by the public sector.

What these P3s do, in short, they offer an alternate form of financing by private companies where private companies come in and do the same job that would be done with public funds, except it gets financed by the same company and then with financing fees and everything on top of it costs the taxpayer, in actual fact, about \$7 billion.

What we need to hear, Mr. Chair, just to sum up on where government is going to be going, we know that we are going to be needing roads and bridges. The Auditor General here in Newfoundland and Labrador last year I think it was, the year before, already commented on it, in fact, that we are about \$820 million in a hole when it comes to getting necessary roadwork done in this Province. We know that.

We know that this government or the next government or the government after that is still going to have to pay for schools in the face of lower oil revenues. So, where does that money come from? We already know that government has to come up with money to pay for the new Western Memorial Hospital, let alone to upkeep the hospitals here in the rest of the Province.

Mr. Chair, when I say where is the plan for government having the money, it has to be a good one and it has to make sure that it does not cost the taxpayer any more money than what it is; but, most of all, it has to be sustainable at the same time. It has to include care for seniors. It has to include the care for the taxpayers' money that is out there and, at the same time, we also have to look after future growth in this Province to help pay for some of those programs.

I will leave it at that for now, Mr. Chair. I look forward to standing up and talking about this again the next time around.

Thank you very much.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

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

It is a pleasure for me to stand in my place today to speak for ten minutes or so on the granting of the Interim Supply to Her Majesty. Mr. Chair, the hon. the Minister of Finance this afternoon spoke very eloquently I thought about the investments of \$20 billion over the last number of years. In less than ten minutes he got up to trying to – really at the tops of the trees, looking at the spending of nearly \$13 billion. I know when he stands in his place in the next few days he will continue to talk.

Mr. Chair, I want to get down a little bit deeper into the weeds and talk about the investments of \$20 billion over the last number of years, and reference crumbling infrastructure, little infrastructure investment, and only little bits of investment in people. In the last number of years our government on this side of the House has invested heavily in the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We

have invested heavily in infrastructure in the Province.

We do not have to go back too long to find out about the lack of infrastructure development in the Province. I am always pleased to stand on my feet in this place, Mr. Chair, to talk about the investments that we made on the West Coast, and in particular in the City of Corner Brook and in my region, in my district. I do not often want to separate the District of Humber East and Humber West because often when you invest in Corner Brook, it is an investment for both districts, an investment in Bay of Islands as well.

If we are investing in the school, we are investing in the school for all of the students of Corner Brook, Mr. Chair. If we are investing in long-term care, we are investing in a long-term care facility for all residents of Corner Brook in the Western region. It is hard to distinguish between one district and another district when they are in very close proximity within one city.

I want to take my eight-and-a-half minutes I have left to talk about the investments we have made on the West Coast and in Corner Brook. I know the people opposite and the people of the Province will be interested in that.

I also, Mr. Chair, want to remind the people who are listening at home, it is very easy for us to forget where we have come in the last twelve years under the leadership of this government. No government in the history of the Province has invested so heavily in the people and infrastructure than we have.

Does that mean the job is finished? Absolutely not. Does that mean there is no work to be done? Absolutely not. There are still more investments needed. There are still more investments needed in people. There are still more investment needed in infrastructure.

I am going to take you on a little journey, Mr. Chair. I want to take the people of Newfoundland and Labrador on a little journey over the next six or seven minutes about where we have come, especially in Western Newfoundland.

We talk about crumbling infrastructure and little infrastructure development. Mr. Chair, I am

going to go back to a previous life that I lived as an educator in the Province. One time when I was the principal and vice-principal at Herdman Collegiate in Corner Brook and when I was at G. A. Mercer in Corner Brook – and my hon. member from across who spoke a few days ago was also an educator for thirty-odd years. He would understand where infrastructure in the Province was with regard to schools in this Province.

I remember in the mornings having to go in and walk down the corridor in the school that I taught in, and look up and see no tiles. There were no tiles in the ceiling, Mr. Chair, not a one, not a tile. I will tell you why, because the roofs in the buildings across the Province leaked like a basket. Shameful, Mr. Chair.

Also, I would go down the corridor and I would see plastic tarps. Yes, Mr. Chair, plastic tarps catching the water from the rain from the night before, redirected into five-gallon plastic buckets. I would go in at 6:00 or 6:30 in the morning, along with the secretary from the school, and the principal in the school, and we would have to move these buckets and ensure the water was emptied from them so that the children and the students coming to school that morning would not slip or fall.

That is the legacy of the side opposite us, Mr. Chair. That is the infrastructure that we inherited. That is the infrastructure that we inherited in the Province. I will tell you what, it has taken us thirteen years to reinvest in the people of the Province, thirteen years to reinvest in infrastructure of the Province, and we have started that journey.

We have invested billions of dollars into infrastructure in the Province. The job is not finished, and we will continue to do so, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Let me talk for a second – I am not even started yet, Mr. Chair. Let me talk for a second about investment in people, and I was a product of this. I was a product and I am not ashamed of it.

There was a salary increase in the Province, Mr. Chair, negotiated in good faith; 21 per cent over four years, accumulated salary increase under this government for the teachers of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I will tell you why. They deserved every penny of it, because I can recall under our previous government the NLTA signing agreements with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, on one hand signing the document and on the other hand the document being torn up and asked for rollbacks, job cuts and job losses; 21 per cent negotiated on this government. They deserved it, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. GRANTER:** While I am on the topic of education, let me just say this. I recall a time – and my hon. member across who coached volleyball in school, he would know. He could stand on his feet, if I am not telling the truth, and say the member is not telling the truth. He can tell you that.

I will tell you, Mr. Chair, phys. ed. equipment. I would walk into the gymnasium and I would look at the phys. ed. teacher and say, what did you do this summer? I enjoyed my holiday, he would say, but I spent a number of days going to the garage sales buying used skates, buying used helmets, buying used hockey sticks, buying used this and used that to support his phys. ed. program for September to June of the following year.

Under this government, Mr. Chair, we invested heavily into the programs in our schools, phys. ed. programs. Look at what we have invested under the music program into guitars, trombones, and trumpets for the wind symphonies and guitar programs in our Province. Soon we forget. We forget how far we have come in the last thirteen years under the leadership of this government. No other government, I say, Mr. Chair, has invested in the infrastructure and programs and people like the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has done in the last thirteen years.

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Mr. Chair, I am only on the first page. I am only on my first page, but do you know what? That is good work. That is all

good work, and there is much more good work that needs to be done. We will continue to do the work but we need to put it in perspective. We often lose sight of where we were and where we are, and how far we have come and the investments we have made.

Mr. Chair, these things do not just appear or pop up before our eyes. It all happens because of good planning, good determination, and yes, decisions that are made on principles. When you have principle decision making, you will stick to the ground and you will lead the Province in the right direction, and that is what we have done in the last thirteen years on this side of the House, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Mr. Chair, when you have a good economy and the economy is running, you can invest in people, you can invest in infrastructure, you can invest in programs in the Province. You have to have a good, solid economy to have a good, safety net, and that is what we have done over the last years. Our government, Mr. Chair, has been focused and will remain focused on the Province's long-term prosperity. We will encourage job creation, encourage strong communities, and encourage a vibrant economy.

Our natural resource development, I hear the Minister of Natural Resources stand on his feet daily, Mr. Chair. We are not going to give away our natural resources. We are never going to give away our natural resources. We are going to use it for the best interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Time and time again over the last thirteen years we have created deals for the betterment of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in all regions of the Province. The money that we talked about this afternoon, by the Minister of Finance, oil revenues and revenues from other natural resources distributed to all parts of the Province.

Mr. Chair, I am down to about a minute and fifty-one seconds, but I want to jump to page eight or nine and I want to talk about the investments we have made in Corner Brook, because the hon. member stood up today and said the people of Corner Brook have not seen

the investments. Yes, Mr. Chair, we are on the road to building a new health care facility and a long-term care facility, as the minister said today, that will start this year. The long-term care facility will start this year.

Let me just talk about some of the investments in Corner Brook to put it in perspective in my last minute and twenty-two seconds, Mr. Chair. If I am wrong, stand up in your place and say these investments were not made for the best interests of the people of Corner Brook and we should not have invested. Is that what you are going to tell me? No, you will not stand up and tell me that because the investments we made in Corner Brook were delivered upon for the people of the Western Region of the Province.

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Long-term care facility, that is number one, way up on top of the hill; dementia units, number two; Memorial University of Newfoundland, Grenfell Campus, new administrative building, millions of dollars; new research labs at Grenfell, millions of dollars.

The water treatment facility that just came on stream, with absolutely crystal clear water, Mr. Chair, from the water treatment facility; new residence at Memorial University, Grenfell campus; Corner Brook Regional High, \$22 million – and under the government opposite, there may have been a few hundred thousand, or it might have been \$2 million or \$3 million for the investment. When we finished the project, \$22 million invested into a state-of-the-art facility, Mr. Chair.

