



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FORTY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

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Volume XLVII

THIRD SESSION

Number 66

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HANSARD

*Speaker: Honourable Wade Verge, MHA*

Tuesday

March 24, 2015

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

Today I am pleased to welcome to the public gallery Ms Bethany Downer, MUN student and founder of One Step Shoe Recycling.

I am also pleased to welcome to the public gallery some representatives of Memorial University's School of Social Work, including members of the graduating class of 2015, as well as Field Education Co-ordinator Sheri McConnell.

Welcome to the House of Assembly.

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

#### Statements by Members

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today we will be hearing members' statements from the Members for the District of St. George's – Stephenville East, St. John's Centre, Carbonear – Harbour Grace, Humber Valley, Virginia Waters, and from St. Barbe.

The hon. the Member for the District of St. George's – Stephenville East.

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

I rise today to pay tribute to a great citizen of our Province, Fred Madore of Jeffrey's. He will be remembered by many as a regular caller to Open Line shows who kept us politicians on our toes.

Fred had a passion for this Province and especially for the Bay St. George South area of the West Coast where he lived. Over the years he spoke out on the state of roads, medical care, and many other issues.

To many of us, Fred was an entertaining speaker who made his points forcefully. To his wife, he was a devoted husband; to his children, he was a proud and loving father; to others, he was a brother, friend, and co-worker.

Fred Madore was not elected to any official political position in government, but he was a

leader in his own way. He influenced and added to public debates which were happening in our Province. He will be remembered fondly by many.

I ask all members of this House to join with me in showing our appreciation for the contribution of Fred Madore to political life in this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MS ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, I am thrilled to acknowledge and honour the social work graduating class of 2015. Soon, sixty-eight new social workers will be set loose on our community. They have spent years learning and preparing for this time.

They have been challenged by anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and feminist theory. They have challenged back, looking at how the state responds to the needs of people. They have explored progressive mental health practices and critiqued child protection and anti-poverty policies.

They have worked hard, both in school and in field placements applying their knowledge, learning more, and also bringing fresh ideas to the workplace. The amazing Jason Wiseman did his placement with my office and it was a wonderful experience for us all.

These students are ready. They are ready to give back. They are ready to work in our hospitals, in our schools, to work in our public service, to work with the incredible community groups who are doing life-saving work.

In honour of Social Work Month, I thank these amazing women and men for their commitment and dedication. I thank their teachers for giving them the tools they need to go out there and change the world. I look forward to them serving the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Bravo, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. SLADE:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate Zoe Hamilton, a teacher at Carbonear Academy, for winning the 2013-2014 National Award for Teaching Excellence in Physical Education.

This award honours Canadian teachers who provide outstanding teaching performances at all levels, have an exceptional ability to motivate students to participate in physical activities, and who further physical education in Canada.

Zoe is very passionate about instilling in young girls a sense of equality, empowerment, self-esteem, and positive body image, all of which are embraced in her physical education classes.

Her classroom becomes a community in which all students are respected, accepted and treated equally and where health and wellness are exemplified.

Contributing to the physical education profession both on a provincial and national level for the past twelve years, Zoe is the current president of the provincial NLTA Physical Education Special Interest Council and sits on the Council of Provinces and Territories for Physical and Health Education Canada.

Zoe is the ninth national winner in the last ten years from Newfoundland and Labrador.

I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating Zoe Hamilton on winning this prestigious award.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate the organizers of the third annual *Snow Ride for*

*Autism* which was held in my District of Humber Valley, this past Saturday.

The charity snowmobile ride began in 2013 as a way to highlight the importance of learning about the challenges facing those with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and to assist the Autism Society in their fundraising efforts.

Mr. Speaker, the Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador depends almost exclusively on the donations and fundraising events like the *Snow Ride* to run their programs. This past weekend over \$8,600 was collected for the Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador. It was great fun to join everyone who took part in the snowmobile ride throughout the district to support autism awareness. I am delighted to say that over 150 snowmobile riders from all over the Province took part.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating the Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, regional assistant manager Kelli Lannon, board member Donna Giles, and the steering committee on such a successful event.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters.

**MS C. BENNETT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize Bethany Downer from the District of Virginia Waters.

Ms Downer, an innovative geography student attending Memorial University, has always had a desire to start her own not-for-profit organization. In 2014, she attended the 2014 Impact! Student Leadership Conference. At this conference she was encouraged to act on her passion to make a difference; a real sustainable difference.

“One Step Recycling” was created. The mission of the charity is to bring unwanted pairs of shoes to those who can put them to better use worldwide. Since September 2014, 5,936 pairs

of shoes have been collected and redistributed. That's the equivalent to over 9,000 pounds diverted from landfills.

The shoes go to various organizations across Canada with priorities to low-income families, homeless shelters, and women shelters Ms Downer's organization's mission is to create sustainable communities and bringing those in need one step closer to a better life.

Mr. Speaker, I ask hon. members to join me in recognizing Bethany and her incredible ingenuity in encouraging others to value sustainable practices. Her leadership in protecting the environment and her passion for social justice are making a real difference every day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I rise in this hon. House to congratulate Kaylee Gerrow of Rocky Harbour on being selected for the Newfoundland and Labrador Women's Hockey Team, to compete at the Canada Winter Games hosted in Prince George, British Columbia, February 13-March 1, 2015. The Newfoundland and Labrador Women's Hockey Team placed ninth, and it was a great experience.

Kaylee plays for the Gros Morne Minor Hockey and the Western AAA Midget Female teams. She joined the Atom Team in Gros Morne at the age of ten, the team won gold at the Provincial "J" Championships, and she was hooked on hockey! Kaylee's previous accomplishments include a gold medal at the Newfoundland and Labrador Winter Games 2014 and a silver medal at the Atlantic Challenge Cup 2013.

Kaylee attributes her success to what she has taken from her role model and friend, the late Vanessa Brown saying, "You always have to work for what you want, treat everyone with respect, always be positive, make the most of everything, and take nothing for granted."

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating Kaylee Gerrow.

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

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

### Statements by Ministers

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in this hon. House to speak to the substantial infrastructure investments this government has made in communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our commitment was demonstrated when the Department of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs introduced new cost-share ratios in 2008. The revised formula freed up monies for communities to invest in other programs and service delivery areas. It meant that towns with populations less than 3,000 only pay 10 per cent toward their approved infrastructure projects, with the Province covering the remaining 90 per cent. Towns with population greater than 3,000 but less than 7,000 pay 20 per cent, with government paying the 80 per cent difference. For towns with populations exceeding 7,000, the Province pays 70 per cent, and the town pays the remaining 30 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, since these ratios were implemented, for every \$1 municipalities invest, the provincial government invests between \$1.5 and \$6.6, depending on a municipality's population. Lower contributions for our municipalities makes infrastructure more affordable for them and may mean they do not need to borrow or incur debt to finance their share. In fact, since 2006, municipalities' debt service ratios have decreased on average by 10 per cent.

Since 2008, the provincial government has approved in excess of \$820 million in municipal capital works projects resulting in improvements to drinking water, waste water systems, as well

as recreational infrastructure. Just this past year, the Department of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs committed to a \$200 million three-year capital works program for new municipal infrastructure projects. When federal and municipal contributions are included, the total investment since 2008 is in excess of \$1.3 billion.

In addition, the new Building Canada Fund will provide approximately \$349 million in federal funding to the Province over the next ten years. When combined with provincial and municipal cost sharing, the total investment for this fund in provincial and municipal infrastructure is expected to be \$800 million and \$1 billion in additional investment.

Mr. Speaker, the department has received in excess of eighty applications for the new Building Canada Fund. We are currently in the process of assessing these applications and expect to submit proposed projects to the federal government in the coming months.

Our government recognizes that investing in infrastructure promotes economic development and supports the provincial economy. We continue to work collaboratively with communities throughout the Province to advance their infrastructure priorities, recognizing that there is more work to do to support our communities and residents and provide them with modern and reliable infrastructure.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. There is no doubt the capital works that are provided by the government did make a difference in a lot of communities and towns, and there has been some great work down across the Province, Mr. Speaker.

I just find it kind of strange that he did not mention the large towns, where they took away the MOGs for large towns – that is not added in

this, the money that is subtracted. I look at the past two ministers, Mr. Speaker – and I am sure this minister is very different, and the Member for Gander was very different, but the past two ministers, you got funding and it depended where you lived. If you lived in a Liberal district, you had problems. I will use Lark Harbour, for example, which was committed last year \$1.2 million – they never got it – for amalgamation.

I look at the boil water advisories in the Province – still high. It is great if you give a town a Cadillac system, but you need to give the resources to run the system. That is what this government is missing. They are saying we are giving out all of this money, you can have all of this major infrastructure, but they need to operate the system, Mr. Speaker. Water is something that we all need in this life. We all need it. So we need to let the town have some resources to make sure that they operate these great systems.

I say to the minister, I look forward to working with you with amalgamation on Lark Harbour-York Harbour and capital works. I know this minister, from the previous past, who has a different mindset to help everybody out in the Province.

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

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

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

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

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

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement, but the minister and his government are fully aware that municipalities do not get enough funding as it is now and there are going to be problems in the future. They are also fully aware of the falling populations in rural areas of the Province also drops the per capita share that they get from such funds as the Building Canada Fund. This is also going to add to the municipal funding problem in the future as well, if they do not address the population concerns that we have.

Municipalities have put forth other funding arrangements to government. It is going to be interesting to see what government is going to be offering back to municipalities come this Budget.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this hon. House to highlight a new innovative education and awareness initiative developed by Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and Newfoundland Power in partnership with our government.

This initiative and its trademark slogan SWITCH ON YOUR LIFE was launched last Wednesday at Holy Spirit High School in Conception Bay South. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development attended the launch and was joined by students, teachers, representatives from post-secondary institutions, and employees of Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and Newfoundland Power.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial government has contributed more than \$389,000 over three years to this project. Funding is provided by my department through the Labour Market Partnerships Program of the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Labour Market Development Agreement.

The overall goal of the initiative is to educate young professionals in our Province about the many interesting and diverse career opportunities available in the electricity industry in Newfoundland and Labrador. The website – [www.electricityindustry.nl.ca](http://www.electricityindustry.nl.ca) – is a valuable information tool that provides details about the electricity industry, details on the educational requirements for particular careers, and the benefits of working in this industry.

Through the development of marketing and communication tools targeted primarily at youth,

as well as curriculum that will be offered in some high schools through the Province, we hope to encourage more young men and women to learn about the industry and explore the employment opportunities available in this particular sector.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage everyone to visit the website, to learn more about this exciting and worthwhile initiative. Educating our young people on the variety of career paths and opportunities available to them here in Newfoundland and Labrador will help to encourage more young people to stay in this Province to study, work and raise their families.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the goal of the SWITCH ON YOUR LIFE initiative is to educate young professionals on the career opportunities available in the Province's electricity industry. Not surprisingly, a visit to the website reveals there are no projections around how many of these positions will be needed over the mid to long term – none.

These programs take several years to complete. Choosing a career, Mr. Speaker, is a big decision. It is irresponsible of government to promote any career without updated labour market projections. Government continues to make the same mistake, promoting and funding trades without updated labour market information.

Mr. Speaker, two years ago it was government's own ADM for Labour Market Development who said himself the outlook twenty numbers were outdated then, and there are still no new numbers. In those two years, Mr. Speaker, this Province has lost 10,000 jobs.

I say a failure to plan is a plan to fail. Government is promoting its SWITCH ON YOUR LIFE initiative but this government is truly in the dark when it comes to labour market development.

**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 his statement. It is good to see an effort to involve youth in a particular career. This effort is needed in many sectors to slow the outmigration of young people.

A report from the Federation of Labour, called Opportunities and Challenges for Young Workers, urged government to address barriers to labour force participation that youth face such as high student debt and employer requirements for years of experience. It urged the government, and I support them in that, to reprioritize action on youth retention, involve youth in planning, and learn from best practices in other jurisdictions.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, over the past decade the provincial government has worked successfully to ensure students in every corner of Newfoundland and Labrador have the opportunity to have their educational needs met through distance education. Recently, I took part in a course demonstration at the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation in Gander, along with my colleague, the Member for Gander, and had the opportunity to see firsthand the innovative techniques being used to educate our students throughout the Province.

As a former educator, with a strong background in CDLI, I know how distance education can provide high-quality programming to students in rural, remote, and isolated regions, where smaller enrolment and the availability of specialist teachers might otherwise have limited their opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, our government wants every student in our Province to reach their full potential and through the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation, we are ensuring that students, regardless of location, have access to the courses they need for a rich and diverse educational experience.

Since 2004, the provincial government has invested more than \$71 million in distance learning which has allowed teachers in areas such as skilled trades, core French, science, mathematics, and music to reach over 20,000 students throughout the Province.

With forty-six staff, including twenty-nine distance teachers, CDLI's mandate includes the development and delivery of senior high school distance education programming, online teacher professional development, and providing oversight of various K-12 technology integration initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, in the past decade, CDLI has grown from offering twenty-five courses in ninety-three high schools to offering over forty courses in more than 110 high schools. The program has also expanded to offer senior high course review material to assist all students with final or supplementary public exams and free online tutoring to senior high and intermediate students Province-wide.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to meeting the needs of students and staff in rural and remote communities throughout the Province by investing in distance learning to ensure that all students have access to education no matter where they live.

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. CDLI was established under a Liberal government in 2001 to ensure equal access to educational opportunities for all of our students, regardless of where they live in Newfoundland and Labrador.

On behalf of the Official Opposition, I would like to thank the teachers and the staff at CDLI for all of their great work, everything they have been doing to try and make Newfoundland and Labrador a world leader in online and distance education. Given this Province's disbursed population and our geography, the remoteness of some of our communities, we ought to be a leader in distance education in the world.

Teachers and staff at CDLI know, Mr. Speaker, that there is lots more to be done. There is lots more to be done to build on the work they have done over the past fifteen years – but that cannot be done with less funding. So, it is unfortunate that CDLI has seen its budget cut by more than a million dollars in just the past few years. That is when times were good and oil was high, and as the previous Finance Minister said, we were flush with cash.

Then they also cut the Virtual Teacher Centre, which provided Province-wide online professional development for teachers for more than a decade. Mr. Speaker, we are probably going to need more distance education if they keep building schools too small.

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

I remind the member his time has expired.

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

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

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 her statement.

Due to our geography and the size of our communities, the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation is incredibly important to help our students in rural schools get the education they need and deserve. I hope the minister read the NLTA pre-budget consultation and listens to their recommendations that small rural schools receive additional allocations, as identified by need of the school to meet the program requirements. That government establish a committee to oversee integration of technology in the classroom, and that the committee involve teachers in the ongoing review, approval, and evaluation of the educational suitability of technology for education.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

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

Government's fall update was released on December 16 and projected a deficit of \$916 million and \$63 oil, but since then oil has averaged in the mid-fifties, around \$56. Once again, government's recent forecasting has proven to be inaccurate.

I ask the Premier: Based on oil trading lower than you forecast in December, what is the new projected deficit for this year?

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** We recognized in the fall that the oil prices were going to be staying down for some time. The Premier announced some actions we were going to take at that time to curtail expenditures to ensure that we were – when we did that update, we were going to try to stay focused on meeting that target by making some adjustments in our expenditure levels throughout the latter part of this fiscal year. We have done that. That target that we set with the



update, we are still working towards that, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

The question was based on the price of oil, which is we were looking for an update. Obviously, this is not being followed closely.