The curling rink, \$900,000 last year, when I was the Minister of Environment and Conservation, from the Green Fund for the civic centre in Corner Brook; Sir Richard Squires Building, millions of dollars; the courthouse; the soccer pitch; the eye care centre; seniors' residence on Park Street, Summit Place; twinning up the Trans-Canada Highway. When I get another ten minutes –

**CHAIR:** I remind the hon. member his time has expired.

**MR. GRANTER:** – I will talk more, Mr. Chair.



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

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

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

**CHAIR:** A point of order, the Member for Bay of Islands.

**MR. JOYCE:** I did not want to interrupt the minister, because he said anybody who wants to stand and talk about the investments – talk about the 100 beds that you cut, the long-term care, and people cannot stay in Corner Brook. Let's talk about that.

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

The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

It is an honour to be able to stand up and speak to this. I am wondering what I did wrong, because I feel like I just got shouted at for the last ten minutes. My God, it was a bit hard on the ears.

**MR. GRANTER:** I do not shout (inaudible).

**MR. A. PARSONS:** The minister is now saying he did not shout, so God help us if he does get upset.

I would say to the minister that one of the things that I did not hear referenced in his speech about Corner Brook – he went through all the different things – one thing he did not say was the Corner Brook hospital. We have not seen anything yet. In fact, the minister may have even been elected, that was one of the promises made. Here we are going to another election and all we have is the biggest dog park in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador over there.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** So, I say that is not a promise that anybody is going to trust this time.

I would say to the minister as well, do you know what? You referenced gym equipment. The kids really are enjoying using it in the

classrooms that they have to have gym in since the schools that you are building are all too small and they cannot use the gym properly.

Anyway, I digress. I have a number of points to make. One thing I would say, the Minister of CYFS got up – and I was the critic for that department a long time ago, and I do not think you can equate criticizing actions of the department with criticizing social workers. Again, one of the things that I believe the Member for St. Barbe brought up and I think the minister said was not true – now if I am wrong, correct me. In the Advocate's report dated 2014, printed January 2015, Recommendation 2 says, "Policy must be developed by CYFS to direct that all children in a family be critically observed during a referral and during every home visit." I would surmise the reason that the Advocate made that recommendation is because it was not happening.

I think what the member is saying – and again he does not need me to speak for him. What he is saying is that this is a recommendation that was made for good reason. We hope that is followed through and does happen. That is not criticizing workers.

I appreciate the minister gets fired up about this. He takes his responsibilities seriously and I am glad to hear that. Every minister on the opposite side should, just as every member on this side is going to stand up and speak if we see an issue. We are not going to be told to sit down if we identify something that the crowd on the other side gets upset about. That is how this give and take works. They do not like sometimes when we bring up something. I am sure we do not like it when they say certain things as well. It is the nature.

One of the things I want to talk about – it was brought here up last week; it is going to be brought up this week. Some members on our side, all members on our side are criticizing the management of this crowd on the other side when it comes to fiscal responsibility over the last number of years. We are talking about the management.

We will talk about how there was more oil revenue – this government had more money to spend than any government ever previous just

when it came to the oil royalties, more. What we are saying is that we think you could have managed it better.

Then they will say well, what shouldn't we have spent on? I will point out one thing that probably should not have been spent on, and did not need to be spent on if we were listened to in the first place, and that is this glossy report here called Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act that cost \$1.1 million.

Mr. Chair, \$1.1 million may not sound like a lot when it comes to \$20 billion of oil revenue, but \$1.1 million would pay for your Family Violence Intervention Court twice over. I am glad that we saw the report because the report actually verified and backed up everything that we told the crowd opposite three years ago – everything we told them. We will get a chance when we debate this because we will stand up and the members on the other side will stand up and defend the comments they made about how this was good legislation, how this was proper legislation.

The current Attorney General got up and he mentioned how we said we would not have put us in this mess. Well, what would you have done? I would not have introduced Bill 29. The member opposite, the Attorney General who introduced – now again I would note that the new Bill 29 – redux, part two, the sequel – that is coming in from the Minister Responsible for the Office of Public Engagement, it is funny how that has been taken away.

So the Attorney General said: What wouldn't you have done? This is \$1.1 million that is not being spent in Justice this year.

**CHAIR:** I remind the hon. member not to use props.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Okay, this nice report here that everybody should have – and I know the Minister of OPE has embraced it. That is money – I am glad it was spent. It was a necessary spend after the debacle that the original Bill 29 debate was.

I say to the Attorney General, you should not have brought it forward. You should not have slammed it down the throats of the people of the

Province. You should not have invoked closure in this House. If you had listened to us the first time and everybody else, you would not have spent that \$1.1 million.

Mr. Chair, \$1.1 million is a small figure, but it is \$1.1 million that would have went to people. Maybe that is fewer jobs that may be cut.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Four MHAs.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Yes, according to the figures used in Bill 42, that is four MHAs right there because the crowd on the other side said trust us. We know what we are doing when it comes to the information. We are not trying to hurt you.

**MR. JOYCE:** The cost to bring it in (inaudible).

**MR. A. PARSONS:** We will not even get into the cost of the filibuster. There actually was a CBC story talking about the cost of the Bill 42 debate. I would say that is probably equivalent to the Bill 29 debate which was actually much longer. It went through night after night.

I say to you, you can sit over there now as if you see the light, but I tell you what, nobody forgets what you stood there and slammed down our throats. That is money that was wasted. It is wasted money, and you are all responsible for it. So, I will say that.

I will continue on. Some of the comments coming from members on the other side, notably the Minister of Finance – to use a phrase that has been used in the past a number of times: I cannot recall everything that he said. I cannot recall everything that he just said there. I know that is a phrase that people use sometimes when they get asked questions, but what I will say he did mention the West Coast.

That is good. I am glad he is talking about the West Coast, but there is a difference between the minister and me. I live on the West Coast. I know what goes on, on the West Coast just like the Minister of Fisheries, just like the Member for Bay of Islands. I live on the West Coast. So I would invite the Minister of Finance to come out and show me all the great work that his

government has done in the last ten, twelve, thirteen years.

Maybe we can go down, while we are at it, to the Burgeo Highway, which collapsed before Christmas almost killing a man. We can talk about the investments – again, full credit to the current Minister of Transportation for the work that his staff does. He was right on it, even in this latest situation. He made sure that staff were there, and I am glad.

Do you know what? The current Mayor of Burgeo is saying come down and sit with us so we can identify a plan, that if this happens again – because this is twice in the last two years that the roads collapsed. People are actually scared to drive on that road, not knowing if the road will collapse and your car – again, we have a man who had to get airlifted to a hospital. I would say we are just waiting to come out and have a chat on what happens if the road collapses again.

Do you know what happens? A road does not collapse if you have an investment in it, though, and we have not had any investment. We want to talk about that investment. They are going to tout all the money they spent here and there. I notice there is a capital works funding announcement in Mount Pearl tomorrow, and that is good. Everybody should get their fair share.

Do you know where there was not a municipal capital works announcement last year? In the biggest community in my district which is Port aux Basques. It is the first time in years, not a nickel – not a nickel. So please, do not stand up and tell me how great we have had it until you come out and sit down with me and talk to everybody in my district and tell me how good it is. Please, do that when you stand up and tell us about the great work you have done and how you managed everything so great.

I will say, they have made some good decisions – some. One of them was made last year, and it was through the work of the Member for Bay of Islands, the Leader of the Official Opposition, the caucus, the action committee, and the people of the West Coast. I will even give the Minister of Fisheries some credit, that he saw the light after and came onboard.

The former Minister of Health and members opposite said you do not need radiation on the West Coast. They said to us today, you do not do any research. Well, we did the research. We showed the former Premier, Premier Marshall, and they came onboard and said, yeah, you are right. I say sometimes a good decision does happen on the other side but a lot of times it only happens when we actually prove to them why it is the right decision.

I say, Mr. Chair, this is my first opportunity to speak to this. It will not be my last opportunity to speak to this but, please, continue to stand up and tell me why things are so good because I look forward to hearing it.

Thank you.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

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

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

Yes, Mr. Chair, it is a new department. It is Education and Early Childhood Development, and I could not be happier to welcome Early Childhood Development into what we do in the Department of Education. It is great vision on behalf of the Premier to have combined both of those departments.

When we look at the continuum of learning, when we look at learning from very, very early days right on through to post-secondary for that matter, it just makes great sense to have both of those divisions accommodated under one department. I am really happy to have this opportunity to be the Minister Responsible for Education and Early Childhood Development.

Since my time there in September, I have taken the time to immerse myself in terms of what has happened, to look at some ways of innovating and finding new ways forward, and to really get out and listen to the people of the Province. Some of that happened, Mr. Chair, as a result of the work we did around Budget consultations. It was really good.

Like the Minister of Finance who spoke earlier today, I too would like to thank the people of the Province who came out to talk to us at Budget consultations and to tell us their concerns. To tell us what their wishes were, and to tell us also – many times I was very pleased to see that they spoke to us in terms of some accolades about things that had already happened. That was very good and I was very happy to hear about that.

This afternoon, Mr. Chair, what I would like to do for the eight-and-a-half or so minutes that I have here, would be to focus on some of the outcomes of the work that we have done in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Mr. Chair, one of the things I think people of the Province need to hear about as we talk about Interim Supply is a sort of report card. It is a progress report on how we spend the monies that are voted in each of our respective departments.

In this case, in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the overall budget is \$872 million for 2014. Mr. Chair, that is \$591 million in 2003; \$872 million in 2014. It is an increase of 48 per cent. That increase of 48 per cent occurred despite the fact that student enrolment had decreased in this Province by almost 14,000 students, or 17.5 per cent. Mr. Chair, it speaks to the commitment we have in terms of education, recognizing that education is a key driver for everything that happens in this Province.

Mr. Chair, if we are to look at the future of this Province, then we know we have to have an educated population. Therefore, the kind of expenditures that we have committed to will, I think, sustain that kind of production for us well into the future.

Some general things; I heard my colleague speak earlier, the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, and I believe he also has new responsibilities now in Forestry and Agrifoods, but I heard him speak earlier. He talked about how some of the investments that we have made have realized concrete effects. In his time as an administrator and being in a classroom setting, and in my time, thirty years in a classroom setting, I can tell you that I have seen some huge improvements.

One of the greatest I think for me, and one of the things that I will perhaps be ever so proud of is the investment we made in reducing school fees, and in fact eliminating school fees, Mr. Chair. We did that at a cost of \$56 million back in 2006.

I know I have spoken of it here in this House before but it never leaves me, the image of seeing students come to school in September with a note that they would have to pass in to say they could not afford the fees or they could not afford the textbooks. The absolute embarrassment they felt with having to bring that note into the office to us, and trying to find ways to come in or trying to find ways to slip it to us in the run of a day.

Mr. Chair, removing that from them, giving them back their dignity, giving them back the sense that they were every bit as important as anybody else in that school, really had made a difference in their overall outlook into how they started out that school year. That elimination of school fees is something I will forever be proud of, and it is the result of the work of this government.

Our per-pupil investment in the K-12 level, Mr. Chair, increased from \$7,412 in 2003 to \$13,000 in 2014. That is an increase of 75 per cent. It is the best in Atlantic Canada as well, and it is among the best in the country.

There are many other general things that I can talk about. I want to try to touch on a few things. Time runs quickly when we stand.

Early childhood development; we have seen a 70 per cent increase, Mr. Chair, in the number of regulated child care spaces in Newfoundland and Labrador from 2003 to 2014. Budget 2014 alone allocated \$42.5 million to focus on child care in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have a number of programs in place, and those programs are seeing great benefit.

We have introduced a new one recently called the voluntary operating grant. Mr. Chair, I understand there are some commercial child care centres for whom that particular grant does not work. However, there are a number of other programs.

I have committed to – with the help of my Parliamentary Secretary who is leading this charge – meeting with the larger commercial centres. We sent out a survey just about a week ago asking them to tell us what the issues are, asking them to outline for us what their costs are, what their overhead costs are, and how we might be able to reach out and help them as well.

Mr. Chair, make no mistake about it, the \$42.5 million that we are investing this year will make differences. At the end of this ten-year strategy we will have spent almost a billion dollars improving child care in this Province, and that is not to be sneezed at – or \$500 million, I am sorry. That is a goodly amount of money and it will make differences. We will continue to tweak every single program to get the maximum benefit for the work that we are doing in early childhood, Mr. Chair.

In terms of infrastructure, we have allocated over \$681 million for infrastructure since 2004. What that has seen is fourteen new schools opening, eight more are in various stages of planning and construction, and twenty-seven major extensions and renovation projects have been completed, with ten more underway, Mr. Chair.

One of the jewels, I believe, in the crown of education in Newfoundland and Labrador, something that we probably do not pay enough attention to and we do not speak about enough, and that is in terms of distance education, distance learning, the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation, a place where I had the pleasure of working for almost seven years, Mr. Chair, as the French department head for the Province.

I can tell you that the quality of education that is offered through CDLI is second to none. We currently have services and offer courses in 110 high schools, primarily in rural and remote areas, isolated regions of the Province. About 1,000 senior high school students avail of CDLI programming.

Just recently I went out to the office in Gander, along with the Member for Gander, and we had a presentation from the staff at CDLI. In particular we looked at their industrial or their shop classes and saw what they were able to do

across this Province, and it is absolutely phenomenal to see the level of education, to see the technology of which they avail, and to see the success stories of the students who are enrolled in various courses around this Province in CDLI.

Mr. Chair, though I say that they are primarily for isolated areas of the Province or smaller regions of the Province, it should be noted that there are students here in the city, for example, who, for various reasons – for example, they may have an illness and cannot go to school, or there may be other extenuating circumstances and they cannot attend a regular classroom setting – they too avail of CDLI, and again, some of the best teaching that results in some very, very fine results at the end of the school year. So, CDLI is certainly something that we need to be proud of.

Mr. Chair, I had had a number of things that I wanted to talk about here. I wanted to talk about teachers, but I particularly wanted to get into the curriculum and talk about some of the improvements and investments that we have made in curriculum right across this Province that have seen really good results. I will get up perhaps later on this afternoon, or if not, another day, and speak to those areas as well, because once again, what we have seen is that the investments are paying off. We are seeing higher graduation rates than we have ever had in this Province, we are seeing the lowest dropout rates that we have ever seen in this Province, and that is not happenstance; that happens because of good planning.

It is something that I want to be able to lay out in more detail. With just ten or twelve seconds remaining, I think I will take my seat for this afternoon with the promise that I would like to come back, though, and discuss those other areas, particularly around curriculum, at another time.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

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

It is a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 44, a resolution respecting the granting of Interim Supply to Her Majesty. Mr. Chair, I would like to talk about a group of people in this Province who are feeling left out through this whole process. That is the Aboriginal community.

There are a number of reasons why I bring this forward, Mr. Chair. I am not speaking for the Nunatsiavut Government. I am not speaking for the Innu Nation, Mr. Chair. These Aboriginal governments and entities are pretty much to be commended on coming forward speaking on their own behalf, but I am speaking for the people I represent who live in Nunatsiavut and live in the Innu community of Natuashish.

Mr. Chair, I heard the Minister of Finance talk about how well this Province has done in the last ten years. I do agree that some districts have done quite well, while others seem to have fallen behind. I would like to talk about a few issues that have come forward, some recently, and some over the last ten years. I would like to talk about justice, Mr. Chair.

If you check Hansard, I have gotten up time and time again and talked about justice and the shortcomings. Mr. Chair, we have a shortage of Crown prosecutors in Labrador. They are still waiting to fill the complement of five lawyers. Even now they have considered offering \$25,000 bonuses to new recruits.

A report in 2007 stressed the need for experienced lawyers, so they have come about-face. They have turned the tables. We have Aboriginal lawyers from Nunatsiavut with a background in how law applies to Aboriginal people; an extensive background and experience. The former minister, Judy Manning, refused to hire this person. This person has no criminal charges, has no financial shortcomings, and is in good standing with the Law Society. We talk about commitment to Aboriginal people, Mr. Chair, here is a classic example of where is it – where is the commitment?

This government talks about the relationship, Mr. Chair, but I would like to see the action because it is two contradictory terms – what they say and what they do is not the same thing.

Another example, let's talk about the Request for Proposals for new shipping. Mr. Chair, we look at the nice looking vessels the *Hazel McIsaac*, *Grace Sparkes*; lovely boats, well and very much needed in this Province. We are looking forward to the launching of the *MV Veteran*; we cannot wait, Mr. Chair. We look at the situation in The Straits upon the North Coast. I spent Christmas in Hopedale and when I went there, the manager of the store told me that they were still unloading freight from the dock because it was unloaded on pallets at minus twenty – 290 pallets dropped off.

The proposal states: When it goes out, between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m., there shall be no freight dropped off. That is in the contract. What did they do, Mr. Chair? They drop off a winter's supply in the middle of the night in sub-zero temperatures. Would they do this anywhere else in the Province, Mr. Chair? I think not. Again, a nice relationship with the Aboriginal community, but what they do is different.

The RFP, Mr. Chair, there was an Aboriginal company that put in a proposal. If you look at the land claims agreement, any company that puts in a proposal and meets criteria not only should get a look-in or should be part of the top three, but they shall get the contract – they shall get the contract.

Mr. Chair, I heard the Minister of Transportation and Works and I heard the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs talk about interpretation. This is not interpretation. This is not about interpretation. The land claims agreement was negotiated, accepted, and signed by three levels of government to protect the very people that this government is now trying to shrug off as interpretation. It was negotiated to protect them, not to be all of a sudden open for what they see as interpretive.

Mr. Chair, when you look at legislation that has come forward over the last three years at least, or four years since I have been here, in many cases the acts proclaimed by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, there is a clause included that states: The provision term or condition of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement shall have precedence over the act or regulation that is made under the act – shall have

precedence. That does not say that it is open to interpretation.

Interpretation has nothing to do with it. Interpretation is what this government is trying to take out a negotiated agreement that has words: shall, must, has a duty to. Now, to me, to the Nunatsiavut Government, to the Innu Nation, that does not sound like words that initiate interpretation.

Mr. Chair, the legislation that has relevance to the Labrador Inuit lands been applied to the Child Care Act – very important legislation – is not open to interpretation. The Labrador Inuit agreement shall take precedent. Missing Persons Act, applied again. Emergency 911, applied again. Liquor Control Act, Adoption Act, Mineral Act, Missing Persons Act, now all of a sudden this government is says no, it is not applicable here, when it is pointed out specifically in the land claims agreement that this government shall award the contract.

Now, Mr. Chair, having said that I am not privy to the proposal itself, so what do we do? Do we wait until June now before we get another decision? We do not know. All we know is that there has been deadline after deadline after deadline after deadline. We do not have a *Hazel McIsaac* yet, but what we do have is a shipping situation that is a sad state by a government that has a good working relationship. It says it does. It says it has a wonderful working relationship, but the facts speak for themselves. The facts do not lie.