I want to go back to a few months ago when the Premier said that nobody could see the price of oil dropping so low this year. If you look back to 2007, to the Energy Plan, they predicted oil between \$60 and \$70 a barrel this year in 2015. That was in 2007.

I ask Premier: Since your Energy Plan in 2007 predicted for oil prices to be reasonably accurate, why didn't you just stick to that plan?

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** Mr. Speaker, each year when government develops its Budget, it reaches out to experts who provide advice, not just to this government but governments around the world – investment houses. They provide advice to people like ourselves. They monitor this. They have their finger on the pulse of what is happening globally and they are able to provide some significant advice to people like ourselves.

Over the last four years we have relied on that advice, and they have held us in pretty good position. If you consider what our forecast has been –

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** If look at our forecasting for the last ten years and what our actual performance has been, there has only been three years of the last twelve where our forecast was higher than we actually achieved. I would

suggest, Mr. Speaker, that advice has held us in good position for some twelve years.

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

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

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

Well, the advice you took in the 2007 Energy Plan is obviously better advice than you got for this year.

Mr. Speaker, the government made big decisions based on short-term oil pricing, the development of Muskrat Falls to name just one; however, the long-term forecast they laid out in the 2007 Energy Plan is much more accurate.

I ask the Premier: Why did you make decisions based on oil trading over \$100 a barrel when your Energy Plan in 2007 predicted it to be only in the mid-seventies?

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** One of the things that members opposite would also appreciate is planning, strategic plans, long-term visionary plans, obviously, are able to be informed by information you have at that time. They are also living documents. They change over a period of time, I say, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** They do change over a period of time. What we would have forecasted in 2007 – as new information became available, you adjust your plans based on new information, like we are doing today.

Last fall, when we realized oil prices had changed significantly back in July, and now the forecasting was not going to be as prosperous as we thought, very different than we thought last year, we adjusted the course accordingly, just like we did from 2007 and the out years. We

will continue to do that, adjust the course to reflect current-day realities.

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

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

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

**MR. BALL:** I say to the minister and to the Premier, it seems to me that the old information that you had in 2007 is much more accurate than you are actually using today.

Speaking of planning, Mr. Speaker, government had an Energy Plan which they obviously did not follow. They had a 10-Year Sustainability Plan they walked away from in year two. They committed to reducing the per capita debt to the national average, but instead that has been increased. They published mandate letters that they have not committed to follow.

I ask the Premier: Why don't you just follow the plans that you are putting taxpayers' money of Newfoundland and Labrador in? Why can't you just follow your plan?

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

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

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

It is a good discussion happening here today. I am glad members are providing opportunity for the minister and I to respond to them. Regardless of their continuous interruptions across the way, we will continue to provide the answers and the information, Mr. Speaker.

It is important to know – and the Minister of Finance has highlighted it – that you set plans and then plans have to be fluid. You have to be able to adjust plans.

Just recently, there was significant discussion on child care in this Province, Mr. Speaker. We have a ten-year plan that we are implementing. Within that plan there are several projects and several programs that we are working towards –

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** – into approved child care in Newfoundland and Labrador. As we roll out those plans and we see the realities of the impacts of those plans, we adjust them so we get the best benefit for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

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

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

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

It has been very obvious that as you roll out a plan you spend just as much time rolling up plans and getting rid of them, I would say.

Mr. Speaker, the government made bad management decisions which resulted in a loss of 7,600 full-time jobs in the last year. On top of that, we are seeing a ripple effect as the Alberta oil patch and now the commuting workforce are not being called back.

I ask the Premier: Do your Budget projections include a decline in the commuting workforce?

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

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

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

We know the impacts of the world oil prices are impacting provinces from coast to coast, Mr. Speaker. They are impacting the federal government. They are impacting provinces that are heavily reliant on oil as part of their economy and they are having impacts.

We also have projects underway such as the Muskrat Falls Project, Mr. Speaker, which has provided jobs to thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians – thousands. While the numbers change and move, as we move through the cycles of construction and the different phases of construction, we are glad to see that our economy is still very strong in Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Speaker, we waded through difficult times in 2008-2009, and we will do it again now.

**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 that 7,600 full-time jobs, just imagine where that would be today if it was not for those megaprojects that we have.

Mr. Speaker, one of the key things about economic diversification, there has been a lot said about that. Last April, government announced it was negotiating with Rentech for the development of Central and Northern Peninsula timber resources but, last fall, they admitted that there were multiple challenges during negotiations and have refused a further update.

I ask the Premier: It has been over two years since the Expressions of Interest was announced for these resources; why is it taking so long to put this deal together?

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

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the hon. member. As I said in the House a day or two ago, negotiations with Rentech are ongoing; they have been ongoing for a number of months. The industry is a very competitive industry. We are concerned with the issues out in Central Newfoundland, as we are with the industry on the Northern Peninsula.

As I said a couple of days ago, we are negotiating with Rentech; they have other interests around the world. They are interested in Newfoundland. We are negotiating. We are getting down to the fine points, Mr. Speaker. When I get to the point where I have something to say on that, I will in the House.

Thank you.

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

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

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

It has been six years actually since Central Newfoundland saw the expropriation of the Abitibi mill. Will the minister at least give some information to the people in Central Newfoundland? When can they expect to see this deal finalized?

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, the member has answered questions on this; he has demonstrated our commitment as a government to continue our efforts to achieve an agreement with Rentech. It is very important to not only us as a government, but also the people of Central Newfoundland, the central part of the Island. It is very important to them. It is important to us. We are consistent with that.

Mr. Speaker, we have to work with business, we have to work with opportunities, and we have a good track record as a government in doing that – partnering with businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador, bringing business to Newfoundland and Labrador, diversifying our economy, and in supporting those who come here to hire Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

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

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

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

Each year the Business Investment Corporation, a Crown corporation of government, is writing off millions of dollars as bad debt. Since 2010, there has been a steady increase in the amount of money that is being written off. In 2014 alone, it was \$6 million.

I ask the minister: What measures have been put in place to protect taxpayers' money?

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

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

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

I would like to answer that question. I have some information here which is kind of interesting.

As he has said, in 2014 seventy-one investments were written off; 91.3 per cent were from older portions of the portfolio that existed prior to the creation of Business Investment Corporation. So, in other words, Mr. Speaker, the majority of writeoffs in 2014 were investments made under the previous Administration.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for the history –

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

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

**MR. CROCKER:** – lesson and if he wants to do history lessons, let's go back and talk about cucumbers.

Mr. Speaker, this government does not have a great track record of ensuring oversight of management of taxpayers' money. The Business Investment Corporation has written off \$40 million as bad debt.

I ask the minister: Will he table a list of all of the writeoffs, and can he explain why \$40 million of taxpayers' hard-earned money has just been written off?

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

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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting he asked me a supplementary question, the same question he just asked me, the same question which the answer just embarrassed him and his party. He remains

asking the same question, so I will again answer it.

When he talks about the money that is written off, the vast majority of that money was written off by the past Administration. Instead of asking me, it would probably be best if he asked the Member for the Bay Islands who was part of the Administration during that time. He may be able to answer that question better than even myself.

Thank you.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters.

**MS C. BENNETT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can certainly understand why the minister might have difficulty understanding that question. I am not sure he has actually read the terms and conditions of some of those loans and those equity investments.

Again, I would like to ask the minister: Will you table a list of every one of those companies who you gave a writeoff to?

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

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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to go back to the officials in the department and ask for that list. Many on that list, of course, the members opposite would be familiar with, as they were created during their Administration.

I would be happy to endeavour to get that information for the member.

Thank you very much.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters.

**MS C. BENNETT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have heard about this government's Crown corporation writing off millions of dollars that they were accountable for ensuring was repaid. Government continues to talk about increasing revenue and cutting expenses. Have you ever thought that maybe what you might want to try to do is to get your fiscal house in order?

In 2013, the AGs report, for example, had nineteen recommendations related to health care in the Province. These recommendations were made to improve health expenditures.

With thirty-six cents of every dollar going to health care, why aren't you ensuring that the AG's recommendations are implemented and taxpayers' hard-earned money is being spent in the right way?

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** I am always amused by the member opposite when she stands and asks questions about getting our fiscal house in order. It was not all that long ago, in fact, you only have to go back to 2003 and 2004 when this government, this Province, was almost bankrupt, as a result of what? As the result of a Liberal Administration's mismanagement over many, many years of this Province's finances.

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** In our tenure we were about the first five or six years that we were in government trying to restore some semblance of control –

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** – put in place good fiscal policies, management policies, to ensure that we were positioned to deal with circumstances like we find ourselves in today. Had we not done that today, had we not done that in the last ten

years, just think of the position the Province would be in today, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters.

**MS C. BENNETT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can certainly say that eleven deficits in sixteen years is not something the people of the Province are laughing at. You had six in eleven and you want five more.

There are over 110 recommendations from the Auditor General from 2008 to 2011 that remain not fully implemented, and an additional 176 recommendations that have been made since 2012 that we do not know the status of; 286 recommendations to better manage the money this government has to control.

Why is your government not acting expeditiously to get your own financial house in order?

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

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** Mr. Speaker, once again the member jumps to conclusions. The assumption is because she does not know the answer, it must be wrong. All the recommendations that are made that she does not understand the status, she does not know what the story is, she automatically assumes it is wrong.

All you need to do is just look at the Auditor General's reports. They are very important. They are very important documents for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. They are a great piece of work for all governments.

The Auditor General comes in, makes reviews, and makes suggestions as to how we might improve. Governments over time, each department of government gets a report over a period of time on their operations. We, on a regular basis, are continually making

enhancements to what we do, improving programs and services, and responding to the recommendations of the Auditor General for better internal controls.

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

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Mr. Speaker, a request to extend the validity period to June 12, 2015 has been sent to all proponents shortlisted on the RFP for Labrador marine services. This follows a number of extensions already granted on the RFP.

I ask the minister: Why have you requested another extension on the RFP, and does this now mean that all proposals, including the one from Nunatsiavut Marine, are being considered in your review?

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

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

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

As I mentioned last week, the RFP process was a very in-depth process here. We went to the market. We had a number of proponents who put in a proposal, we have looked at that. We want to make sure that we have the best service possible to deliver to the people of Labrador, while at the same time making sure that the taxpayers in this Province get the best return on their investment.

We have gone through a process; I have gone back to my officials. We have even included a fairness monitor to make sure we have assessed every component of that RFP. I have gone back and said, I want to look at some other components as part of that RFP to ensure we get the best return on our investment and that the people of Labrador get the best service that we can provide for them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Mr. Speaker, included in your letter to the proponent is an acknowledgement that a further delay in contract award will impact delivery dates for the vessels and the commencement date that was anticipated in the RFP.

I ask the minister: Are you now telling the people of Labrador that a new marine vessel will not be available in 2016, despite you saying all along that it will be?

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

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

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

What I am telling the people of Labrador is that we will do everything possible. We have a very diligent staff with 100 years of professional service in the marine service to ensure the best service possible for the people of Labrador will be provided. We will do that in the quickest way possible, being very diligent of the financial investment that we have to make, and making sure we have included the stakeholders. I have had multiple conversations and meetings with stakeholders to ensure that what we are going to offer the people will meet their needs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, recent news show our seal products are confiscated at the US border for breaching the Marine Mammals Protection Act, 1972. This act inaccurately deems our seals as endangered. In fact, in 1994, the US amended the act to permit Alaskans to take seals.

I ask the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs: Will he make representation to the federal government to ask the US to review the facts on the seal population that would permit a

regulation change, given that our seals are surely no different than the Alaskan seals?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, no doubt, the sealing industry for the past 400 years has been very important to us as a people and our Province. That is why we so heavily invested in the sealing industry and supported it over the past number of years. It is still very important to us.

We understand the incident took place, in regard to the Marine Mammal Act, in the US.

Certainly, we are looking at that in terms of what it means; but overall, in terms of us as a government, we are committed to the sealing industry and what it means in terms of exports. We continue to grow the industry. It is very important to our coastal communities and we will do whatever is required to make sure that we continue to grow the industry, whether it is North America or anywhere around the world, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** We certainly did not get a commitment from the minister on the answer to that question.

Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador is one of the worst in the country for protecting public land. In 1992, all provincial governments committed to increasing protected areas from 4 per cent to 12 per cent by 2000; yet, when all federal and provincial lands are counted our total is a paltry 4.6 per cent.

I ask the minister: More than a decade overdue, will you admit your inactions clearly highlight protecting public land is just not a priority for your government?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we are definitely dedicated towards protecting biodiversity in this Province at many different levels.

Mealy Mountains National Park, we are in the very final stages of negotiations with the federal government. We are going through Aboriginal consultations in short order, Mr. Speaker. We are getting down to the brass tacks on that one. Mr. Speaker, once we have that land mass negotiated and turned over to the federal government for that national park, we will be right there with the provincial average in terms of protected areas in all of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we are on the mark. We are doing good work. We have people in the department doing good work. We have advisory boards that are advising us what we should be doing, Mr. Speaker. We have a robust system.

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

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

**MS DEMPSTER:** Mr. Speaker, the establishment of the Mealy Mountains National Park will significantly increase the potential for tourism development in all communities in Southeastern Labrador. However, we are still waiting for the Province to finalize the land transfer agreement.

I ask the minister: When can we expect the Province to finalize this land transfer agreement?

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

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

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Mr. Speaker, we have made significant progress over the last number of years. I am pleased to announce here today that in the coming weeks – and we are talking weeks, not months – we will be making an announcement that will be pleasing to everybody in the Province, including the people

in Labrador in particular, and people of the region, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MS DEMPSTER:** Mr. Speaker, this file has been ongoing since 2007 – over seven years of waiting for the transfer of land from the Province. Two weeks ago, the Minister of Environment said there would be an announcement on the Mealy Mountains Park, but still nothing.

So I just want to ask the minister: Why do you continue to give the people of Labrador expectations that you are obviously not prepared to meet?

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

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

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that is an unfair comment. We have negotiations going on with the users, of the people of the region.

This is going to be a landmark agreement, Mr. Speaker. There are details that I am aware of that I cannot provide to the House at this moment in time.

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

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

**MR. CRUMMELL:** It is going to be a significant agreement for the people. Believe me, Mr. Speaker, our interests are to make sure that it gets done in a timely manner. We are down to the short strokes. We are going to be happy to stand up and make that announcement in this House, and when we get up to the region as well.

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, last week I asked the Minister of Service NL about past amendments to its insurance legislation; however, for some bizarre reason, the Minister of CYFS took the opportunity to update us on workers' comp issues.

Therefore, I ask the Minister of Service NL: Why wasn't the Insurance Brokers Association of Newfoundland and Labrador consulted when your department amended its insurance legislation to remove the requirement for audited statements of trust accounts?

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

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

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I do apologize for missing the tail end of your question. It was a long preamble and I did not get quite the ask. I should have asked you to restate your question. It was my fault, Mr. Speaker, and I do apologize.

I thank the minister next to me for standing up and talking about something that we thought it was referring to.

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

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

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Listen, Mr. Speaker, on this question in particular, the change does not impact consumers at all. Other jurisdictions in the country do not have these types of auditing.