Mr. Chair, we talk about the Vale agreement – open to interpretation, a duty to consult. The government made the decision to stop all royalties, to give Vale a break on the Long Harbour project. Mining still went on in Nunatsiavut, in the land claims area. Where are the royalties that were promised? Three to five years, we will take your royalties and we are going to give Long Harbour a break.

This government made the decision without consulting with the Nunatsiavut Government on the Voisey's Bay agreement. They did not even consult, Mr. Chair. That too was laid out in the land claims agreement: a duty to consult. What did this government do? They act unilaterally and say it is open to interpretation.

Mr. Chair, the Nunatsiavut Government had no intention of stopping the project, but what they did have was a land claims agreement that said this government has a duty to consult. It did not say that this agreement is all of a sudden open to interpretation. It is not like that. The reason for the land claims agreement was for the protection for these people from the very thing that this government is doing now.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Merci, Monsieur le Président, wela'lin.

I am pleased to stand in my place today in the hon. House of Assembly in this third session of the forty-seventh General Assembly and to speak in support of Bill 44, An Act for Granting to Her Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2016 and for Other Purposes Relating to the Public Service.

Mr. Chair, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador of course needs this supplementary or Interim Supply. The purpose of this procedure is for the House of Assembly to approve a certain amount of expenditures so that we can operate as a government and a Province, and pay our bills until a new Budget is brought down and passed in the spring session of the House of Assembly by the hon. Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Chair, the people of this Province elected us to govern the affairs of the Province in a responsible and efficient way. That is why I am proud of our investments we have made for the benefit of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

[French spoken.]

Investments in infrastructure, education, health care, roads, municipalités et communautés, business, innovation, ressources naturelles, this will create opportunities to grow our economy.

It is about building a future that is healthy and full with opportunity so that our children, et nos petits enfants, will also call this place, chez nous, home. We want to give them the opportunity to grow, get educated, learn new skills and trades, et garder la famille, work, and grow old, right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Chair, our history is deep-rooted and fascinating. We have weathered many storms over the centuries. Ours is a story of courage and perseverance, where our fore-parents fished the waters, farmed the lands, combed the forests – all of this to build a foundation and create the chance for us to continue to live here and to be the innovative and creative, and to find new prospects.

Mr. Chair, this bill states: “From and out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund there may be issued by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board sums not exceeding \$2,784,047,800 and the sums so issued shall be paid and applied by the individual Heads of Expenditure in respect of the financial year extending from April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016 towards defraying the charges and expenses of the Public Service of Newfoundland and Labrador as set out in the Schedule.”

Mr. Chair, now let me list out where the money will be allocated. Consolidated Fund Services, \$6,135,100; Executive Council, \$46,245,800; Finance, \$48,033,100; Public Service Commission, \$792,600; Service Newfoundland and Labrador, \$15,542,400; Transportation and Works, \$479,513,300; Legislature, \$7,540,300; Advanced Education and Skills, \$330,358,100; Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development, \$46,302,900; Environment and Conservation, \$10,769,100; Fisheries and Aquaculture, \$6,916,800; Natural Resources, \$128,507,500; Child, Youth and Family Services, \$42,431,300; Education and Early Childhood Development, \$316,708,200; Health and Community Services, \$1,083,015,200; Justice and Public Safety, \$69,007,600; Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs, \$123,940,400; Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, \$13,867,600; and Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, \$8,420,500, for a grant total, Mr. Chair, of expenditure of \$2,784,047,800.

The crowd across the way will ask every day: What are you doing with the money? Where are you spending it?

**MR. JOYCE:** What a minister.

**MR. CORNETT:** Now, Mr. Chair, I hear the hon. the Member for Bay of Islands taunting over there: what a minister.

I was a minister, and I am proud to have been appointed a minister in this government, Mr. Chair. I am proud to have been a minister to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in that capacity.

**MR. JOYCE:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** A point of order, the hon. the Member for Bay of Islands.

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Chair, the reason I said what a minister, was because the people down in Copper Mine Brook were waiting for fourteen months to get a response of why they cannot sell their cabin. This minister would not return one phone call, one message, or one letter in almost six months. You should be ashamed to say you are the minister.

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

The hon. the Member for Port au Port.

**MR. CORNETT:** Again, Mr. Chair, I am very proud to have served the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador as a Minister of the Crown.

In this day of fiscal restraints, Mr. Chair, I approached the Premier and asked him to take me out of Cabinet so we could save money. Mr. Chair, I ask the other members on the other side of the aisle, why don't you cut your salaries as well? Why don't you get rid of your responsibilities and save money for the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador?

**MR. JOYCE:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** A point of order, the hon. the Member for Bay of Islands.



**MR. JOYCE:** I do not want to interrupt the member, but when he is pointing at me, Mr. Chair.

In 1989, the Bay of Islands had one house on the south shore. I stepped aside for the Premier, so do not go trying to lecture to me about what should be done for the district. Please, do it to somebody else.

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

The hon. the Member for Port au Port.

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

I will have my time again to get up during this debate and during this session of the House of Assembly, Mr. Chair, and I will make my points as to why I am so proud to sit on this side of government with the investments we have made for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Newfoundland and Labrador, we are the envy of the country, Mr. Chair. We are the envy of the country. We are leading in so many ways here in this Province. We are a leader in this country. A leader in this country, I say to you, Mr. Chair. A leader in this country in so many ways that people are looking at us for guidance and for leadership.

Mr. Chair, it starts at the top, and it starts with our Premier. That is where it starts. It starts with our Premier showing the leadership, the courage to move forward with this Province, that this Province can be better off in the future, not just yesterday or today, but the future as well. It is what leadership is all about, Mr. Chair, and I am proud to stand behind this Premier. I am proud to stand behind this government.

There are so many investments we have made, Mr. Chair. I just listed through why we are doing this Interim Supply and the monies we are spending in the short term. That is a lot of money, \$2.7 billion, and these are all for programs and services and salaries in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

If they want to stand up, Mr. Chair, and vote against it, they can stand up and vote against Interim Supply. Go right ahead, but explain to the people why you are doing it. Explain to the

people of Newfoundland and Labrador why you are so against the investments we made for the betterment of them. Stand up I say, stand up and be accounted for.

**MR. JOYCE:** A point of order, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** On a point of order, the hon. Member for Bay of Islands.

**MR. JOYCE:** He is offering for us to stand up, and I have no problem to stand up. Why would we vote against the Budget? Because when you spend \$20 million for a dog park and for seven years we are still waiting to build a hospital, Mr. Chair, I have to stand up because it is false.

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

The hon. the Member for Port au Port.

**MR. CORNET:** I say to the hon. member, you are waiting a little bit of time for your hospital but tell the people of Stephenville, under a Liberal Administration how long we waited for a health care facility, let alone to call it a hospital. You called it a health care facility. We waited fourteen years –

**CHAIR:** I remind the hon. member his time has expired.

**MR. CORNET:** – Mr. Chair, and I will be back with more.

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

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

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

I am very happy to stand this afternoon and speak for a second time to Bill 44. I am proud to stand and speak as a member of a caucus in this House of Assembly, and to speak to a bill that will be approving expenditures that have to be made in order to keep the Province going while we wait for a Budget, a Budget that we really are not sure about when it is going to appear. We have heard the Premier of the Province say publicly and we have heard the Minister of Finance say publicly sometime in April. We

have heard maybe the end of April after the federal government brings its budget forward.

Why the federal government's budget has anything to do with our Budget, I do not know. I have not heard any other Premier in the country say they cannot bring forward their provincial budget until the federal budget happens. I have not heard of any other Minister of Finance in the country say that either.

One thing is certain, there is going to be nothing in the federal budget for us. So why we have to wait for that federal budget to come down in order for ours to be brought forward, I do not know. It could be, Mr. Chair, it is because they do not know what to do, that they are in a quandary they have created themselves.

It is important that we stand here and pass a bill that will allow government programs to continue in the interim, that will allow our schools to stay open in the interim, that will allow our hospital services to continue, and that will allow workers who work for the public sector to get paid. Obviously, Mr. Chair, we are going to be voting for this Supply bill, or else we will bring the whole Province to a standstill and we are not here to do that.

We are here, Mr. Chair, to speak to concerns about what will be in the Budget, concerns about things that we hear this government talking about. One of the things that we have heard is a Premier who sometimes, I am thinking, he is speaking through his hat. A Premier who is saying it is going to be a bad Budget. Prepare yourselves; it is going to be awful.

As we heard him saying for weeks in the media, everything is on the table. When he was asked what is going to be cut, everything is on the table. We have asked the question: Does that mean our health care system is on the table? Does that mean our educational system is on the table? Does that mean programs that are absolutely needed by the people of this Province are on the table? We are sort of sitting around waiting for this government to bring down a Budget that will tell us what was on the table and what they decided to cut.

The other thing the Premier has said, and he has said publicly, well, I am just throwing ideas out

there. He threw out the idea of privatization. When he was asked about that, what would be privatized, oh everything is on the table.

I want us to think a bit about everything being on the table when we are talking about privatization. Let's look at some real experiences in this country about what happened when services in this country became privatized. A really good one is the laboratories in Ontario.