Mr. Speaker, we do have other oversights as well. It was determined by officials in our department that this is not required for the Province at this time. Again, we have checks and measures in place, reporting systems in place that are going to happen on a regular and annual basis.

Mr. Speaker, we will be doing some random audits as well, just to make sure that –



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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I remind the member his time is up.

The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

This government's 2013 Aboriginal Consultation Policy states that they are committed to consulting Aboriginal organizations when making land and resource development decisions that impact them.

I ask the Premier: What happened to this policy when government came to an agreement with Vale to change the Voisey's Bay Development Agreement?

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, consultation requirement exists for changes that occur on the Vale site in Labrador – if there is change in licensing, change in process, change in operation on the site itself.

The agreement that we reached with Vale, which benefits the people working on the site, it benefits the Nunatsiavut Government, it benefits the Innu Nation, is that we were able to reach an agreement so that the mining continued at Vale in Labrador to the benefit of all of those parties.

As part of that agreement of what happens, what we changed was an agreement of what happens to ore after it leaves the site. Mr. Speaker, under the agreement, there was no requirement to consult in that circumstance.

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

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

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

I point out to the Premier that when we talk about the Voisey's Bay development, it always includes all of the operations with regard to minerals.

I ask the Premier: How can he expect Aboriginal groups to trust what he says when the government does not even follow its own written policy?

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, we do follow a policy. Obviously, there has been a discussion. I had a discussion with President Leo. I also had a discussion yesterday in a phone call I made to Grand Chief Qupee. We had a discussion on that.

Yesterday, when I spoke to Grand Chief, I asked her for the opportunity for us to meet together in a face-to-face meeting, and she has agreed to that. I look forward to the opportunity to follow up and have further discussions with the Grand Chief and also President Leo.

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

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

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

In light of some of the incidents that have happened in this Province with regard to relations with Aboriginal people, I ask the Premier if he has considered diversity, sensitivity training for his Cabinet ministers.

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to tell you the relationship that we have –

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** – with Aboriginal peoples and representatives for Aboriginal peoples, I take very serious. I know the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs takes very serious. He and I have had numerous discussions in recent days and weeks about that relationship and the importance of it, Mr. Speaker.

I can tell you, there is nothing more important – there are things equally as important, but there is nothing more important than ensuring that we have a good working relationship with all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, including the people in Labrador, including our Aboriginal people, and ensuring that we have strong partnerships and strong relationships with all persons in our Province.

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

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

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

Section 9(3) of the new ATIPP Act underscores the importance of public health and safety and disclosure in the public interest.

I ask the minister: Considering that government has already put its stamp of approval on this new legislation to be passed in the coming weeks, would his government also agree to the importance of appointing a public health professional to the fracking review panel?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, we have established an independent fracking review panel – highly-qualified experts with experience with respect to the fracking issue, experts with respect to the process, with some experience as well.

What is important here, the decision that this government made, is that we establish a process here that gives everybody in the Province – experts, doctors, whoever wants to have input – a very clear opportunity to stand and make a

presentation, write a letter, offer an email, but certainly the opportunity to present their views with fracking and the potential impacts on the West Coast of this Province. Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to that process.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. John's East has time for a quick question.

**MR. MURPHY:** Mr. Speaker, would the minister agree that the disclosure of fracking chemicals would also be in the best interest of public health and safety?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources, for a quick reply.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, what I will agree to – and I think we have demonstrated time and time again – is that public safety whether it is in the offshore, whether it is on land, with aspects to workers in this Province, Occupational Health and Safety, as well as public interest with safety, we will do what is right.

With respect to fracking itself, I look forward to the panel doing their work, and I really wish the member opposite would do the same, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

### **Tabling of Documents**

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Finance, on the Tabling of Documents.

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

Pursuant to section 26(5)(a) of the Financial Administration Act, I am tabling fourteen Orders-in-Council relating to the funding pre-commitments for 2015-2016 to 2019-2020 fiscal years.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further tabling of documents?

The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the Energy Corporation Act and the Hydro Corporation Act, it is my pleasure to table the 2014 Business and Financial Report for Nalcor Energy, as well as the 2014 Consolidated Financial Statements of Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

**Petitions**

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

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

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

WHEREAS the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District is considering a proposal to bus K-6 students from Holy Family School in Paradise to the former School for the Deaf on Topsail Road in St. John's – twelve kilometres away; and

WHEREAS many parents have expressed concern about the impact of long bus rides to and from school for primary and elementary school-aged children who would otherwise attend Holy Family School in Paradise; and

WHEREAS many parents have asked the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District to consider alternatives to having children from Holy Family School attend school at the former School for the Deaf;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to direct the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District to find a more suitable alternative to the proposal which would see students from Holy Family School in Paradise attending school at the former School for the Deaf.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I did point out the last time I read this petition – there are about another 100 or so petitioners on here today. The proposals, the options for the English School District, have changed, but they are now proposing two bad proposals, in my opinion. One is to bus Grade 2 to Grade 6 kids out forty-five minutes to the School for the Deaf on Topsail Road, or to add four modular classrooms to an already overcrowded school at Holy Family – neither a good option here, not at all.

I understand, from speaking to people that the Premier has involved himself personally in this situation now. I do not know how that is going to turn out, but I do understand that the Premier is somehow involved in this, and he represents Paradise as part of his district.

As I said before, I do not really think that either of these options make any sense. Overcrowding an already overcrowded school is unsanitary – what is going on already. The school was never designed to accommodate that many students. There are already problems with kids lining up to go to the washroom; team teaching; the cafeteria is cut up; poor air quality, according to anecdotal reports; crowded parking lots when people are trying to drop off all these kids. That proposal is to increase the school population to something like 1,000 for a school that was built for about 650.

Then the other option is to bus kids forty-five minutes. You are talking about busing kids in Grade 2 all the way out there. People ask: How

did it get to this? How did government manage to so poorly plan schooling on the Northeast Avalon? When times were good, when oil was high, when we were flush with cash, this government failed the people on the Northeast Avalon, failed to build schools where they were needed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the

House of Assembly to urge government to reinstate the Family Intervention Court.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to stand in this House, particularly today with a number of social workers and social work students in the gallery. When we look at the issue of family violence, domestic violence, we know how complex that is.

As a social worker, I was involved in starting the first transition house here in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. That was a long time ago. Mr. Speaker, we know that several social workers were involved in organizing and lobbying for the court, and that several social workers across the country did the same in their provinces. Some of whom modelled theirs on our court here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, there were several social workers in different departments involved in the operation of the Family Violence Intervention Court. We had social workers with Child, Youth and Family Services who really understood the impact of domestic violence on the lives of children. Not only was their job to understand that, but their job was also to ensure that children were kept safe.

Social workers with Child, Youth and Family Services who worked with the court were determined, and they did a fantastic job. They knew, and they continue to know, the Family Violence Intervention Court was a model that really got to the root cause of domestic violence and it did ensure the safety of children.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage the government to listen to the expertise of social workers around the Family Violence Intervention Court.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. FLYNN:** 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 2009 Throne Speech clearly states that the government has provided free textbooks to students; and

WHEREAS this is an instrument of education; and

WHEREAS unfortunately students attending independently-funded schools have been deprived of equal access to this assistance; and

WHEREAS the Department of Education is perceived to show discrimination towards parents who exercise a choice of schooling for their child; and

WHEREAS all schools operate under the guidelines of the Schools Act;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, beginning immediately, ask the Department of Education to provide free textbooks to all students who attend any school that follows the requirements of the Schools Act (amended) Chapter S-12.2.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is the third petition that I have presented here to the House. Yesterday, the Minister of Finance accidentally said they do not discriminate against children, but it is very clear in this case the children attending the independently owned schools are being discriminated against.

It is not like these people are asking for a leaky roof to be fixed or even heating in that school to be fixed. It is not like these people are asking teachers to be paid for out of the public purse. What this demonstrates is a clear discrimination against children in our society. Those parents, whether we like to admit or not, not all of them have deep pockets. In actual fact, their school books are not even allowed to be tax deductible.

I am asking the Minister of Education, because this petition does involve names from Humber West as well. I will present some later from St. John's. I will ask the Minister of Education to

intervene on this level and stop the discrimination towards children in our schools.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. George's – Stephenville East.

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

I have a petition today on health care in the Heatherton to Highlands area.

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

WHEREAS there has not been a permanent doctor at the clinic in Jeffrey's for almost a year; and

WHEREAS this absence of a permanent doctor is seriously compromising the health care of people who live in the Heatherton to Highlands area and causing them undue hardship; and

WHEREAS the absence of a doctor or nurse practitioner in the area leaves seniors without a consistency and quality of care which is necessary for their continued good health;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to take action which will result in a permanent doctor or other arrangements to improve the health care services in the Heatherton to Highlands area.

Mr. Speaker, this is a petition signed by a number of people in the Robinsons area, from the Cartyville area, all throughout the Heatherton to Highlands area. It is a situation that has gone on for too long. For over a year now, the people of that area have not had a permanent doctor in the clinic at Jeffrey's. People have had to travel long distances to get medical care, to get prescriptions refilled, to get medical tests back, and to be referred for tests. So, it is far from ideal, the situation there in Jeffrey's.

St. George's, as well, does not have a doctor; has not had a doctor since before Christmas. So they have been without a doctor for a number of

months now. People in that town are really concerned about the future, given they are looking at their neighbours in the Heatherton to Highlands area who have not had a doctor for over a year.

People are very concerned about this and they want to see some changes. I have talked to the minister about this. I have talked to officials at Western Health. People are aware of the situation there, and I am hopeful that we will begin to see some solution to this problem very soon, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

WHEREAS 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 clearing such as manual labour, alternative competitive seeding methods, and/or 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 bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition today comes from residents of St. John's and residents of Salmon Cove in Conception Bay North, and I want to thank these people for signing this petition and sending it in at this particular time.

Earlier in Question Period, I had talked about the proposed new legislation, the new ATIPPA legislation, that is going to be coming forward to the House this spring session, and we know that government has already accepted as is that particular piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I had referenced earlier a section 9(3) in this particular piece of legislation that reads: Whether or not a request for access is made, the head of a public body shall, without delay, disclose to the public, to an affected group of people or to an applicant, information about a risk of significant harm to the environment or to the health or safety of the public or group of people, the disclosure of which is clearly in the public interest.

Mr. Speaker, the signing of a petition is, as far as I am concerned, clearly in the public interest. Where public health and safety is concerned, it remains evident in the petition in itself. It says here, the second last line: WHEREAS the provincial government is responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of its citizens. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador who are signing this petition are directly concerned. They have a right to know about what is happening to their environment around them, they are showing signs to this government, and have been now for the last year-and-a-half, two years, that I have been on my feet about this petition, that they are directly concerned with their own personal health.

They have a grave concern that, so far, this government has not addressed. Again, we are asking government to address this. Of course we know the piece of legislation that is coming up before us in the coming weeks and pretty soon, they are not going to have any other choice but to address it.

Thank you very much.

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

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

I am sorry – the hon. Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

Here I was saying you did not have a sense of humour.

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 the applied behavioural analysis (ABA) program for children with autism is funded by the Department of Health and Community Services; and

WHEREAS the program was introduced in 1999 and is in serious need of revision; and

WHEREAS with the advances made in early diagnosis of autism, the number of high functioning children being diagnosed with autism has drastically increased; and

WHEREAS the current ABA program does not take into account that children on the autism spectrum are involved in many educationally, recreational, and social activities outside of the home; and

WHEREAS the current ABA program required that the therapist be accompanied at all times by another adult, which is not only inconvenient but can be quite costly when a parent is unable to be that second adult due to work or other obligations; and

WHEREAS the current ABA program ends at Grade 3 but autism is a lifelong social disorder;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call up the House to urge the government to implement a review of the ABA program with considerations given to alternate programming options, and to extend autism programming beyond Grade 3.

Mr. Speaker, I have stood and entered this petition in the House before. I am sure this is not going to be the last time that I enter it. The reason is that we have had a huge change in the diagnosis numbers in this Province, but we have not had a huge change in the approach that we have taken.

I stand here today after having a phone call from a parent yesterday. This phone call was dealing with their child is on the spectrum and they are having issues at the school. He does not know what to do. It is absolutely amazing – the scary thing is this is not the only parent I have had that conversation with. We need to do more.

We look back to when this program was introduced. We look back to the funding that was put in. It is not keeping up. Do I have all the solutions? I certainly do not. One thing I would suggest is that we actually start talking to some of these parents to figure out solutions to the problems here. I do not think it is all just a financial consideration. I think we should be able to talk to them.

When we look at the fact that ABA goes to Grade 3, but the fact is these children grow up. They still have to continue on; these parents still have to continue on. We have to do more.

I am pleading with the government. We know that the Budget is coming at some point. Please, let's see some mention of this type of issue in there – a review of the program. The program is good. Let's see some changes to it. Let's listen to these parents because they are crying out, desperately, wanting to be heard.

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

I do not know if I missed the Member for St. George's – Stephenville East. Were you about to stand?

**MR. REID:** No.

**MR. SPEAKER:** No.

The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply to further consider the Interim Supply bill.

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.

We will continue the debate on Bill 44.

The hon. the Member for Exploits.

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

**MR. FORSEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity again to speak on Interim Supply. It is always a pleasure to be able to stand up here in the House and speak on behalf of the wonderful District of Exploits and the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

It is a funny thing, Mr. Chair, we cannot seem to get away from education sometimes. It seems like everybody who gets up wants to talk about education. I guess it has to do with the investments that we made in education as a government and the plan that we had when we came in.

It was a bit of a difficult situation at the time. There was that much infrastructure needed for education and other resources, it was a very

difficult time for this government to try to maintain certain services.

I sit back and I listen to the Opposition when they get up and they talk about we had no plan and we wasted money. Back in the 1990s, during their Administration – I have said it before and I am going to say it again because they do not seem to hear it when you say it across the way there – they were the ones who amalgamated the schools.

They were the ones who were going to save all this money. They were the ones who were going to reinvest it back into the schools that were left. They were the ones who were going to do the renovations and the maintenance and all of that, but they had no plan. They did not have a plan.

When we came in, it was mould after mould after mould issues. The minister got tired of answering questions and getting up and responding to getting investments for the schools, Mr. Chair.

I listened to the Minister of Education speak yesterday very passionate and eloquently about our investments in education and how we started out with – I think the main platform for the Opposition in 2003 was we are going to eliminate school fees. They thought that was a big thing. That was in their platform. Now they were there for fifteen years, sixteen years, and they could have done that.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for St. John's North on a point of order.

**MR. KIRBY:** Mr. Chair, I believe the member said that the minister was tired of answering questions. If the minister is tired of answering questions, then they should get the Premier to call a general election.

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

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

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



**MR. FORSEY:** At that particular time that I was talking about, Mr. Chair, the minister was tired of answering questions because that was the first couple of years of this Administration. The buildings were falling down and dilapidated.

Mr. Chair, I will just stick to my own district. I will ask the people across the way if it is a waste and they can tell me if it is a waste, if this government wasted money.

Back in 2005, Mr. Chair, when I was elected, a school in Leading Tickles, where I grew up and went to school, the school was a K-6 school and they were getting ready to tear it down. I went down there for meetings and they said, well, our member said he was coming down, the former member. He was coming down, who happened to be the Premier of the day. He was coming down. Oh, wait, we are going to get the windows done, we are going to get the insulation fixed, and we are going to get the roof fixed. We are going to get all that done. Guess what? Six months later the school was demolished. It was not fit to go into, it was not fit.

What this government did was put a new one back there, because we had to. We had no choice. We had no choice, because we believe in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. We believe that a community like Leading Tickles in the District of Exploits deserves just as much as somebody in Grand Falls-Windsor or St. John's, Newfoundland.

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

**MR. FORSEY:** We are all the same on this side, Mr. Chair. We treat everybody the same, but apparently across the way they do not understand what that means.

I remember first when we brought in skilled trades. When we brought in skilled trades, we were after going from bringing in free textbooks, eliminating school fees, and started to build on infrastructure. Then we started on expansion. We brought in twenty-six pilot projects in high schools for skilled trades that first year. Botwood Collegiate, in the District of Exploits, was one of the very fortunate schools that was able to avail of the expansion on skilled trades. Since then, skilled trades is in every high school.

We have it in every high school in the District of Exploits.

I remember a teacher in Botwood telling me, he said: Clayton, we service five communities from here. We are a feeder school for five communities: Point of Bay, Phillips Head, Northern Arm, Botwood, and Peterview. They all go to the same school. He said, we have had students there who were not sure what they wanted to do. When they brought in skilled trades, he said, I recall putting this young fellow in the carpenter shop. He said he was right at home.

That is what we did, Mr. Chair. We gave the youth an opportunity because of investments.

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

**MR. FORSEY:** Now if that is a waste, I hate to see what the Opposition would do if they call that a waste.

As a matter of fact, I remember the other day the Member for CBS or somewhere, across the way there, stood up and started talking about the waste of \$20 million. Twenty million dollars, it is a waste – \$20 million. Then somebody was smart enough to correct him –

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

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

**MR. HILLIER:** Mr. Chair, the \$20 million I was talking about wasting was the \$20 million wasted on Humber Paving. That was the \$20 million I was talking about wasting.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Exploits.

**MR. FORSEY:** He said they squandered \$20 million – squandered it. Then somebody in their caucus said: oh, no, it was \$20 billion. Oh, I am sorry, he said, I thought it was \$20 million – and they want to form the government. They do not know the difference between \$20 billion and \$20

million. Can you imagine these fellows running the Province?

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

**MR. FORSEY:** Can you just imagine what they would do running the Province?

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

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

**MR. HILLIER:** Mr. Chair, I have only been here five or six months and I try to role model whoever I can, who I think are my best role models. One that I have been following, obviously, has been your own Minister of Finance, unfortunately, who admits that he is not very good at math.

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

The hon. the Member for Exploits.

**MR. FORSEY:** I do not need to defend the Minister of Finance, but he has done some very good portfolios while he has been in this government and did a very good job of them, I must say. He was the one who did the good work with the Department of Health when he was there. He was the one who had to face what started with the Liberals back in the 1990s, the same thing that has started with the education. Nothing has changed over there, and I do not think we are ready to go back to it.

I did hear the Member for St. John's East, when he stood up and spoke at least he understood, yes, and agreed that when we took over in 2003, did we have an infrastructure deficit? We did, a major infrastructure deficit. Did we put the money where it needed to be? Of course we did.

If you want to go out and tell the people of Leading Tickles that the investment in that school was a waste, please go and do it, and they will tell you what they think. If we never had built enough schools and spending money on the infrastructure, along with the programming that we brought in, along with the skilled trades and everything else we have done for education – just in Exploits alone, Mr. Chair. I get rather

passionate when I start talking about the investments.

I was fortunate enough to go and talk to the Grade 9 class at Leo Burke Academy two weeks ago, Mr. Chair, and they were really interested in how government works, and the money and how it is spent. Of course, it all starts with education. Even though 40 per cent, or close to it, is spent in health, education is still most important when it comes to wanting to know, what you want to do, and learning about government, and learning about the Province, and learning about education, environment, and whatever else.

Mr. Chair, investments in new schools. In Botwood Collegiate, just last year we had to replace the roof, \$235,000. In Leo Burke Academy we had to replace the roof, \$350,000. Memorial Academy in Botwood, we had to replace the roof, another \$100,000.

We have been building schools in the District of Exploits. We have been very fortunate. We built a new school in Leading Tickles. We added on an expansion to Botwood Collegiate, and we have done repairs and upgrades. It is much, much needed investments in education I say, Mr. Chair.

I see my time is up. I will certainly have another opportunity, I am sure, to talk about the good things that this government has done.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. SLADE:** Mr. Chair, I am going to tell you one thing, it is a job to stand here on back of that one.

Mr. Chair, I just want to say one thing. Yes, there have been investments in schools, and I am going to give you examples – and big investments. I am going to use the school in Carbonear, the new Carbonear Academy. That is the school I am going to use. When it was opened last year, it was built two small. The government had to turn around and build four

more classrooms on the side of it while the children were in there trying to learn.

So I am going to tell you something. When the Member for St. John's North gets up and speaks about schools being too small, there is one case there now. Somebody over there got to tell me what happened to the numbers because, at that point in time, we had three and four kids in one locker.

I respect you guys over there, but I will tell you something, you do not tell all the truth. Mr. Chair, they certainly do not tell all the truth, I can guarantee you that.

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

**MR. SLADE:** Mr. Chair, I brought issues here over the last year or so. One of them was down in Freshwater. I want to speak about my district because I am very proud to stand here as the Member of the House of Assembly for the Carbonear – Harbour Grace district.

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

**MR. SLADE:** I want to talk about number three well down in Freshwater. We all know there is arsenic in it. We know it is high-level arsenic. The Minister of Municipal Affairs knows all about it. He asked the local service district chair down there to go out and get estimates. He went out and got estimates. He was talking to somebody in Municipal Affairs the other day.

Arsenic is a major issue. The worst thing we could ever do is turn our backs on people who have that situation. The people of Freshwater deserve clean drinking water, the same as every person in this Province, Mr. Chair.

Do you know what the gentleman on the local service district was told down there? You are going to have to wait for the next new Budget to come down. Shame on this government to allow the people of Freshwater to be treated like that. I cannot believe it.

Mr. Chair, I stood here many times and I spoke about the road cut-offs down in Freshwater and Bristol's Hope. I spoke here on the floor at long lengths on it. I presented petition after petition. So, while government is over there tapping

themselves on the back and saying how wonderful they are, I can assure this government you are not wonderful to the people in the Carbonear – Harbour Grace district because you have neglected them.

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

**MR. SLADE:** Mr. Chair, I am going to tell you, I really would like for them to stop clapping over there right now because they know I am right.

Mr. Chair, now I will tell you, Bryant's Cove over the last number of years has been applying to Municipal Affairs to get the Point Road done. This is very interesting. I have to tell you this one because this is indeed very interesting. Point Road is to the point now where it is hardly usable. Last year they might have been able to tack coat it, we will say, and save the road. Forget about it. After this winter, it is not going to happen.

School buses go out over that road, Mr. Chair. Do you know what the school bus driver is saying? We cannot go out there any longer to pick up the children. Why? It is dangerous on the bus for the kids, so they cannot go out.

Mr. Chair, just imagine, this road has been applied for by the town for the last four or five years and to this point, it is not done. I will tell you how bad it is. The Department of Transportation I think does their plowing for them over there on this road. It is that bad the Department of Transportation gave them sixty bags of wet patch to patch the holes in it. That is how bad it is. Sixty bags of wet patch, can you imagine? So how bad was it that the equipment did not even want to go out there?

I heard the Minister of Finance get up there yesterday. He spoke about all the things we say that the government did good. You guys over there, you absolutely have me amazed. You guys have been in government for twelve years, and every time I hear each and every one of you over there getting up to speak – every time he blames it on the Liberals.

Guys, you have been over there twelve years; you have to take your own blame. The Liberals did not do it. If the Liberals did something that

was so wrong, why didn't you guys correct it? You had twelve years to correct it – twelve years to correct it. It is crazy. I have never seen anything like it in my life. You guys do not take responsibility. It is always the Liberals that have done it. I do not understand it, Mr. Chair. I do not understand it whatsoever.

Mr. Chair, in Carbonear by the TC Square – and not the present Minister of Municipal Affairs now but the one prior to him. Anyway, I will tell you, over there every year the Town of Carbonear had to get after this government to have the lines placed on the road there. It is a very dangerous place, a very dangerous place indeed. They would have to go after government to turn around and get the lines put in there because of people coming into Carbonear and one thing and another so that there would not be any accidents there.

Mr. Chair, last year, got after the minister, they finally got the lines put in, but they forgot to put the arrows in. They forgot to put the arrows in. We went back to them; I went back to them in an email and letters to follow up, the arrow signs, the directional arrows, were never put on it, Mr. Chair, never put on it.

So much for safety of the public and this government professes how they want to be very, very compassionate with people. No, Mr. Chair, absolutely not, there is no compassion whatsoever.

Mr. Chair, I just mentioned the road there up in the district in Bryant's Cove. At what point in time do we have to look at this and say the safety of our children is foremost in our mind? At what point in time, Mr. Chair? Because apparently for the last four or five years, they did not have that concern. This town has been applying for that. They had their share to put into that, so safety is certainly not on the minds of this group.

There are many things wrong. I will just give an example; Lady Lake Road has been waiting for roadwork for the last twenty years. The Thicket Road up there – and this is factual. If you went on the Thicket Road and talk about preference and what this government has done, part of that road is in the member's district, the Chair's district, and part of it is in mine. If you looked

at the part that was in the Chair's district it is in pretty good shape. I have to say, it is in pretty good shape. Over on the other side, Mr. Chair, I am going to tell you something, you would never believe it – you would never believe it.

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

**MR. SLADE:** I will tell you something else they done in Spaniard's Bay – and I have a short while to get it out, so I have to try to get it out. In Spaniard's Bay, the divider was the church on the top of the hill and the road was paved there. The Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace, before I got here, they got curb and gutter put on his side of the district. There was a Liberal on the other side of the district and they would not put in the curb and gutter, so there is now technical it gets.

Mr. Chair, I am going to tell you something, I am fair, as fair can be, Mr. Chair, and I respect a lot of guys across that way. I have had many, many conversations there, but I will tell you something. Your report card is an F because you failed the people in my district, and there are lots of other issues out in my district that does not get any attention from this government.

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

**MR. SLADE:** I will say that right now, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

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

Mr. Chair, it is certainly my pleasure to speak today on Interim Supply. I love the passion on the other side of the House. I heard a similar speech yesterday, Mr. Chair, from the Member for St. John's South when he was on his feet.

I remember not so long ago when the Member for St. John's South was on this side of the House. He was on his feet and he was talking

about the great accomplishments that our government achieved in the last ten years, and the investments we made in some of the things that the member was talking about a few minutes ago. The investments made in infrastructure, the investments in schools, hospitals, roads and in ferries; and, Mr. Chair, investments in the prescription drug plan. He was very proud of that.

I remember having conversations with the member when he was on this side of the House; we would have conversations. He was very proud of our tuition freeze. It is one of the things that stood out to him. We would talk about this at length.

I have heard him on his feet in the House talking about the great accomplishments and how much we have achieved in such a short period of time to transform this economy. He was on his feet yesterday, Mr. Chair, saying something a little bit different. You cannot cut it both ways. I have heard him say that expression before as well.

Mr. Chair, there are so many good things that have happened in the last ten years. Certainly, when he talks about the district, the member who was talking earlier from Carbonear – Harbour Grace and what was going on there. The investments in that community, and those communities in that region, were significant – absolutely significant.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. CRUMMELL:** You are always going to find things that need to be improved on, and I will give him that. There is more work to be done out there in the Province. There will always be work; 100 years from now there will still be more work, but, Mr. Chair, things are moving ahead. Things are moving forward and our economy has been transformed. It has never been better. It has to do with the decisions that were made on this side of the House, the decisions that this government has made.

Oil was part of the results of why we got to where we are, Mr. Chair, but it was not the only reason. We diversified the economy. We found

ways to manage the money that we had in our hands. Mr. Chair, the proof is in the facts and the facts do not lie. The facts are out there for all to see if they want to have a look at them.

Look at the average weekly wage here in this Province. In 2003 it was \$640, today it is \$950. It is the second highest in all of Canada. That is something we should be proud of.

We should be proud of living in a country where you can travel from one part of the country to the other to do work. I have two daughters working in Calgary who are coming home soon. They were working out in Calgary and are soon to come home.

It is a beautiful country that we live in, that we have that ability to go around and move around our country to do work. It is also beautiful, Mr. Chair, to work and live here in Newfoundland and Labrador. That is what we are trying to do for our children. That is what I want to do for our children.

If we look at retail sales, another benchmark, another key indicator of how well we have done as a Province in the last ten years. In 2003, retail sales were \$5.7 billion. Today, it is \$8.6 billion. Mr. Chair, that bodes well for the future. The economy is still strong, despite what is happening in the oil patch, despite what is happening right now with the resource and the economy when it goes that way. Everything else that is happening in this Province, I think we are in good shape.

Employment, 211,000 people were working back in 2003; 232,000 people now. Unemployment has gone from 6.4 per cent to 11.4 per cent, Mr. Chair, in the opposite way around. So in good ways, in positive ways, there are so many positives. We have built a strong resource-based economy, there is no doubt about that. On top of that, we are working around the edges to build up other pieces of the base that we need to move forward as a Province.

Mr. Chair, we recognize we do have a revenue issue. We do recognize that we have to make some changes to what we are doing and how we are handling our monies. This Budget is going to be a difficult one for everybody in the

Province, for everybody right across this Province. We have to recognize that. We have to be prudent, but we need to continue to grow our economy. We can do that, even though government is in this fiscal reality.

When you look at tax regimes, when you look at taxes and putting money in people's pockets – which is important to drive the economy of this Province, Mr. Chair. In 2011, our policy Blue Book said, “... ensure Newfoundland and Labrador families continue to enjoy tax rates that are low and competitive. ... review our income tax rates and provisions to ensure that our income tax system is progressive and competitive.”

Mr. Chair, we have worked wonders since 2004. We have worked wonders since 2007, when we came out with the other policy Blue Book. If we just look at the total cost of tax and fee changes from 2004 to 2014 to put money in the pockets of the people of this Province, to be able to spend that money and drive our economy, the people of this Province would be amazed. The facts are on the table. I am a person who believes in less tax. I have to be honest with you, I do not think anybody in the Province believes less tax is better, it stimulates the economy.

In 2004, we had a tax relief for the people of this Province of \$4.8 million. We put into their pockets, based on policies that we put in place, this government put in place. In 2008, we were up to \$322 million a year in tax relief for the people of this Province; per year, Mr. Chair. That is back into the pockets of the people of this Province to continue to help drive this economy.

When you look at 2012, \$507 million in tax relief. It is money in the pockets of the people of this Province. In 2014, we went up to \$744 million. That put money in the pockets of the people of this Province to make sure that we could continue to grow this Province, continue to grow jobs, and continue to grow the economy. Mr. Chair, each year these savings went right back into the economy to make our economy a strong economy for the people of this Province. We were diversifying the economy as we went.

Mr. Chair, what does the future hold? We know we are a resource-based economy. We recognize that as a Province. We recognize that as a people.