In the 1990s, the Harris government restricted hospital lab testing. You still had hospital lab testing, and it is still going on, but it was restricted; and the market was opened up for private labs, particularly in the community, labs in the community, and especially in rural Ontario and Northern Ontario. You still had labs in the main hospitals and in the health care system, but the majority now were being done out in the community by private labs.

People complained. They did not like the new large, centralized private lab services, especially in the northern and rural communities. Because the way they ran, they were not run for the good of the people. So, after the year 2000, in the early 2000s the government of the day decided to do a pilot project –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MS MICHAEL:** – and the purpose of the pilot project was to compare what was the difference between the cost of laboratories that were run publicly as part of the health care system, and what was the cost of laboratories that were run privately by profit-based corporations.

The evaluation found that testing was cheaper at the public hospital labs than with the large for-profit labs. The difference was, in the public system, in the hospital-run labs, the average cost per test was \$22, and in the private labs the average cost per test was \$33.

Now, I wonder why that was. Well, the obvious answer for anybody who knows the difference between private and public is that a private corporation has to make a profit. They have to make a profit. So, there has to be something coming in that will pay for the service, the cost

of the delivery of the service, and also give shareholders money. That is the difference. The shareholders of a private company are individuals who are trying to make money by having shares in that company. They expect a profit. The shareholders in the public sector are the public, the voters, the people who belong to the community.

Now, I am not against private companies. We have a capitalist system, we have the free market, and there is a place for companies that run on profit. I believe that. It is our system, but I do not believe in turning everything over to that market. I do not believe in turning everything over to private corporations, and I certainly do not believe that they should be in here in our health care system. I do not believe they should be in our educational system. I do not believe that any service that has to do with the health and welfare of our people should be in the hands of profit-based corporations because it means that money is going into the pockets of people who do nothing else but invest their money, while it is not for the good of the people.

What happened in Ontario is really hard to understand. Even though the pilot project showed that it was cheaper to have the tests done in the public hospital system, the Liberal government of the day terminated the pilot project, which meant the loss of the overnight lab shift at the hospital that was part of the pilot. That was something that was really good. Having round-the-clock shifts in the lab because it meant you got a better turnover. Things got done more quickly.

So what has happened? There has been an expert who has studied the privatization of medical laboratories across the country. That expert estimates that the Ontario health care system could save \$175 million to \$200 million per year by letting hospital-based labs do the community lab services again. So experts out there are studying this. They are comparing the private and the public, and they are showing that it is much better to have the public health system do the labs.

The other thing they are learning as they study the private and the public way of doing laboratory testing is that you have much greater transparency when you are dealing with labs

inside of the hospital system than you do with labs that are being run by for-profit companies. You have protection for the private corporations from public disclosure. Surely that is not something that we want here.

That is the things that we are dealing with. Whether we are talking about privatization of laboratories, whether we are talking about private health care being delivered, for example, like home care, we find that it is very difficult to hold the for-profit corporation accountable for what is going on.

The issue I raised in Question Period today, a corporation running itself in a way that somebody who is in a bed, needs a home care worker, cannot get that service, trying to hold that company accountable for that is very, very difficult. Whereas with anything that is part of our public system, the public system has to come under the accountability and transparency that we expect from government.

We all say here in this House that we believe in that. The government says it believes in accountability and transparency. We say we believe in it, but if we talk about getting into the private care sector, we talk about putting health care, education, anything that has to do with the needs of people into the private care sector, into the hands of profit-based corporations, then we are putting ourselves into an area of losing the ability to make sure that everything that is happening is transparent and accountable.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I will speak more to this issue as we go on.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs.

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

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

It is certainly an honour and a privilege to get up and speak to Bill 44 here for Interim Supply. As I always do when I get on my feet in the House of Assembly, I would like to give a warm thank you to the constituents in Lake Melville who know my heart, they know the energy that I put

into this job, and they are there time and time again to come out and support me. So whether they are from Churchill Falls all the way through Upper Lake Melville into Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Mud Lake and then down to Northwest River and Sheshatshiu, I am there, I am at their service and always ready, willing, and able to engage in dialogue.

With that, we are hearing both sides come back and forth about money being spent, money in past budgets being spent, past Administrations being spent. I will just say I am very happy every time I drive down Hamilton River Road in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and I look at the progress that is happening on our twenty-bed expansion to long-term care there, Mr. Chair. We certainly recognize the need for that; we have delivered on this side of the House. It has been an absolute honour and a pleasure to have served the people of Upper Lake Melville in this case and all Lake Melville, for that matter, by making sure that we had that need met.

You can honestly say – and I do not think anybody on the other side of the House would certainly say that that was a waste of money. We have heard some banter back and forth about wasting money and all that, but I will just tell you that if we were to look at past Budgets and things that were done and if I had to look at before I got into politics and where we are here today, I will just say that I graduated high school in 1992 and when I left home, we had a dirt road. We had a cow path at best, which was the Trans-Labrador Highway.

I will talk about Administrations, and I will be respectful too because there is always room for respect in what we do in this House of Assembly. When I went to university in 1992, that was a cow path; it was a dirt road. They said there would never be pavement there. I went out and got an education, Mr. Chair. I went out and I had a young family. I worked in Ontario and I travelled all over North America working for the companies that I worked for. I got a lot of experience.

I had the opportunity and I was so lucky to have had that opportunity, to be able to come home to my home Province, to Labrador, to contribute. That was in 2003, Mr. Chair. What did I come

home to? The exact same infrastructure that I left when I went to high school in 1992.

Between 1992 and 2003, there was not one single bit of change. No blacktop, no asphalt on the Trans-Labrador Highway. What was there? Nothing. No change in schools, no change in infrastructure, nothing in the town, and I will be very blunt in saying that.

We get a lot of criticism. Yes, we have had a lot of oil revenue. Yes, we have, but we have certainly used that and we put it to good work. I see it in my own district. I know everybody sees it in their districts as well, Mr. Chair. We are talking about hospitals. We are talking about schools. We see them in my district. We are talking about pavement. We are talking about neighbourhoods springing up. We are talking about megaprojects. We are doing a lot of good things.

It is a waste of my time to talk about what was not there during the last time they had government. Like I said, I had time to go out and get an education, have a family, travel North America, go to work, get lots of experience and not a single thing had changed in my district between – so what are we talking about, eleven years, Mr. Chair.

I am not going to dwell on that right now. I am just going to say that I see it in my district. I see the investments we have made. I am proud to be part of a government that is ready, willing, and able to meet the challenge, to talk, to liaise with the people and say this is what we want, this is what we need, and meet those needs from Budget to Budget. I am proud of what we have done.

With that I will say, Mr. Chair, last week I had the chance to get up and do a Ministerial Statement on Mel Woodward, an entrepreneur. I just want to take a second here to talk about Mr. Woodward and just thank him because the Ministerial Statement was very official.

I want to thank him and his family. We talked about a company that got to revenues of \$750 million, 800 employees. So Mel Sr.'s legacy is one of entrepreneurship. It is one of hard work and dedication and stick-to-it-iveness if you will,

Mr. Chair. He started out with one truck and grew it to the company I just talked about.

Mr. Chair, it is about not only that success that he had in entrepreneurship, but I want to thank him too for his public service. He was Labrador Affairs Minister as well and did serve the people. With that, to Mel Jr., to Peter, to Tana, and to his wife Sibyl, I just want to say thank you for that legacy. He certainly made a difference to Labrador and saw Labrador for what it is, which is a bountiful part of our Province where there are opportunities that are absolutely limitless.

With that, in talking about my district a little more, I see my time winding down. I want to give a quick shout-out to two of the social enterprises, if you will, those organizations in Lake Melville, one being Mokami Status of Women and the other being Libra House. I will look back to my friend, the MHA for Harbour Main, and give him thanks. Back a few years ago when he was a minister and I was the MHA for Lake Melville, we worked together and we did some great things. We saw some investment, Mr. Chair.

In one of those past Budgets, people are saying that we may have squandered some money. What we did is we had women's shelters. We put hundreds of thousands of dollars into women's shelters. We made a difference, and I would like to thank him for that.

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

**MR. RUSSELL:** No, absolutely, well deserved.

My staff and I, we spend a lot of time, whether it is a charitable event, whether it is a lobbying effort, whether it is just going down and helping out and attending functions. We certainly recognize the good work that Mokami Status of Women, their executive director, Sandy Kershaw, wonderful, wonderful group of ladies down there doing all they can – and Janet O'Donnell in Libra House and their staffs.

I am not going to drop all the names of all the staff, but what I want to say is they do make a difference; we are there to support them. Just recently, the Mokami Status of Women, specifically, they are putting together an

initiative to talk about violence in relationships with that demographic of young ladies between the ages of thirteen and eighteen. I will say that we came together with a couple of thousand-dollar grants from government just to make sure that they have a workshop – a set of funding, if you will, to make sure that the workshop can be pulled off successfully. It is these little things. It might not be these big dollar amounts, either, but it is the little things like that that make all the difference in the world to people who are vulnerable in our society and who are in need.

So, I just want to give them a shout-out and say thank you for all they do. Their work is certainly recognized in our communities, and if there is ever an opportunity where I can get up and say what great work they do and what their dedication is like, I certainly take that opportunity.