The oil and gas sector, 2.7 billion barrels have been discovered so far and being exploited. Well, Mr. Chair, there are 6 billion-plus barrels out there estimated to be undiscovered; 6 billion barrels of oil. The oil age is not over yet. Some people may say it is, but it is not.

This bodes well for people like my son who is at the Marine Institute working at a trade that is going to see him work in the offshore. He will be employed shortly after, from the sounds of it, because they need people like him. Even though there is a downturn, we are still producing oil offshore of this Province.

Natural gas, right now there are 10 trillion-plus cubic feet discovered, Mr. Chair. We believe there are 60 trillion-plus cubic feet of natural gas off our shores of Newfoundland and Labrador, out there yet to be discovered. That is what is estimated based on the research that we have done. At some point in time in our future we will find a way to harness that, to monetize that.

Australia has done a wonderful job. If we could follow the model they have down there, at some point in time the oil companies, the gas companies of the world, they will come to us. They will make it happen. That will be the future for our children and their children going forward. The oil and gas sector is going to be strong into the future for many, many years.

Renewable energy, hydroelectricity, we have 6,700 megawatts developed. Mr. Chair, there is another 6,000 megawatts-plus that are undeveloped that we can harness and take advantage of. Opening up new corridors to sell our energy to other jurisdictions in North America bodes well for us for the future.

We look at wind. People talk about wind. We did not dismiss wind when we talked about Muskrat Falls. Wind was part of the equation. We did the analysis on wind and wind did not make sense right now. We need hydroelectricity to backstop what we need here in this Province. Fifty-one megawatts of wind is developed right now, Mr. Chair. We have 5,000-plus megawatts

undeveloped right now that we anticipate could be developed to sell to the North American grid to monetize to make this Province a better place for our people now and into the future.

Mr. Chair, the opportunities are endless when it comes to renewable energy – absolutely endless. We have not even reached the tip of the iceberg when it comes to that. Mining – similar circumstance in many ways. Mining right now is going through a little bust, a little downturn, but it will change. The world economy will come around again, Mr. Chair. This is what we have seen happen in the past, and the past will repeat itself. The mining in Labrador will continue to drive our economy, and the mines in the island portion of Newfoundland will continue to drive this economy.

So, Mr. Chair, we are working in manufacturing; we are working in resource-based companies; we are working in forestry; we are working in the fishery; we are working in the manufacturing industry; travel and tourism. Mr. Chair, we have such a bright future ahead of us, and we laid the groundwork, this government has laid the groundwork in the last ten years, and the people of the Province will recognize that when they go to the polls in the fall.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for St. George's – Stephenville East.

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

I listened with interest to the Minister of Environment and Conservation, and he makes some very good points. I want to just give a quick summary of where we are and what we are doing here in the House now, just in case the people are just tuning in.

Mr. Chair, what we are doing here is we are looking at Interim Supply. Interim Supply is an act to allow government to pay its bills before the Budget comes down. This year, our Budget is going to be a little later, so we are in in the process of passing Interim Supply so we will be able to continue to pay our bills, despite the Budget not being passed.

This is a finance bill, so it allows us to have a good, wide-ranging debate on many issues that impact on the Province. So, it is a good opportunity to talk about public policy and where we are going in this Province and our dependence on oil and issues like that. I notice a number of other speakers have also sort of talked about the finances of the Province and our dependence on oil and how we should diversify our economy. So, similar to that, I want to sort of inject some ideas related to public policy and to have a little bit of a discussion about where we are going in terms of our finances and where we are going in terms of public policy and oil.

In that light, I want to talk about a concept in public policy called the paradox of plenty. I want to see how that relates to what is happening in this Province and how we compare to other places. The concept of the paradox of plenty was developed by an economist, Terry Lynn Karl, back in the 1990s. What she did was she looked at places around the world where oil had been discovered and she looked at how their economy had been impacted by the discovery of oil. She did a comprehensive analysis and what she found was very interesting. What she found was that in some cases places that had discovered oil turned out to be worse off in the long run than places that had not discovered oil.

Mr. Chair, there is a paradox there – if they have discovered these riches off their shore or on their land, why are they, in the long-term, less well off than places that never discovered oil or never discovered mineral wealth? Why does that happen? So, that is the paradox, Mr. Chair. Basically, she wondered how did this happen. What she found was that the huge influx of money to the economy from the resource revenue had a detrimental impact on the producing jurisdictions.

It is interesting to apply the concept of the paradox of plenty to Newfoundland and Labrador. We have had a discovery of oil in our Province and if we look around, we should be looking at other places to see what we can learn from how they have conducted their affairs, to see what mistakes other places have made, and to look at how we cannot fall into this situation where we have the paradox of plenty. No matter what government is in power, Mr. Chair, these

are some public policy directions that we should be taking, some things that we should be doing.

Newfoundland and Labrador is a relatively new producing region of the world. In terms of where we are today, we are basically similar to what the early days of the North Sea was in terms of producing oil. We are still very small. We have three producing fields and another one to come on stream fairly shortly. We are very small scale compared to somewhere like the North Sea where hundreds of wells have been drilled and much oil has been taken out.

Mr. Chair, it is interesting to note the impact of oil here in this Province. Between 1997 and 2010, provincial real GDP grew by 58 per cent. It is estimated by the Department of Finance that half of this growth is directly attributed to oil production. It is interesting that there have been comments that we are overly dependent on oil revenue.

Another concept that is very common in terms of the oil industry, public policy and the way it impacts on the economies of the producing jurisdiction is called the Dutch disease, Mr. Chair. It is sort of related to the paradox of plenty. The Dutch disease is a term that began to be used by *The Economist* magazine in 1959. It related to the discovery of gas off the Netherlands during that period.

Mr. Chair, basically the Dutch disease is a concept in economics that involves the use of – when oil is discovered often what happens is that other industries are neglected. Capital and labour move to the oil industry, and other industries such as agriculture and manufacturing are neglected in many ways. Basically, goods are not produced locally. Because you have all this oil wealth, all this oil revenue, you are able to import the goods you need rather than produce them locally. That is another way that oil can have a damaging impact on your economy.

These two concepts are sort of related: Dutch disease and the paradox of plenty. The paradox of plenty is sort of a broader concept because it looks at how oil and natural resources impact on the public policy in the Province and public institutions. Basically, it hinders the oil development – it hinders the development of

functioning public institutions. It leads to a greater concentration of power. It also leads to an expansion and predominance of the state in many places. This sort of thing has been documented in many places such as Africa where oil has been discovered and corruption has resulted and authoritarian regimes have come about.

Mr. Chair, if you look around the world at what other jurisdictions have done in terms of the way they have used and developed and taken advantage of their oil revenue, a country that a lot of people sort of look at, a place that has done it right, is Norway. Norway is seen as a model country that has done it right; but, Norway, some people say, is a place that had a lot of wealth when it discovered oil. It had mature democratic institutions when it discovered oil, but others look at the state-owned oil company, Statoil, and the impact that that had on government and the way it was set up.

Mr. Chair, also the Norwegian Government Petroleum Fund is also an interesting fund. It is not just a savings account, but it is the way it is set up that has made it such a success. Norway did not start off with this production fund; it sort of came about as a result of the impact of oil prices dipping in the 1980s and the severe recession that resulted from that. The Norwegian oil fund was a reaction to that.

The interesting thing about the fund is that the government is not allowed to pull money out of that fund. They are limited to how much they can take out in a year. They are limited to the revenue that is generated from the capital amount of the fund, to take that and invest it.

Also, the government has sort of put restrictions on how the funds can be invested and a portion of it has to be invested outside of Norway. That is a way of diversifying their investments outside of the petroleum industry.

Mr. Chair, those are some things that Norway has done to use their revenue wisely. Maybe in the future of the debate I will have a chance to talk about this a little more.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.



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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Bonavista South.

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

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

It is an honour to be able to speak in this House today on the Interim Supply bill, Bill 44. At this point in time, Mr. Chair, I would like to extend a sincere thank you to the people of Bonavista South for your continued support, confidence, and trust that you put in me on a regular basis as the Member of the House of Assembly for the District of Bonavista South.

Mr. Chair, after listening to the previous speakers today and previously on this very important Interim Supply bill, I would like to respond and outline the many positive moments and times and announcements and investments that this government has made since 2004.

We are definitely maximizing our resources and investments into our resources, and I would like to explain how it ties into major projects that have been announced and investments that occurred in the District of Bonavista South over the past number of years. I will definitely outline the number of positive initiatives that this government has been involved in, Mr. Chair.

I would like to start by talking about the major investments that went into the tourism industry and how it ties into future investments made by business people who actually invested their own money into the tourism industry as well because of the major investments that our government has put into the tourism industry.

I would like to speak on a number of major projects, Mr. Chair, and outline them. Tourism Elliston – if you look at the Home from the Sea, the Sealers Memorial, and the investment that this government made into that particular legacy project and how it ties into the future tourism industry in this Province, I would ask members opposite, what would you have done? Would you have cancelled that type of investment? That is a very important legacy to my district and to the future of this Province.

Would you have not invested in that area? I am going to ask the questions; I am going to continue to ask. The Sir William Ford Coaker foundation, a national historic site, a site that this government has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars, would you have not invested in that particular site? I would like to know where you would have made cuts in relation to where we go in the future, Mr. Chair.

The Tip-A-Vista Wellness Foundation – our government has made enormous investments in that particular site in Bonavista South and how it ties into wellness and physical activity and what we are doing as a group on the Bonavista Peninsula in promoting wellness, and it is great project. Would you have not invested in that project? I would like to ask the members opposite, which projects would you have cut, which projects would you have not allowed to go ahead if you were in power?

In addition to those committees, Mr. Chair, there are a number of other major projects that this government invested in. Our government has invested highly in health and community services. I am proud as an MHA, and a representative of the people of Bonavista South, representing the people of this Province, Mr. Chair. When you look at the health care investments – an investment in a new protective care community residence; \$2.6 million that this government has invested in.

Health care is a priority. This government made health care a priority, Mr. Chair, and we will continue to make health care a priority. I wonder, what would the members opposite have done if they were in power? Would they have invested in health care, the new protective care community residence that is very important? There is a wait-list, Mr. Chair, in relation to this type of project. There still is a wait-list.

So our government has invested in strategic areas in relation to departments such as health and community services. In addition to that, Mr. Chair, in our last Budget, there was an announcement for dialysis. Right now, we have invested \$1.5 million into dialysis services in the District of Bonavista South. It is a regional investment, an investment that allows our own people to stay at home and have a service right in our own communities in Bonavista South.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** I have to ask the question: What would you have done if you were in government? To me, those investments were strategic investments that were a priority to the District of Bonavista South, Mr. Chair.

We make no apologies for making investments like that on behalf of the people of the District of Bonavista South – not only in Bonavista South but, strategically, these type of investments occurred right across the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I will be upfront and I will say it again: Can we do everything for everyone? Honestly, the answer is no. This government is all about letting the people know upfront what we can do and what we cannot do.

This past week the Premier of this great Province visited the historical beautiful District of Bonavista South. Through the process we – and I will say we, the people, the people of Bonavista South along with our Premier and their elected MHA – had great conversations about the investments that this government made on this side of the House for the District of Bonavista South.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** I can tell you they certainly showed their appreciation for the investments that we made as a government and we will continue to make strategically as a government in the future, Mr. Chair.

I will mention exactly the visitations and the places that we visited, Mr. Chair. We actually visited the community of Trinity Bay North. We went through a business there, the bottling plant at the Sir William Ford Coaker Foundation. We spent about an hour there in consultation and talks with a business person. He was delighted that we stopped by. The workers were delighted we stopped by and had a consultation talk with them.

From there we went to the College of the North Atlantic, a campus in Bonavista that serves the region and the Province, Mr. Chair. I must say, I am delighted to know there are major new

programs, investments made by this government into the College of the North Atlantic.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** I will name some of the investments and the programs, Mr. Chair. There is a culinary unit in that College of the North Atlantic. It is next to none. An investment that was made by this government, an investment where there are two cooks and a baker program. An investment where our own people can graduate and find jobs, and go into entrepreneurship, become business people and reach out, help develop, and make this Province grow.

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

**MR. LITTLE:** That is what this government is all about, making this Province grow, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, there is a new program there as well, a program that I am truly delighted about. It is called the heavy equipment operator course. There are a number of people from the Bonavista region, from Bonavista South and all over the Province involved in that program.

There are two instructors there as well who are providing great educational skills to our younger people, to some older people, to people who have been out of the labour force who will definitely get back into the labour force with jobs in the labour market of tomorrow. That is what this government is all about, Mr. Chair, investing in programs like that in our educational system, and we will continue to invest in those programs.

I must say, I am delighted, and I, for one, would not want to see any of those programs cut. I ask the crowd across: What would you do if you were elected?

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

**MR. LITTLE:** Thank you very much for your time.

**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 really happy to be able to stand again and speak. I would like to make some reference to what we have just heard from the Member for Bonavista South. Considering the cuts they made to the College of the North Atlantic in 2013, I think we should be looking at a reversal of some of that, Mr. Chair. That is not much of a promise of him to say there are going to be no cuts to programs. They cut them as far as they could two years ago. So who knows what is going to happen this time. I am sure the people in the college are worried sick.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MS MICHAEL:** The things that have been done. I know one person, for example, who had a full-time job in the College of the North Atlantic. She is at a point right now where she is working in two different colleges, a public one and a private one, teaching what she was trying to teach at the college and trying to make a living. So that is the reality of what this government has done to people who either work at the College of the North Atlantic or people who have looked to the college for benefits.

What we need to be looking at – which I am sure we are not going to see from this crowd in this Budget because of the mess they have us in – is investment in the ongoing growth and improve what is happening. We know the college here, for example, on Prince Philip Drive is still the same size as it was decades ago. Yet, they have so many more students and they are trying to do more programming.

There is a lot of work to be done around the college; not because of the people at the college. They are doing what they can do. It is this government that has decimated them in many ways by the cuts they have made in the past. So I hope the Member for Bonavista South is going to have some impact on the Minister of Finance if he believes everything that he just said to us.

In the meantime, Mr. Chair, I do have a plan for myself for today – a plan, something that this government is not very good at. I am not even sure that any government over the decades in this Province has been good at it. I will be talking some more about home care and planning for home care in this Province.

Before doing that, I want to think about thirty years ago. In 1985, the report of the environmental assessment study on Hibernia was released in this Province – 1985. That report was comprehensive. It was thousands of pages trying to deal with what the impact of oil and the development of oil was going to mean in this Province.

Now, I do not know who else in this room, but I know I was quite involved in that process as a person working in the community, as a person who was concerned about the socio-economic impact of the development of oil.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MS MICHAEL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, I appreciate that.

Back in the early 1980s when we were responding to the environmental impact statement that had been put together by Mobil Oil, there were many things that we identified, but one of the things we said very clearly was that governments had to immediately start planning for what the possible impacts were going to be and how oil developed.

Back in the 1980s, in 1983 I was author of a study on the need for studying what would happen with regard to housing in the St. John's area, giving warnings about the need for planning. When the development started in 1992, nothing had been done. Nothing had been done by the Tories, nothing was done by the Liberals, and nothing is being done by the Tories now in terms of long-term planning. It was all short-term planning and kneejerk reactions. This is what has gone on in this Province.