Next, Mr. Chair, I want to talk a little bit about something that is going on in my district right now – I see the time winding down. I want to talk about Kraft Hockeyville. As people know, I have been a hockey coach for many, many years. I grew up in the arena – and we have an arena called the E.J. Broomfield Memorial Arena, named after my uncle, Ebert, I am proud to say.

We have made the top ten. We are the only submission in Newfoundland and Labrador, and one of a few across Atlantic Canada. We are in the top ten. I am looking for everybody's support. If you are out there watching at home, anybody in this House, we have until midnight tonight. Get on there and vote. This is a bit of recognition for our community and all those kids, all those mom and dads, all those volunteers who get out there, give their heart and soul to the sports in our communities.

A bit of money could come from this to help upgrade our arena, Mr. Chair. As well, maybe we will get an NHL game in there as well. It certainly would be a wonderful thing. So I ask, I plead, to the people, to the masses out there; get out there and vote for Happy Valley-Goose Bay, get out and vote for E.J. Broomfield Memorial Arena.

I just want to give a shout-out to my EA, actually, who put in the submission. Mr.

Shannon John Tobin wrote that letter, got it out there for Kraft Hockeyville, and nominated our little town to get in there. So, kudos to Shannon on a job well done right there.

With my last minute or so, Mr. Chair, I want to talk about a young man from Northwest River named Collin Baikie, good friend of mine, good supporter of mine. We have somebody who represents the best of what our youth has to offer in Newfoundland and Labrador. What we have is somebody who wants to show people that you can reach and you can attain your dreams through hard work.

This is somebody who represents being fit, clean living, being able to go into schools and talk to kids and steer them on the right path, Mr. Chair. I want to thank Collin for all he has done. Two weekends ago, Collin graduated from the amateur ranks of MMA and had his first professional fight. I am pleased to say – oddly enough, he actually fought someone named Brett “the Hitman” Hart, but Collin won with a technical knockout in the first round less than three minutes. So, that was his professional debut.

I just want to say thanks to Collin because he is an inspiration. He works closely with the children in Sheshatshiu with wrestling and with MMA. He even brought Georges St-Pierre of MMA fame, of course former champ, into Sheshatshiu to talk with the kids and inspire them and give them those talks that mean a lot.

When role models come in, Mr. Chair, and they open up their heart, they talk about what it takes to get to a certain spot and they put that dream in their grasp and it lets the kids know that no matter where you come from or what your background is that if you work hard enough and you dream high enough, you can get there. You just have to pay your dues.

With that, I want to congratulate Collin, a good friend of mine, on having his first professional victory. I want to thank him for this tireless work with the children in our district, being a role model for them, and I want to wish him the absolute very best.

With that, Mr. Chair, I just want to say thanks again to the great people of Lake Melville who

are always there to stand by my side. I just want to thank you for letting me have an opportunity to speak here today.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for St. John’s South.

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

Mr. Chair, I want to talk about the management put forward by the government on the opposite side over the time that they have been in government, the true picture of what has happened over the course of the years. They have talked a lot about how they have paid the debt down and how they put our oil royalties to good use, but let’s have a look at what has actually happened. We will have a look at what has actually happened.

Just as an example, in 2013-2014, 31 per cent of our revenue came from oil. It was anticipated that 36.5 per cent of our revenue would come from oil for 2014-2015. Now, we know that a barrel of oil has gone down, and the Minister of Finance has said that the shortfalls for the coming year will amount to \$1.5 billion.

It is a little concerning, but what I want to talk about is the Province’s debt. In 2003, Mr. Chair, when the government opposite took over, the Province’s debt was \$9.3 billion. Now let’s have a look at oil royalties for that year. We had \$126 million in oil royalties that year. This year, it was estimated that we would have \$2,380,000,000 in oil royalties.

Over the course of the years, Mr. Chair, we have gone from, in 2003-2004, \$126 million. The following year we had \$264 million. Now, we had a \$9.3 billion debt. Even though our oil royalties doubled, Mr. Chair, and we went from \$126 million in oil royalties to \$264 million, the debt went up, from \$9.3 billion to \$9.7 billion. I would hardly call that paying down the debt, but the true picture gets even more grim when you look at year by year.

The following year our oil royalties almost doubled again, in 2005-2006, to \$532 million.

What happened to our debt, Mr. Chair? Did it go down? No, the Province's debt went up, from \$9.7 billion to \$10 billion.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Shameful!

**MR. OSBORNE:** It is shameful.

Now let's have a look at the year after that. The Province's oil royalties were \$423 million. On top of that, Mr. Chair, we had Atlantic Accord royalties as well of \$329 million. Mr. Chair, did our debt go down? No. No, it did not. Our debt went up from \$10 billion to \$10.1 billion. Now you could say it was because our oil royalties went from \$532 million to \$423 million, fair enough. It went up from \$10 billion to \$10.1 billion.

Mr. Chair, we will have a look at the following year; \$1.7 billion, up from \$423 million – \$1.7 billion. As a bonus on top of that, we had \$494 million in Atlantic Accord revenue. What happened to our debt? We had gone from \$423 million in oil royalties to \$1.7 billion in oil royalties; from \$329 million in Atlantic Accord bonus to \$494 million in Atlantic Accord bonus. What happened to our debt? It stayed the same. It did not go down. It was \$10 billion the previous year and it was \$10 billion that year.

Mr. Chair, that is a lot of oil royalties. Yet, the Province did not pay the debt down. They did not put any money in a rainy day fund or a heritage fund like Alberta, and they did not pay the debt down.

Let's have a look at the year after that. We had gone from \$1.7 billion that year in oil royalties to \$2.2 billion. Get this – because we want to point to the true picture here – from \$494 million in bonus in Atlantic Accord revenues to \$1.7 billion in Atlantic Accord royalties. Mr. Chair, what happened to our debt? We had a \$10 billion debt the year before. We went from \$1.7 billion to \$2.2 billion and from \$494 million in Atlantic Accord to \$1.7 billion and our debt went from \$10 billion down to \$9.9 billion.

Can you imagine? What a legacy, Mr. Chair.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** What a mess.

**MR. OSBORNE:** What a mess is more like it. What a legacy.

Mr. Chair, the following year we had \$2.2 billion in oil royalties, only \$464 million in bonus Atlantic Accord royalties, and we went from \$9.9 billion in provincial debt to \$10.1 billion.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Up again.

**MR. OSBORNE:** Up again. That crowd over there, Mr. Chair, would have you believe that they paid the debt down, that the Province was in great hands, that the Province was well managed. Well, Mr. Chair, I beg to differ.

Mr. Chair, what happened the following year? We went from \$2.3 billion in oil royalties to \$2.7 billion in oil royalties. On top of that, we had an Atlantic Accord bonus of \$536 million. What happened to the debt? It went from \$10.3 billion to \$10.5 billion.

Now that is hard to figure out, Mr. Chair. That is hard to figure out. In all those oil royalties, the debt continued to climb? When they took power it was \$9.3 billion. It went up to \$10.5 billion. In good hands, the Province was in good hands. That is unbelievable.

Mr. Chair, we have collected \$20 billion in oil royalties over the years. There is no heritage fund. The debt had gone from \$9.3 billion when they took government, to over \$12 billion. They did not pay off the debt to help future generations. They mortgaged the future, that is what happened. No legacy fund. The legacy is a higher debt and \$20 billion in squandered oil royalties because of a higher debt. No legacy fund; a higher debt.

Mr. Chair, the Province was not in good hands. It was not well managed, not like they would have you believe. It was not well managed. That is the reality. We all know the reality, Mr. Chair. You had a government that was totally dependent on oil royalties without putting money aside, and the only legacy was a legacy of collecting \$20 billion in oil royalties. They cashed the cheques, ran to the bank with the cheques to cash them, but did not pay the debt down, did not put a legacy fund aside, Mr. Chair, but they were quick to cash the cheques.

Now, they will have you believe they are in trouble this year because the price of a barrel of oil went down, but let's have a look at the reality, Mr. Chair. They projected a barrel of oil in 2004 at \$28 a barrel, and they took in \$126 million in oil royalties. This year they projected a barrel of oil at \$105. Now, it might be \$85. That is a far cry from the \$28 a barrel when they took over. It is still significantly higher, and oil royalties are significantly higher when they took over, but they are in trouble.

Why are they in trouble? It is not because they could manage the books. Why are they in trouble, Mr. Chair? It is not because they could manage our resources. Why are they in trouble? It is not because they could manage the economy. Why are they in trouble? It is because they could not manage, that is the reality.

They are short on ideas. The only idea they had was how they could cash the cheques. They did not plan for the future. They did not help future generations. They did not stabilize industry in this Province. They simply cashed the cheques.

**CHAIR:** I remind the hon. member his time has expired.

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

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Chair, I appreciate the opportunity to make a few comments. I was certainly inspired by the speech given by my colleague and some of the comments he had made. I want to address those as I speak for the next few minutes.

Before I get into that, I do want to again reference a situation in my district with the Cottlesville fish plant, Mr. Chair. Obviously when people woke up yesterday morning it was devastating news, a hard blow to the community and the economy of the region. I think all members of the House understand the importance of a particular fish plant in a small

community and how it contributes to the very fabric of that community.