If we had done the planning that was being recommended, planning that community groups and economists were talking about, perhaps

today we would have a full home care program in this Province. Perhaps today we would have child care in this Province. Instead, the only reaction of Liberal and Tory governments in this Province was spend the money without any planning. That has gotten us to where we are today, Mr. Chair.

It is interesting, that in 1986 there was a review done of the report of the environmental assessment. That review that was done, that was a review of PEA done by people here in the Province, two well-known people, two researchers, Mark Shrimpton and Lars Osberg. When they wrote their review in 1986, they gave a warning, and it is an interesting warning. It is something we should be thinking about even as we move towards Muskrat Falls today, Mr. Chair.

The warning was that because of the fact that the price of oil was something that we had no control over, that there was real futility in trying to do economic forecasts and the contingency of economic plans, that the spot price of oil on internal markets was something we had no control over and at that time it had slumped to roughly \$25 Canadian dollars per barrel – their warning is, in doing planning, you cannot plan based on the cost of oil today, you have to look at the time when your project is going to be operating and when you are going to be taking the oil out, or in the case of Muskrat Falls, putting the switch on, and you have to look at what is the price of oil at that moment.

The problem is we do not know what the price of oil is at that moment and that is the warning that economists were giving –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MS MICHAEL:** – and the daily papers here in St. John's were giving back in 1986. Now, that is really quite interesting; that is something for us to be thinking about. Because that means you do not spend your money in each Budget based on what you hope the cost of oil is. You plan a Budget that you know that you can afford, and then you do what they did in Norway, as has been referred to already here in the House, and what they have done in Alberta and what they

have done in Saskatchewan. You put the money into a fund; you generate money from the money that you are making. You generate your money. That is what they did in Norway.

Norway started back in the 1970s when they first started developing oil, when they first started their production. Granted we are talking about a country here, but they now have over a trillion dollars in their fund, with hundreds of investments around the world, many of them here in Canada.

Alberta and Saskatchewan have billions but, of course, they did not choose to do it exactly the same way as Norway. They did not put all their money in; they put partial money in. In actual fact, they used their fund over the years and have taken money out and put money back in. They have not had the strict discipline that Norway has had.

Mr. Chair, if we had done that kind of thing, if we had planned an economy where we were developing other projects that could bring money in instead of just spending the money from oil and gas, we would not be in the situation where we have the mess that we have. What this government has to start doing is doing real analysis. I am going to come to home care, and I will probably speak again this afternoon to this because I will not get a chance to finish it.

When we look at home care as part of the health care system, home care, for the most part, you have mainly senior citizens who require home care. You also have people who have been in hospital and require short-term home care, and you also have younger people who have chronic illnesses or conditions that require home care as well.

There have been studies done in this country, and the key one has proven that home care costs are less than residential care. I am just going to put one statistic out there today. If we had started thirty years ago, or even twenty years ago with a vision for having care in the home rather focusing mainly on building residences and having residential care, we would have paid between 40 per cent and 70 per cent less for care than having people in residences. That is a study that has been done here in Canada by Hollander and Chappell; they did it in 2002.

They concluded that investing in home care saves money and improves the quality of life for people who would otherwise be in either a hospital or long-term care.

That is the kind of planning that we needed to do and that is the kind of planning we have to start doing. I want to see a Budget that will not be a knee-jerk reaction, but will show that this government knows how to plan.

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

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

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Bellevue.

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

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

It gives me great pleasure to stand here in the House today and take my place and represent the people of the great District of Bellevue –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** A great district.

**MR. PEACH:** A great district it is.

Mr. Chair, I am a bit confused somewhat because yesterday, I listened to the Member for St. John's South and he read off millions of dollars that was spent by this government. Then he said they could not manage the money. Mr. Chair, like my colleague before me, I have to remind him that it was only a couple of years ago since he went over on the other side of the House, and all these years that we were spending all this money, he was part of the government.

He was a minister in government. He supported it. He stood in this House many, many times and he supported the money that our government was spending. He said that we had a great government, and he announced money a good many times as minister. I am a bit confused that way.

I also have to refer to the Member for Virginia Waters. I just want to say she said that we have no vision. This government has no vision.

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

**MR. PEACH:** We keep spending the money.

Mr. Chair, I just want to read from the paper here, if you will allow me, where she was Chair of the board at Nalcor. She said, "We have put our passion for the future prosperity of this province into developing a sound vision – one that ensures we are meeting the current and future energy needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in a safe and sustainable way."

Mr. Chair, when I hear the comments that are made on the other way, it makes you wonder what they will do. I do not know what they will do. We have several projects that have been in place and several that are a benefit to my district, like the Provincial Home Repair Program. Through the Provincial Home Repair Program a total 14,848 grants were provided to low-income homeowners between 2007 and 2013, 70 per cent of which went to low-income seniors.

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

**MR. PEACH:** Would you call that, Mr. Chair, squandering money? The Residential Energy Efficiency Program: In the year 2013-2014, 500 households were approved for this grant. The average client saved \$720 a year on heating costs.

The Home Modification Program: As of March 31, 2014, 300 homeowners received this grant and approximately \$1.9 million was approved. Is this money that has been squandered? I would ask the people on the other side, what would you have done? Would you have approved these programs? These programs were brought in by this government here.

Mr. Chair, to the Third Party, I have to say every time that a Third Party gets on their feet, they talk about spend, spend, spend. If you look at the dollars that our government has been spending they always want to be adding more on.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. PEACH:** Money trees over on the other side, Mr. Chair; money trees for the Third Party.

The Home Heating Rebate: For the winter of 2013-2014, approximately 58,000 households received rebates. During 2014-2015, the combined investment of \$62 million for the Home Heating Rebate and Residential Energy Rebate; that is well spent money, money that goes back to the people.

Over \$3 million is provided annually for the Medical Transportation Assistance Program which supplements the cost. Mr. Chair, I just want to say a few words on this one because a lot of people out there do not know that our government has this medical program in place.

If you put 1,500 kilometres on your car in one year, in any one year, the government will pay you sixteen cents a kilometre. I have been to a lot of fundraisers; I have been talking to a lot of people out there who has travelled back and forth to St. John's for dialysis and different things, and they were very, very pleased to hear this. They were very, very pleased that our government took the initiative to help them out in their travel. It is not a big lot of money. Maybe not, but at least it helps them a great deal in getting back and forth to St. John's.

Mr. Chair, the Newfoundland and Labrador drug program: In 2014-2015 over \$147 million was invested in the program and over \$1.5 billion – billion, I repeat that because some people on the other side might think it is million – has been invested since 2004. In 2013-2014, 41,500 people availed of the Sixty-five Plus program at the cost of \$47 million.

Mr. Chair, the health and wellness grants, grants between \$5,000 and \$10,000 – in 2013-2014, there was \$700,000 for 100 community groups and not-for-profit organizations. In 2012-2013, there was \$862,000 for over 100 groups. Since 2005, over \$6 million has been awarded for health and wellness grants.

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

**MR. PEACH:** Every year more than 20,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians avail of the Long-Term Care and Community Support Services program offered across the Province.

We hear from the other side, especially the Third Party again, that we do not have enough money put into long-term care. It is like the Member for Bonavista said, all the time we cannot be putting out money, we cannot satisfy everybody; but this year, a total of nearly \$700 million will be invested in long-term care and community support services.

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

**MR. PEACH:** Mr. Chair, just recently, we announced some seniors' community grants, and you would never believe the good that it does to a small community with a small group. I was out the other night to Sunnyside and I met with the 50 Plus Club. There were seventy of them there in the room. To listen to the conversations that we had about this government was unbelievable, the support for this government and what we are doing for the people, what we are doing for the 50 Plus Clubs and different ones like that.

I hear people saying about the millions of dollars they have spent in their district. Well, my district, from the District of Bellevue, I do not have the health care centres. I do not have the hospitals. I have schools that have been repaired, the same as everybody's schools have been repaired. There are four schools in my district that have had roofs repaired and had the mould removed over the years since I have been here in 2007.

Mr. Chair, I know first-hand what the schools were like. I worked in the schools. In 1995 to 2000, I worked in the schools as a finished carpenter for the Avalon North School Board. I know first-hand about the mould that was in the schools and the damage that the schools had and the neglect that was there. This government here in 2003 started changing all of that.

I remember when I ran for election in 2007 there were protests on the go about the mould in the schools. There are no protests today. Those four or five schools that had mould and had problems with the roofs are all fixed, thanks to this government and the good fiscal management that we have.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

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

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

Mr. Chair, I just heard the member speak and I heard a couple of others and one of my colleagues said that at least now we know we are saving on paper because they are handing around the same note to everybody – constantly.

I am going to stand and speak about a few things, but before I do, I have to get something – because sometimes we all get in this debate and there is something that happened to me several times and the Member for Terra Nova, the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services. Mr. Chair, I just want to go back because we all get into a heated debate sometimes. Back in January – it was in this sitting, January 30. The member came over and apologized after, but he did the same thing yesterday, put into Hansard: why don't you just shut up?

Mr. Chair, there was an incident back in 2006, 2007 where someone got on the Open Line and said I received money to step aside for Clyde Wells. The Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services got up on January 25 and repeated it. What he said is the Member for Bay of Islands is absolutely bitter from what took place. The government became – offered the former Premier. That is fine. I do not know what he got paid.

Mr. Chair, I took a fellow to court on that. I ask the Member for Terra Nova, stand up and say that outside the House of Assembly, or stand up and say where he heard it from. If you want to go attacking me, that I accepted money because I stepped aside for a Premier, stand up and go outside that House of Assembly and make that statement. I am just tired of this member standing up here on a regular basis attacking me personally, coming over, and apologizing.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Chair, I have to laugh, all the members over there are laughing. I will just

give you a history of it. If you want to talk about the members opposite, I do not attack anybody personally. I attack everybody for the issues.

When I went to court there was a guy by the name of Ron Jesso who was down to your PC convention lately, Mr. Chair. When we got him in what they call discovery, he had no basis to it, absolutely no basis to it. Then he wanted to settle.

The lawyer at the time said no, four questions. The questions were: Who asked you to make the call, how many times, was it done before, and anybody else? Do you know who asked him to make the calls? Linda Roche, Danny Williams' executive assistant. Do you know how many times? She called me three times that night to get on Open Line. Eight times prior and it was stated in discovery that it was other people.

When the Member for Terra Nova, the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services, wants to stand up in this House and say I heard, stand up and say who you heard it from. Go outside the House because anybody on this side who ever made an accusation against any member over there, I would be the first one to say get outside the House and say it if you are going to say something personal.

I am just sick and tired of this member sitting across the House. What do you get paid? I am sick of it, Mr. Chair. If that member wants to do it, if the member wants to say it again – he is over there laughing his head off. That is fine with you. That is fine, you can laugh your head off, Mr. Chair, but I can tell you one thing, do not go coming across this here and apologizing to me privately any more. Just do not do it –

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

**MR. JOYCE:** – because I am sick and tired of listening to you saying something in the public. I am sick of it. I ask the Member for Gander, I ask any of the members over there from – did any of you ever hear me say anything personal about anybody? Never – never. I attack issues –

**MR. S. COLLINS:** (Inaudible).

**MR. JOYCE:** The Member for Terra Nova is saying sit down. It is a big joke to him. It is a great big joke to him, Mr. Chair, but listen, if you are going to keep debating, debate; if not, have the guts to go outside this House of Assembly and say it. You are laughing, but you have not got the guts to do it. Do you know why you do not have the guts? Because it is just not true. You go outside and say it.

**CHAIR:** I remind the hon. member to speak to the Chair.

**MR. JOYCE:** That is right, Mr. Chair. He does not have guts to do it.

Anyway, I will just leave that alone, Mr. Chair. So from here on in, if the Member for Terra Nova, the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services – what he should do is spend more time about his own department instead of up attacking people and spreading rumours and lies. He can laugh about that.

I will just get back to the topic. I just want to make sure that is on the record, because I am sick and tired of this member standing up in this House and walking over privately – being the big hero in front of all the members and walking over privately: Eddie, sorry about that, boy; I did not mean that, sorry. I had enough of it, Mr. Chair. Say it outside if you are going to say it.

So, Mr. Chair, I will just turn around and talk about some issues in the district. Let us look at Copper Mine Brook. The Minister of Environment – and I thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who is finally getting something moving on that. I thank that minister for that because it was fourteen months that those people down there were shut off, were not allowed to sell the cabins, even were not allowed to give it to their sons or daughters – were not allowed to give it to their sons or daughters.

At least this minister, the Minister of Municipal Affairs – I know the Member for Port au Port who was in there would not even return a letter – would not even return a letter – would not even return a phone call. The people, the residents, he would not even talk to them, Mr. Chair.

The Minister of Environment now, the Member for Humber West, the email I got – the minister

is aware of it; I spoke to him about it. Most of the residents are from your district. They still cannot get an answer. The Minister of Municipal Affairs is going to have a public meeting, finally. For fourteen months they had cabins, they could not do it. They just could not sell it. They could do anything with it. They could not even transfer it.

So the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Member for Ferryland, I just want to acknowledge the work you are doing on that piece. Finally, the people are getting a bit of respect.

I go back to amalgamation, Mr. Chair, York Harbour-Lark Harbour. The Minister of Health, who was the Minister of Municipal Affairs at the time, committing the money to me for water and sewer. Then having the meeting with them, I will get back to you in two to three months with this, and never heard a word. He would not return a call, would not return an email, Mr. Chair – would not even return a call, would not even return an email.

Mr. Chair, then the other minister who is the Member for St. John's West, I think, is the Minister of Environment now and government services arranged a meeting to go out and sit down about the fire truck and never even showed up to the meeting – never even showed up.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Did he call?

**MR. JOYCE:** Never even called, Mr. Chair – never even called.

Mr. Chair, as usual, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, now the Member for Ferryland, I have to say he is taking the bull by the horns and at least he is working with the people. He said he would meet with them out in the mayors and municipalities conference; he did. He said I will get back to you at a certain time; he did. Now there was a response gone to the town; the town now will send a response back.

I just wanted to thank the minister and I just want to recognize that at least there are some members over there who do give respect to a lot of people. I know when the Member for Granders was there, he would treat it the same



way. You could not get everything, but at least you get respect, and that is all you ask for is work with people.

Mr. Chair, we hear the members opposite: What would you do? What would you do? I guarantee you one thing, I would not have built Muskrat Falls, charge eighteen, twenty cents a kilowatt and sell it Nova Scotia for four cents a kilowatt. I guarantee you that is one thing I would not do. I would not put \$30 million up in Parsons Pond and drill a hole to look for oil because you wanted to be like Jed Clampett. That is another thing I would not do.

I heard the Minister of Natural Resources talking yesterday about the oil. You are right, if you buy in oil – but is there a better way instead of paying \$700 million to \$800 million to have shares, can we get it through royalties? That is the big question: Could you get it through royalties? That is the question you need to ask.

Right now we are in a Budget crunch. There are a lot of people and we hear about the schools around – could we get it a different way? That is how we think, Mr. Chair.

I heard I think it was the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island, the Minister of Transportation and Works. I never seen anything so condescending in my life, standing up there and started saying look what we did for the people of the Province. You are a minister – you are a minister – you should not get up and say people, look what I did for you, if you are not nice to me, you will not get it. That is just absolutely shocking.

Just for the record, Mr. Chair, the money he is talking about in Humber West, and I know the Member for Humber West – the school is not even open. So when you stand up look at the great school we have – and the member knows; they are up in G.C. Rowe crammed like sardines. You know that. It is not done, but at least be honest with them and do not say it is going to open and delay and delay it and delay it. He said last week – it was not you who said it, I say to the Member for Humber West; you did not say it. He was up bragging about it the other day and they are crammed up there like sardines, and the commitment was made.

I will not get into the hospital, Mr. Chair. I will not get into radiation. I definitely will not get into that because I know I may be at teleconference 6:30 on Thursday night with the minister anyway – with the health care committee about the hospital, Mr. Chair.

I know I do not need to do the minister's job and I know I do not need to do the Member for Humber West's job, but I did send them off the functional plan for you. Because as the minister said, the plan is not ready yet, but they do have it.

I just want to thank you and I am sure I will be back again for another few words.

Thank you.

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

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

Mr. Chair, I have been in this House now, I think it is going on twelve years. I remember when I came in first I found this place rather intimidating; I have to be honest with you. I sat back there and I remember looking across at two champions that come to mind in particular, Roger Grimes and Gerry Reid. Having been new to the House and seeing some of the things that went on, there were days when you wondered if you were fitted for the job because some of the tactics were – I do not know how I would claim them, but they left you pondering and wondering if you should indeed be here.

The Member for Bay of Islands has been here – I am not sure how many years he has been here, but he has been in here quite a while and he knows about the bantering that goes on back and forth. I am not going to belabour what it is was but I have bantered with him on occasional times. After listening to that one, I thought there is a country song out there somewhere that says I am just a sensitive guy. That is the first thing that came to mind.

Mr. Chair, he has to admit we as ministers – I like to think that I treat people fairly and I think the majority of us over here do. When I took on the First Minister's role it was pointed out to me very clearly that I was not a minister just for my

district, I was a minister for the Province. As such, I carry out my duties on behalf of the people of the Province.

I am going to take my few minutes to follow up on the fact that the Member for Stephenville East took because I thought it was a very, very interesting fact; there is no doubt about it. He talked about this bill in particular and the dollars that are needed to continue the work of government. That is what this is about. He talked about the direction of oil and he talked about us as a Province being oil dependent. I will debate that a little later on, but we know that we are impacted by oil. There is no doubt about it.

We are impacted because as we moved through it we did agreements and we did work around royalties and whatnot, and oil did leave us in a better place. I think all of us would have looked – if we had sat down two years ago and thought about where the price of oil is now compared to where it was then, I do not know if anybody would have predicted it. Other people would argue we should have done this and we should have done that, but we are at the situation we are in.

Alberta finds itself in the same situation. I was reading an article today about the impact that it is having on the workers. It is going to impact the people of this Province. There is no doubt about it.

I was going down through some stats the other day. They have been collecting some stats on EI. In 2014, we had the second lowest unemployment rate that we have had since 1976, and 2013 was the lowest.

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** The reason being, we can look around our own Province. Yes, we have people who are going out West to work. It is no trouble to see it. All you have to do is go in the airport. I went in the airport last week and there were three or four people there from my district who commute back and forth.

We also have to take a look at the projects that were happening in the Province. Right now I do not think people even realize, I am not sure what the exact number is right now, but just a short while ago there were 1,200 people working at the site in Marystown. I drove by there one day thinking there are probably about 500 or 600. When I checked on it, I found that there were 1,200 people working on that.

I remember checking on Long Harbour. At one point, just a couple of years ago, there were some 4,500 people working there. I did not realize it, and I do not think there are a lot of people in the Province who realize it. As a result, our unemployment rates were down low.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. JACKMAN:** I do want to challenge him on just a couple of points that he made. One is that he said once you become totally dependent on oil, you neglect other areas. I challenged him on that. The reason I challenged him on that is I would say to him if we took a look at our tourism industry, where it has gone, it seems there is something about 10,000 direct jobs related to tourism.

Tourism is moving up to that billion dollar mark. If we look at the number of tourists who are coming to the Province, that number has increased. Let's face it, you can look at The Straits if you want to as a particular area, you can look at the Bonavista Peninsula, just ask where they would be without their tourism industry. You have to admit that, I do not care what side of government you are on. You have to admit that if it was not for tourism on the Bonavista Peninsula there would be a huge impact, likewise on the Northern Peninsula. Look at Gros Morne, look at the parks, look at the festival, the theatre festival that happens up there, all connected to the tourism industry.

If we look at the fishing industry, we know the transition that has gone on in the fishing industry. There is no doubt about it. We were once primarily a cod, a pelagic, a flatfish, and groundfish type of industry. Now that industry transitioned to the crab industry where we have seen dollars being made in the fishing industry

that were never made there before. Now that industry is bordering a billion dollar mark. So the transition from the moratorium days to where we are now is really interesting.

I was reading a book –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. JACKMAN:** I believe the man's name is Cecil Parsons who wrote a book. In it he interviewed this gentleman who, at the time of the moratorium, had thought it was the end, it was the end for the fishery, but he asked him just a couple of years ago what he thought now. His thought on it was quite different from what it was back when the moratorium came in.

As such, we see an industry that has transitioned. It has transitioned in large part, I would say to my colleague, the Minister of Fisheries, because of investments we have made in FTNOP. How plants have adjusted, how the fishing industry has adjusted, experiments that were carried out.

In terms of the mining industry, investments were made. Projects were doing quite well. We see what has happened with iron ore. We see where the prices are.

I listened to my colleague for Labrador West the other day. He made a comment about what is happening in Lab West right now. His point, I think, was that Lab West has seen these types of things before where, when you are a one-industry town, you know that prices fluctuate. The thing about Lab West – when I listened to him speaking and I listened to the commentary around that community, they know, and they are strong enough and they are resilient enough, they will live through this, and they will. There will be that day when they will rise from where they are now up to where they previously were a couple of years ago.

Now, we will see that happening in this industry. Through that we, as a government, have to govern. Every time I have heard one of the members opposite get up, whether it is in petitions or Question Period or in debate, it is usually an ask for something. Well, it is easy to

ask and promise. The people watching this, the people out there have to listen but it is somebody who has to rule and somebody who has to decide, these are the priorities for us at this particular time. Mr. Chair, that is what we have to do on this side as a government.

There is nobody here who would not want to build every school, every hospital, pave every road, do every water and sewer project, but, Mr. Chair, just as we have a household, I cannot do everything in my household over and over, likewise we as a government, we cannot do everything. We learn when we are raising our children, they ask and ask and ask but sometimes as a parent we have to say, sorry, this cannot be done.

This is government, Mr. Chair, we rule our government as we would rule our households, and there are decisions that we have to make and there are decisions that we will make.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the Member for Conception Bay South.

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

I just want to slow things down a little bit. The members opposite have been beating on their chests so much this afternoon, if they continue there are going to be injuries. So we will take our time and relax a little bit.

I wanted to talk a little bit this afternoon about the season, about spring. I wore my spring tie today with the sun and the sunflowers and so on. I can see some people have their – the Deputy Premier has his new tie on. So we are going to talk about spring a little bit today.

As we are aware, on Friday past we had the vernal equinox. At 8:15 on Friday afternoon was the first day of spring, vernal meaning the spring equinox. Some of our older residents in Newfoundland might talk about the sun crossing the line. When the sun crosses the line, they are talking about the equator.

Mr. Chair, I taught geography in high school, and the day that the sun crossed the line was a great day for me because I did not have to do any lesson plans. I could take what was happening that day and talk to my students from what they were experiencing in real time.

We talked about the earth-sun relationships. We talked about the tilt of the earth at 23.5 degrees. We talked about the location of the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn as a result of that 23.5 degrees, each 23.5 degrees from the equator. We talked about the impact on the seasons, the fact that when the earth's relationship to the sun is up and down it is spring in the northern hemisphere. Then we talked about how the tilt of the earth affects it as well. We talked about equal hours of daylight and dark.

Mr. Chair, our ancients celebrated spring simply because they survived winter. We look at some of our ancient architectures, Stonehenge, Machu Picchu and so on, it is tied to the spring equinox. We can see signs of spring all around. We have the buds on the birch trees, the buds on the maple trees just getting ready to burst.

Mr. Chair, I have two dogs, so as the snow goes down I have a reminder of spring around my garden. As the snow goes down, the crocuses come up. We have the sensitive, pretty, beautiful flowers fighting their way up through all that snow, knowing full well that they are in Newfoundland and that before the season is over there will be another snowfall, they will be covered over and have to fight their way up again.

In school, young teenagers are just making eyes at each other now, and what we will find is when they come back to school after Easter they will be holding hands.

When I drive to work in the wintertime, the sun is rising over Ferryland district. Mr. Chair, the sun is no longer rising over Ferryland district. The sun now is rising over Kilbride district. I am sure the Member for Kilbride can feel that red hot sun right on the back of his neck every morning and the threatening sun as it rises over Kilbride.

Mr. Chair, my house is oriented to Conception Bay. So my sunset in the wintertime sets over the District of Harbour Main, but now the sunset is over – no, Mr. Chair, the sun is setting on both the District of Harbour Main and the District of Port de Grave. We cannot tell one season from the other when we are looking across the bay.

Mr. Chair, yes, we are using a metaphor here and a lot of authors have used metaphors. Steinbeck, in his last novel wrote and called his book *The Winter of Our Discontent*. If we use that metaphor now, we look at our own winter of discontent here in Newfoundland. We look at the fact that we were called back to the House on two days' notice so the Premier could satisfy one of his 120-day leadership promises. We looked at the fact that the callback to the House cost us \$80,000; \$20,000 a day squandered.

Mr. Chair, our sixth Budget deficit in eleven years –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. HILLIER:** – increasing on a daily basis predicated by a projected \$600 million deficit. Continued job losses; fourteen months, fifteen months, sixteen months. Mr. Chair, 9-11, while everyone supports Province-wide 9-11 service –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** 911.

**MR. HILLIER:** The 911 service, thank you – the unelected Minister of Justice wreaked havoc on the professionals who provide the service throughout the Province.

Then, Mr. Chair, only last week, we spent \$1 million for the review of ATIPPA. If we want to go on, I think my colleague and critic for Education has done a great job in pointing out some of the issues in building our schools and space for our children in the schools in the Northeast Avalon and in the rest of the Province.

Mr. Chair, it has been a long, cold winter, and we continue with those metaphors. It has been a long, cold winter since the snow started. It has been a long, cold winter for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Chair, sometimes we use the term in Newfoundland, spring by name but not by nature. All we have to do is look outdoors at the piles of snow that we have had in the last couple of weeks. While technically we are in spring, we are still in winter. We are still in winter as a season. We are still in winter politically.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. HILLIER:** Mr. Chair, spring is supposed to be the season of hope. Spring is supposed to be a season of optimism. Spring is supposed to be a season of new beginnings. We talk about the crocuses coming up through the snow, certainly new beginnings. We talked about young love, we talked about the birds, all new beginnings. Mr. Chair, spring is supposed to be a season of renewal.

The Premier is putting together a new Budget – a month later than normal. He says it is delayed because we have to wait for a federal budget. On one hand they are touting that we are a have province, and on the other hand they are saying, well, we cannot bring down a budget until the feds tell us what they are going to give us. Where is the disconnect, Mr. Chair? Where is the disconnect? Nevertheless, Mr. Chair, we are going to be a month later with our Budget this year, and that is why we are here today.

Mr. Chair, the Premier has floated the privatization balloon. We have talked about it here. There have been questions asked here. It has been in the media. Our unions have started a full campaign. It is a cold time in Newfoundland today.

The Minister of Finance talks of tax increases, and he talks of increased borrowing. They both talk of cuts in the civil service. Cold days in Newfoundland, Mr. Chair, cold days in Newfoundland.

Mr. Chair, I ask you, and I ask this entire Assembly, are we entering a season of hope? Are we entering a season of renewal? Are we entering a season of new beginnings, or are we staying stuck in our winter of discontent?

Thank you very much.

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

**CHAIR (Littlejohn):** The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

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

It gives me pleasure to stand here again today and speak to Interim Supply. I would like to thank the Member for Conception Bay South for the geography lesson. I am not sure how he was as a geography teacher, but I am sure glad he did not teach economics or math. I am going to –

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South on a point of order.

**MR. HILLIER:** I remind the member from Labrador, that any chance he gets a chance to learn of anything, take it and be –

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

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

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

Again, I do thank him for his lesson in geography, and I just suggested that I am glad he did not teach math or economics because the lesson he gave in mathematics last week on Thursday was not as well as the one he gave in geography.

In talking about that I just want to clear up a couple of things. I want to talk a little bit about unit pricing. I am going to start with unit pricing and I can table this if the member would like, Mr. Chair.

Last Thursday, the hon. Member for Conception Bay South said about squandering the \$20 million, verbatim, squandered the \$20 million. He was corrected on his side and said: billion, I am sorry billion; I thought it was only \$20 million. Today, he stood in the House and tried to correct himself and said he was talking about Humber Valley Paving. I will table this. Never once, Mr. Chair, did he mention Humber Valley Paving.

I am going to give the hon. Member for Conception Bay South a little lesson in unit pricing. Maybe then you will understand that and you can carry on with your economics then. Unit pricing works in that you put a contract out on a particular job and it is done in units. As a unit of that contract is completed, and through an independent engineer accepted that the work was done acceptably, then that unit is paid for.

The \$20 million that he alluded to today, \$11.8 million of it was independently accepted by an independent engineering firm and therefore it was paid. But of the \$11.8 million, \$1.8 million was kept in a mechanics' lien holdback.

Now again, Mr. Chair, I am not sure he understands mechanics' liens or mechanics' lien holdbacks. I can guarantee you I have had a very good education in both over the last year and I do not mind saying it.

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

**MR. MCGRATH:** I do not mind saying it, Mr. Chair. I understand both and I understand them quite well.

Of the \$11.8 million, there was \$1.18 million held back in a mechanics' lien holdback that is still sitting there. If he wanted to bring up Humber Valley Paving I have no problem talking about it. So that is still there, that \$1.18 million.

As I have said to the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair on many occasions here publicly in the House of Assembly and privately, give me a list of the people in your district who you are saying are owed money on that particular project and I will work with them. To this date not one person has shown that they are owed money on that particular contract.

I have had conversations with people in the Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair district who are owed money and who choose not to go after the \$1.18 million. That is their choice in business. I just wanted to clarify that a little bit.

Also, I find it really strange that the Member for Conception Bay South could stand up here Thursday and talk about \$20 million – corrected to \$20 billion – and then stand up here today and

say he was talking about something completely different. As a member on this side of the House, that makes me nervous for the simple fact that it shows – I hear the Member for St. John's South cackling over there. I am not really sure which side of the House he wants to be on.

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

**MR. MCGRATH:** As indecisive as he is, we really do not know where the Member for St. John's South wants to be. I do not think he knows where he is, but that is up for the Member for St. John's South to figure that out.

I am happy where I am. I will continue to serve and represent the people in my district as they elected me for. The people in my district elected me under a certain party and that is where I plan on staying. I will not make those indecisive decisions.

The Member for Conception Bay South – I just want to put it on record and it will be in Hansard if you want to talk about this later – if you are going to stand up in the House of Assembly and you are going to talk about a particular thing, try to do a little bit of research. Save yourself the embarrassment of not knowing what you are talking about because I was embarrassed for you today.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South on a point of order.