Mr. Chair, it is tough times for the region. I just want to let people know that we will work with you. Members of government that I have talked with share that concern. In the coming days I will be looking forward to talking with the mayor as well, as some of this unfolds and we get a better sense of the impact of what has transpired over the past day or two.

Mr. Chair, you sit in this House and you listen to people talking. The theme over there is that you had \$20 billion and you did not do anything with it. Everybody is talking about that. We have laid out billions and billions of dollars and you know I still have not heard over there where they say you should not have.

You can cherry-pick a few hundred thousand dollars or a million dollars but, Mr. Chair, our investments were about doing what is right for the people of the Province. We stand by that. We stand by the principle of that. Do you know what? They would argue against that. That is fair enough.

This issue about a rainy day fund, the member opposite just said we had no plans about the future. Really, Mr. Chair? Let me tell you a little bit about what has transpired in the past ten years.

I will speak about natural resources, the legacy, and the rainy day fund. Mr. Chair, they also talked about the fact we did not pay down debt. I disagree because we paid down the infrastructure debt in this Province. We have delivered to the people of the Province. They were crying out for the needs in their communities, in my community all around this Province.

We were absolutely poor when it comes to infrastructure, Mr. Chair, but we have spent billions of dollars paying down the infrastructure debt of this Province – billions. It is a little disingenuous to say we have not paid down debt. There are different kinds of debt.

As well, he did not mention pensions and the amount of money that was put into pensions; billions of dollars, Mr. Chair, so that we could



support pensions. He did not mention the public sector workers have gotten a 37 per cent pay increase under our government. It was desperately needed.

They were frozen in the 1990s under the Liberal government, Mr. Chair, perhaps for good reason, but it does not negate that they were frozen and they needed to be propped up in their income. Our government did that. We spent some of the \$20 billion to do that.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** I want to talk about legacy. Our government, Mr. Chair, has made great strides.

The member opposite talked about all the revenue coming from the offshore. That is revenue that came from decisions this government made. That is revenue, Mr. Chair, coming from negotiations and plans, and working with the oil industry – the revenue that comes into the Province. We have built on what took place previous to us taking over. Now we are able to negotiate the benefits for the people of the Province.

Let us talk about legacy. What we are doing, Mr. Chair, is making decisions around taking the revenue from our non-renewable resources and investing it in renewable. What that means is we are taking the money of today, the money that our resources are bringing in today, and we are sharing that out and we are taking care of needs.

We are taking a pot of that money, Mr. Chair, and we are investing it in renewable so that as long as the Churchill River flows – the people the member opposite just talked about, the next generation and our children – there will be a rainy day fund. As long as the river flows, we will make money off the Churchill River.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** It is really unfortunate, Mr. Chair, that they cannot connect that dot. To take non-renewables today, and not use it all today – we could spend it all. We all know there are needs right around this Province and in our districts, but we are not taking all the money

today and spending it. We are reinvesting. We are reinvesting so that the non-renewables can support generations to come because the right investments are made in renewable.

Let us talk about legacy and a rainy day fund. Mr. Chair, we have built Nalcor. We have built an energy warehouse in this Province. We have put it together. We are recognized around the world. Added to that, we have developed an Energy Plan that we have delivered on for the people of this Province.

Mr. Chair, 94 of the 107 recommendations in the Energy Plan are in place or are currently being worked on. What we have done in building the energy warehouse, in building a company that belongs to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador is that we are developing the future.

We have a plan, a vision on executing the development of the offshore, through Nalcor. We have not only created a new land tenure system, Mr. Chair, where we attract companies all over the world to come and spend money and invest and explore, so that we can plan the future for Newfoundland and Labrador, we have also improved safety in the offshore. It makes it more appealing for people to work in the offshore.

There are other things we are doing, Mr. Chair, around seismic work with our partnerships. We are creating the data to send a message to the world that we are the next North Sea, that we are the next frontier in oil development. We are laying down that groundwork for the next generation.

Added to that when you talk about legacy, there was a time in this Province – and we could go way back to the Liberal times or we can come all the way through history – when all we wanted to do was develop our resources for the sake of a few jobs. We were so desperate, we were so poor, we were willing to sacrifice and sell off our resources, in a lot of cases give it away so we could get a few jobs, Mr. Chair.

Well, Mr. Chair, that culture has changed under this government. This government has taken another step. It is not just about jobs. We have aggressive royalty regimes and are going to build on more.

We had a brand new industry that takes a long time to cultivate and grow, Mr. Chair, when you talk about the oil industry. Over the past ten or twelve years, we have some 600 companies in this Province working in the offshore oil and gas industry.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Six hundred, Mr. Chair.

We have grown the industry. We have grown an industry and we will continue, Mr. Chair, not just through land tenure, offshore safety, and the seismic work that we are doing. We have taken it a step from not just jobs, not just royalty, but we are taking our money that we are making on our non-renewable resources. The funding that we are getting from non-renewable, we are also taking equity shares out.

We are investing on behalf of the people of the Province so that when we invest in Muskrat Falls and the cheque is written for Muskrat Falls, it comes back to us. If there is money to be made on the power, it comes to us. That is legacy, Mr. Chair. That is planning. That is about future generations.

Mr. Chair, we are taking equity shares in the oil and gas development so that when the oil companies make money, we make money. If there is money to be made on oil, it is our resources; we are going to make it. That is legacy. That is about making the right decisions for future generations. That is what this government has been all about.

When we talk about legacy and we talk about rainy day funds, let's look at the big picture. Let's look at how we have taken and been able to develop our resources, Mr. Chair, and get more benefits from our resources than any other time in our history.

The member opposite was right. He kept pointing out all this revenue that is coming. Absolutely, because we are developing that offshore and we are going to continue. We are making prudent decisions around investing in the necessary infrastructure, Mr. Chair, that was desperately needed.

It is no good to have a war chest, it is no good to have a bank account when you still have mould in the schools and you have roofs leaking and roads are not fit to drive on. We all know that, Mr. Chair. It is hard to put money away. We could not afford to pay all the debt because we could not afford not to take care of the infrastructure in our communities, and we have been doing that.

What is important, whether it is through Muskrat Falls and the right investments in the renewable side of our resources to give us that revenue for generations to come, whether it is building the energy warehouse, whether it is taking equity, we are trying to make sure – and we have done that time and time again – that the benefits that are in our resources, we enjoy them today, Mr. Chair, so the seniors of today can enjoy the resources of today. Make no mistake about it, Mr. Chair, decisions we are making is making sure that the children of our future are also going to have a chance to share in the wealth of the resources of this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

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

Mr. Chair, I am going to have a couple of more remarks. I am not going to go at the member opposite directly because I kind of like the guy, but I will address some of the remarks that he made.

We are going to have a look at non-renewable resources. He talked about taking money from our non-renewable resources and investing in our renewable resources, but, Mr. Chair, let's have a look at our pulp and paper mills. In 2003, there were three in the Province. Today there is only one. Now, we did invest a lot of money in one of those mills in Central Newfoundland because we rushed into this House, we rushed through legislation, and we expropriated that mill. It left a big boondoggle for the taxpayers of this Province, an environmental liability. So I am not sure if that is investing in our renewal resources.

I want to talk about bridges as well, because in the Auditor General's report just recently, Mr. Chair, talking about improving our infrastructure. There was a plan to repair our bridges in this Province, and most of the bridges that were promised to be repaired were not repaired, as the Auditor General pointed out, Mr. Chair. So not all of the infrastructure issues were addressed either.

I want to go back to one of the legacies, Mr. Chair, of the government opposite. In addition to the fact that when they took office there was a \$9.3 billion debt and today there is a \$12 billion debt, even though they had \$20 billion in oil royalties. That is not a legacy they should be proud of, but there is another aspect of this, Mr. Chair.

In the 1980s, when the Atlantic Accord was signed – and this is important, this is very important. In the 1980s when the Atlantic Accord was signed it was a twenty-year deal. No matter how much royalties we received from oil, we were still going to get transfer payments under the Atlantic Accord agreement. We all remember that deal. We all remember the announcement: Someday the sun will shine and have not will be no more. Everybody remembers that announcement.

Well, Mr. Chair, part of that agreement was twenty years of Atlantic Accord. Well, we also remember a guy rolling down the escalator at the airport with his sunglasses on saying that the future was so bright he had to wear his shades. We all remember that. He had a \$2 billion cheque in his hand. Well, actually he had an empty envelope because the cheque came later, but he had a \$2 billion promise to the people of the Province. Do you know where that came from? We did not get twenty years under the Atlantic Accord, Mr. Chair, we got fifteen. We got fifteen years under the Atlantic Accord.

Let me put it another way. We kind of mortgaged five years of the future for a \$2 billion cheque. Now that is the truth. If it not true, I challenge any member to stand up opposite and tell me it is not true. We did not get twenty years under the Atlantic Accord, Mr. Chair, we got fifteen.

Part of the legacy, in addition to having a \$9.3 billion debt when they took office and a \$12 billion debt today, Mr. Chair, is the fact that they borrowed \$2 billion against the future. They did that, and we got fifteen years instead of twenty years of transfers under the Atlantic Accord.

Now, that is the reality. That is what happened in this Province, Mr. Chair. In a decade that we had the highest oil revenues in this Province, we still needed to steal \$2 billion from the future. Now that is the reality, Mr. Chair. That is the legacy. That is what happened. We can talk about the legacy we left the future but it is hard to do that when you steal from it. It is hard to do that when you steal from the future.

Mr. Chair, government was supposed to use the oil to control the destiny in this Province to determine our future. They were supposed to use that to help set up industry, to make the future brighter. The promise of hope, the promise that future generations would have it easy because of the non-renewable oil royalties in the wealthiest decade that this Province has ever seen. Did it happen – did it happen? I ask the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace, did it happen?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No.

**MR. OSBORNE:** I ask the Member for Conception Bay South or St. John's North, did that happen?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No.

**MR. OSBORNE:** It did not happen. We talk about how the Province was managed, Mr. Chair, and that did not happen.

Mr. Chair, there was a recent report by TD Bank that predicted housing prices in Newfoundland and Labrador could fall by about 10 per cent this year. The Finance Minister, when he was interviewed on that topic, agreed with that assessment and expected the slump to hit several areas of the Province.

Even though, Mr. Chair, we have about \$2 billion in oil royalties projected for this year, it did not help the housing market. He said we are going to see shrinkage in housing markets and the economy for the next year or two. That is

what he said in an interview. He said we might see impacts in retail sales, some impact on housing prices. He projected five more years of deficits.

I am just going to go back, Mr. Chair. In 2004 we had a \$28 barrel of oil. In 2004 we had \$126 million in oil royalties. This year, they projected oil at \$105 a barrel, but the average is going to be \$85 over the course of the year, roughly speaking. That is what we figure, thereabouts. We will find out when the Budget comes out exactly what it was, but about \$2 billion in oil royalties.

How much did we get this year under the Atlantic Accord transfers?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Nothing.

**MR. OSBORNE:** Nothing. Why? Because it was borrowed for a few years ago.

Mr. Chair, even though oil royalties went from \$126 million a year when they took office to almost \$2 billion a year this year, and oil by the barrel was \$28 and this year it is about \$85, you would think that there would not be challenges with housing prices, or retail sales, or five years of projected deficit. You would think if the money was properly invested, if industry was propped up around the Province, if non-renewable resources were used to make renewable resources stronger, if we seriously improved tourism in rural areas of the Province, you would that even though oil was \$28 a barrel in 2003-2004, and \$85 a barrel this year, that there would not be that drastic an effect if there was a legacy fund instead of the legacy that they left, Mr. Chair.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business Report – I want to talk about that for a second because they basically said that since 2003 when the Tories took office, they figure that there was \$11 billion squandered. We took \$20 billion in, in oil royalties and, on top of that, we had Atlantic Accord transfer payments, but they figured there was \$11 billion squandered. Go figure! That is the legacy fund we got. That is what the future has to look forward to, the future generations, Mr. Chair. That is what happened in this Province, and they call it good management.

Mr. Chair, if you went into your banker and talked about huge revenues you had over the past decade but you got five years of deficits, your banker looked at you and said what the heck happened – but we want to borrow more money. What do you think your banker would say? Do you know what? We all know what your banker would say. Your banker would say you have not managed your finances well. What have you been doing with your finances? You have not managed them well. Yet, there are people in this House, Mr. Chair, who want the general public to believe that they have managed it well – not true.

**CHAIR:** The hon. member's time has expired.

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

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

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

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

I am very happy to once again stand and speak to Bill 44, An Act for Granting to Her Majesty Certain Sums of Money for Defraying Certain Expenses of the Public Service for the Financial Year Ending March 31, 2016 and for Other Purposes Relating to the Public Service.

Mr. Chair, I particularly would like to talk about some of the concerns of the good people of St. John's Centre because when we are talking about Interim Supply, when we are talking about Budgets, we are talking about how we use our resources to ensure that people are able to live their lives fully and to ensure that decisions are made in the best interest of the people, but also that decisions are made that are good for the economy. We know that when we have strong, healthy people that that bodes well for our economy.

It was interesting to read some of the presentations that were done in pre-Budget consultations. Mr. Chair, there are some things that I find particularly concerning. The role of the Premier is to ensure that there is a steady hand on the tiller, to ensure that our Province is operating at its optimal, in terms over the economy, and in terms of the services that are

needed by our people in order to be the best that they can, in order for their well-being.

The Premier, a number of times, has stated that everything is on the table. I believe that has created an atmosphere and an environment of instability. I believe that what he has done has created fear-mongering, Mr. Chair. We see it not only in the public service, because we still see the effects of the big cuts that we saw in 2013, and there are still roll-out effects of the layoffs there; but also, we are seeing it in the non-profit organizations in my district who serve the people of St. John's Centre and who also serve the people outside of St. John's Centre and across the Province.

I spoke last week on the fears of the women's centre. They need assurance that their budget will not be cut. We know that in tough economic times that some of the people who are most affected negatively are people who have a harder time economically. So, I am concerned, Mr. Chair, from the reports that I have heard from some of the groups that are in my district, in the District of St. John's Centre.

CHANNAL is an incredible non-profit organization that does support – they do peer support and peer counselling for people who are suffering from mental health issues, sometimes mental health crises or ongoing chronic mental health issues. We know, again, that people who have mental health issues that they are dealing with are often more economically challenged than other people in our society. CHANNAL does not know what their budget will be.

Turnings is another crucial organization in the District of St. John's Centre. Turnings provides services for people who have been in conflict with the law and who have mental health, but particularly addictions problems. We know that the majority of people who are incarcerated in our correctional facilities across the Province are people who have mental health issues and, especially, addictions issues. Nobody knows whether they will be suffering budget cuts at all. We also know that they are working with barebones budgets for the past few years. They were cut the year before last, their budget was. Yet again, in tough economic times, people who are economically challenged suffered

disproportionately when there are tough economic times.

Bridges To Hope is a food pantry in St. John's Centre and not only do they have a food pantry or food bank, but they also do cooking programs for people who are economically disadvantaged, teaching people how to stretch a dollar with food. We all know that when we go to the grocery store – I find every week that I am in the grocery store that the price of food has increased. Trying to buy fruits and produce at this time of year, the prices are incredible, but we see the price of food increasing without people's basic income increasing.

Child care, a big issue in St. John's Centre – there are a few child care centres, but in St. John's Centre there are a lot of working families. So we have working families who are trying to pay off student loans, they are trying to pay high rent or mortgage payments and on top of that, they have child care payments. If they have two children, they could be looking at anywhere from \$1,500 to \$2,000 a month for child care. These are young, working families who are trying to get ahead. They find that they are just scrambling for the basic necessities of life, not for luxuries but, in fact, just to keep their heads above water, as parents are working.

The fear that has been instilled by the Premier by talking about everything is on the table also is affecting small businesses in St. John's Centre.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

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

I have also spoken to small businesses in my district and they are seeing that working families, people on limited incomes, are not spending as much money because they are afraid of the impending Budget. The women's centre, they are worried about the impending Budget. Public sector workers – there are a lot of public sector workers who live in St. John's Centre. How many public sector workers have spoken to me about their concerns about their jobs?

There is a climate of fear, Mr. Chair. I believe the role of government is to assure people, to

step up when there are tough economic situations, when there are tough economic challenges that are facing us. The role of government is to step up and to assure people. It is not to withdraw. It is not to abandon the people of the Province. It is to be able to make sure that everybody is able to keep their head above water as we navigate these tough economic times.

They are temporary. The Premier is starting to talk about that. He is starting to talk about the fact that they are temporary, that there will be longer term plans to show that we will be able to bounce back, but people cannot bounce back if they are going to hit rock bottom. The role of this government is to assure groups who are doing the work of the state, who are ensuring that people have what they need to continue, it is the role of government to assure those groups that they will have the funding they need to do the work that is needed during these tough economic times.

I believe that Cabinet ministers at this time must meet with community groups that are relying on public funding. It is not the government's money. It is the money of the people and they are doing the work of the people. It is time that Cabinet ministers assure these groups that they will not be cut any further because they are already cut to the bone and they are doing, at times, life-saving work.

Seniors in St. John's Centre – we have among the highest percentage of seniors in the receipt of OAS and GIS. That amounts to about \$1,200 a month. If these seniors are renting, their rent is probably about \$750 a month. Their heat and light is averaging about \$200 a month. Their phone and cable is probably about \$100 a month. That leaves them with \$150 a month for food, for transportation, for clothing, for medication that is not covered by our Pharmacare – \$150 a month, Mr. Chair; it is not possible for them to survive.

We need more housing supplements for seniors. We need portable housing supplements to help seniors who are on OAS and GIS. The Minister Responsible for Housing said he was going to look at that, that he was going to do portable housing supplements to help these seniors.

Mr. Chair, this government has to do what is good for the economy.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MS ROGERS:** What is good for the economy is taking care of the people who are most negatively impacted by these economic challenges that we face. Government has to step up and has to assure people so that they can deal with this climate of fear that this Premier himself has promoted by saying that everything is on the table.

**CHAIR:** The hon. member's time has expired.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** I move the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise, report progress and sit again.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Port de Grave.

**MR. LITTLEJOHN:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of the Whole is reporting that the Committee has

considered the matters to them referred,  
reporting progress and ask leave to sit again.

When shall the Committee sit again?

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted.  
Committee ordered to sit again on tomorrow.

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

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Mr. Speaker, I move,  
seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources,  
that the House do now adjourn.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that this House  
do now adjourn.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 1:30 o'clock  
tomorrow.

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