**MR. HILLIER:** Mr. Chair, I guess one gets the sense of embarrassment as an individual. The member opposite should not be concerned about my embarrassment. I will say that –

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

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

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

I was sort of interested in hearing what he had to say; however, he will get an opportunity at some point to stand up again. I will remind the hon. member across the way that growing up in a large family has great qualities because it

teaches you to be able to defend yourself. I grew up in a large family.

I am going to move off you now because I just wasted over six minutes talking about that. I want to talk about –

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South on a point of order.

**MR. HILLIER:** I have a concern, Mr. Chair. I believe the member opposite used my district six times and he calls it a waste of time. I do not see it as a waste of time. I have been here six months and finally I feel accepted into this House of assembly that someone would take the time to talk about me so much. I appreciate it.

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

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

**MR. MCGRATH:** Mr. Chair, again, if the Member for Conception Bay South was listening, he would realize I was not talking about his district. I was talking about his attitude in the House of Assembly. That is what I was talking about. It was embarrassing what I was listening to the last couple of times he spoke.

Anyway, let's talk about Labrador West.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. MCGRATH:** I heard the minister mention what I spoke about last week. You talk about the economy. I hear the members across the way and I heard some heckling – is the economy doing really well – when another minister was up speaking. The economy is doing very well, but –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** It was not last week.

**MR. MCGRATH:** Let me finish. Mr. Chair, if the member across the way would let me finish speaking. The economy is doing very well. In certain sectors of the economy you get ups and downs.

In my district right now, which is a one-industry town, we are in a down. The iron ore industry right now is in a slump. As you heard the Member for Burin – Placentia West mention, it is a slump. We have been there before and we planned for it.

I remember when I first moved to Labrador West and I went into business there, I was frightened to death. You would not invest in your business for more than three years because if the three-year contract with IOC was not signed, well then you were out of business. It was as simple as that. You were a secondary industry in a one-industry town.

We have learned, over the years the people in Labrador West have learned to plan and they have learned to prepare. If there is one thing I have noticed – and it is scary I will tell you. When you are walking through the mall in your district, or you go to church in your district, or you walk into the grocery store and you see the person who was making \$150,000 last year, and the only thing they have today is probably a \$400,000 or \$500,000 mortgage, and they do not know where they are going to get the money to pay for it, that is a scary thought.

When you see those new snowmobiles, you see those cottages, and you see those new vehicles that people worked hard for, and you see them on a virtual flea market being sold at bargain bottom prices, that is scary. I can guarantee you it is scary. The people in Labrador West are resilient and the people in Labrador West know how to get through this.

I have been there for thirty-eight years almost and I am very proud to say that this slump we are in right now in the economy, we will get back to where we were. The people in Labrador West will be on top again and we know it.

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

**MR. MCGRATH:** The difference is we know how to get through that slump. The economy is doing well, but we are in a slump. Together we are going to get through that slump. We will be resilient, we will remain resilient, and we will do it together as a community.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

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

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

I am very happy once again to stand and speak to Interim Supply.

**MS DEMPSTER:** A point of order.

**CHAIR:** A point of order, the hon. the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

**MS DEMPSTER:** Mr. Chair, I find it very, very sad that the member across the way can get up and talk so lightheartedly about Humber Valley Paving; all the businesses still suffering in my area. When I got kicked out of the House, Mr. Chair, many people contacted me and said Humber Valley Paving never, ever paid their bills in sixty to ninety days so why were they going to put in a mechanics' lien in thirty days (inaudible) –

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

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

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

**MS ROGERS:** Thank you very much once again, Mr. Chair.

I am very happy to stand to speak in this House on Bill 44, a bill on Interim Supply. I would like again to stress the fact that the Premier has said everything is on the table. Again, I believe that he is fostering a climate of fear, uncertainty, and instability in –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

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

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

I do believe that the Premier has fostered an environment of fear and instability in the

Province, one where perhaps that is not necessary. Again, one would expect from solid leadership, a steady hand on tiller, to assure people that we are going to be able to weather this storm together if, in fact, it is as big a storm as it has been alluded to.

Perhaps it is, but still there are some very definitive things, very definite things, that should not be on the table because what we need to look at is what is good for the economy. We know what is good for the economy is having a stable workforce, making sure that people have what they need in order to be productive, in order to be able to do the best that they possibly can.

So, the Premier has been saying, when he has been saying everything is on the table, that he is listening, that he is hearing, that his government is consulting like no other government has in the history of Newfoundland and Labrador. That is what he is telling us, that his government is listening.

Well, Mr. Chair, I would like to make a proposal to this government because he is saying I want to hear from people ways of saving money. I have a recommendation on how he can save some money.

Kyra Rees is a trans-woman living in St. John's, Newfoundland and she, as a trans-woman, has wanted to be able to change the gender markers on her birth certificate. We all know that the birth certificate is a foundational document, which means whatever your gender is on your birth certificate then your passport follows suit, your driver's licence follows suit, and any other official ID follows suit according to what is your gender marker on your birth certificate.

Well, Kyra was born a man and has transitioned; she is now identifying as a woman. It is interesting. She has just won the Woman of the Year Award for the YWCA here in Newfoundland and Labrador as a young woman, as a young activist. She got Woman of the Year – how far have we come; this is wonderful when we look at our human rights and all the work that we have done against discrimination.

Why is it important, Mr. Chair, for Kyra to be able to change the gender marker on her birth



certificate? Well, she is a young woman and if she goes to, for instance, a bar and she is ID'd, she has to give her ID. At this point, she very much presents as a beautiful young woman. Her ID says that she is male. So she goes to a bar with her friends and there is a stranger, somebody at the bar who insists that she shows her ID and her ID says that she is a man, it is against her human dignity and her human rights. Can you imagine what that must feel like?

The other thing, it makes it very unsafe for her; we know that the level of violence and the incidence of violence against transgendered people is the highest. They are the category of people who experience the most discrimination, the most violence, who are most vulnerable to violence.

Why can this save the Province money? Well, Kyra has launched a human rights challenge to the Province to say that she wants to be able to change the gender marker on her birth certificate. Another reason that it is so important is if she were to travel internationally, whether it be for work or for leisure, there are some countries where she would not be allowed in or there are some countries where she would be imprisoned – where she would actually be imprisoned. So, it is a matter of not just human dignity, but safety.

Kyra is not the only one; there are a number of trans-folks who are asking for this as well. So, government policy right now is pretty outdated. It is Service Newfoundland and Labrador. So, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, she has issued a court challenge, and the government has decided to fight her. The government has decided to fight her and go to court.

Now, Mr. Chair, imagine, in four other provinces, they have already changed their legislation. What it requires now is not that she have full sexual-reassignment surgery – because that is what our policy and our law requires, and many people who are transgendered will not have full sex-reassignment surgery; they simply will not. That is their choice, but they still identify as trans.

So, our law requires that she has full sex-reassignment surgery; but again, four other

provinces have already changed their policy, have already changed their law, and what is required is simply a doctor's letter saying that this patient of mine has transgendered and is now a different sex, and all it means is changing the M on your birth certificate to F. That is all it is. It is the change of a little, little consonant, a change of a little letter – which means an incredible difference to the lives of transgendered people.

There is somebody in Alberta who gave a human rights challenge. Alberta government went to court against that person, and do you know what happened? The courts ruled against the government. Mr. Chair, we know that the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, to take Kyra to court to fight her human rights challenge is a waste of money. Why is it a waste of money? Because the precedence is already there.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MS ROGERS:** All across the country, the precedence is already there. So by going to court – because we know that the government is not going to win on this. I sure hope that the Minister of Service NL is listening to this debate, that all across the country the laws have been changing. So what we are doing is we are wasting court time. We are causing undue, unnecessary, extra suffering and pain for transgendered people in our Province.

The government can simply do the right thing. What they can do is they can say we are dropping our challenge against the challenge that Kyra has put before the courts, and they can introduce legislation – I am sure there are not tons of legislation that is before us right now. It is a very simple procedure. The precedence is there right across the country. Four provinces have done it already. Nova Scotia is in the process of doing it.

So we have best practices across the country. We can do this, Mr. Chair. This government can do it. Not only will it not cost money to do it, as a matter of fact, it will save this government money. It will save this government court costs.

I would like to know, Mr. Chair, how much money this unnecessary court case is costing the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

There were four Cabinet ministers last week who attended a meeting with young trans-folks and with teachers who work in our school system. Young trans-folks talked about the experiences they have as trans-youth in our school system. I was so happy to see the four ministers there. I know they can attest to the fact of how important it was, the stories –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** It is the nastiest politics you are doing. It is the nastiest politics.

**MS ROGERS:** What is this? I am saying how wonderful it was. It was very wonderful that they were there to hear the stories. There were also members from the Official Opposition there. How wonderful it was to hear the stories.

We know the pain and suffering. So this kind of legislative change can help alleviate that unnecessary pain and suffering. This is a way, Mr. Chair, that this government can save unnecessary spending by doing the right thing.

**CHAIR:** The hon. member's time has expired.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

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

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

It is indeed a privilege to get up here again today – and like I always say when I start off up here – to represent the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis.

Mr. Chair, it is interesting times. I do not know, we have a long session to go. I think we are going to be in here until the middle of June or July or whenever. I almost want to go over the boards today, so I do not know if I can hold it back that long.

It is pretty interesting because both sides of the House, we are here to do a job, we are here to represent our constituents, and we want to do the best we can. Everybody here, I hope, is here for the right reasons. The right reason is that the people who elected us, the people who got out and vote, and the people who are living in our districts get the best representation they can get.

I am going to talk a little bit today about my district, obviously, everybody gets up. I am not going to attack anybody over there. I am not going to do anything, I just want to talk. I want to talk about some of the investments we made.

It is like your household. If you have enough money to spend on something you are going to buy something. If you cannot afford it, then you just do not buy it. At the end of the day you have a roof that you have to put over your family, you have to put food on the table, and there are essentials in life.

Government is something similar to that. We have to take care of our people. I believe we are doing a good job. I believe that we are here for the right reasons. I am not saying that anybody on the other side is not here for the right reasons.

I want to talk about municipal affairs today a little bit. Like I said earlier, I talk about education a lot of the time. I just want to talk about the towns in my district.

Being a former mayor of a town, it is so important that you – again they have the same job. More or less in the town that I was in it was a volunteer position. I took great pride in it. I will tell you why. Not only was I there for people in my town, but my father was the first mayor of the Town of Flatrock. Then when I became a mayor I became very proud of that because it made me feel good, that I was continuing in his footsteps. I knew he was there for the right reasons so I was there for the right reasons.

The Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs was here today and he did a member's statement.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Your father was a good man.

**MR. K. PARSONS:** He was a good man; there is no doubt about it.

Anyway we talked today. When I became mayor of the Town of Flatrock, 50-50 was the cost-shared ratio with government. When you look at a small town, our budget at the time was about \$500,000. I remember a former MHA, great minister, and good friend Mr. Jack Byrne was the Minister of Municipal Affairs and we applied for a fire truck. We were pretty nervous at the time because our debt ratio was up around 30 per cent and whether we could afford it or not, but we went ahead and got it.

At that time the fire truck itself was \$200,000. To take on a \$100,000 debt on a fire truck at that time was huge. Like I said, we were at a budget of \$500,000 and we had to do snow clearing, garbage collection, street lighting, and all the essentials that a town has.

Today, when I look at the Town of Pouch Cove in my area, which two years ago got a fire truck and it was 90-10, it was a \$200,000 fire truck. Just think of the difference of what it was. What it meant to that town was \$20,000, versus just a few years before that \$100,000.

I think this is fantastic. I do not know what is in the Budget. I do not know if we are going to touch anything like that. I really believe that is important to small municipalities in the Province. I believe that it was important in my district when I look at – like I said as a mayor it was huge. We had roads to do. We had everything else, but fire protection was very, very important in the area. We are very fortunate too.

I am going to give it a while and talk about fire protection. I just have to talk about the people who volunteer in fire departments. We have the Pouch Cove Volunteer Fire Department and the Torbay Volunteer Fire Department that takes care of the Town of Flatrock. They do a fantastic job.

This weekend I had the great privilege and great pleasure – and I enjoy my food. The Town of Torbay had a chicken dinner. It was \$12 to go down and it was just to support the volunteer fire department. When I went there on Saturday the line-up of cars that were there, getting in through

the door – and it was so nice to see the people in the district supporting the volunteer fire department.

We take a lot of things for granted, but I cannot believe how dedicated. It really takes a special person to jump out of bed at 12:00 in the night. You may have to go to work the next day, but to do what they do is unbelievable. It was nice to see people in the area get out and support it. I do not know how many chicken dinners they sold, but I had a few. You can tell that I had a few of them. They were excellent. It is nice to see that we get out and support our volunteers in our community.

The other one, while I am mentioned volunteers and especially the fire department, I was speaking to Vince MacKenzie last week. I mentioned to him the Pouch Cove Volunteer Fire Department. When I went to a function that they had, I noticed all of these young firefighters there. He told me about this junior firefighting program. That is really, really good. I could not believe it. I was talking to him about it. He said it started about twenty years ago.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** It is a fabulous program.

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Yes, it is a fabulous program. What it does is give young people in the area – seventeen, eighteen, nineteen years old I think they are – the opportunity to serve in a volunteer fire department. It is a really good stepping stone because you get your feet in through the door and you know how things work. It is a great way to get in.

Like I said, this is a plug today for the volunteer fire department. I am very proud that we as a government are really supporting those fire departments. I know it is a small thing to some people, like \$7,000 for bunker suits or something like that, but that is where we have to be. As a government, we have to support those people. They need our support because they do so much for our communities.

Down my way it is not only what they do to protect the homes, but they are involved in community things like Santa Claus parades and everything else that is involved in the community. You usually see them there at the festivals and different things like that. It is

really important and I just wanted to put that plug in today.

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

**MR. K. PARSONS:** I just want to talk about another thing too. I just want to talk about the fishery today. I remember back in 1992 when the moratorium came in. We were heavily involved. I was heavily involved myself in the fishery.

We owned a trucking company. We used to truck all the cod and capelin out of the east end. There were times that we trucked up to 10 million pounds of cod and probably 7 million or 8 million pounds of capelin.

I was over in Harbour Grace. I remember one night I was trying to get the truck up because there was a fire on the side. I figured if I was going to get caught down on the wharf I was going to be there all night. We trucked capelin all over this Province. When the moratorium came in the whole Province was like, oh my God, this is it. We are finished. The fishery is finished.

I had the opportunity this weekend to speak to a couple of fishermen in my area. I have to say, granted there are not as many people in the fishery today as was there in 1992, but I tell you the fishery today and what is in my area, they are mainly fishing crab. A lot of them are looking at the Canadian dollar. The Canadian dollar is down. So they are telling me that because the Canadian dollar is down, the markets down in the States – the price is going to be a lot higher, so that is great for our fishermen.

Also, they say the inventory in the crab industry is low, so that is huge. The inventory that is in the crab industry in Japan is low, so this year looks like a real good year for the crab fishermen in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is a scary time when you take it – these fishermen, I give them credit for what they do. It is not an easy life when you are going out in a boat that is forty-five feet long and you are going out 150 miles. I can remember one night my young fellow was on the boat with my brother, and I remember the wind blowing that night and I

could not sleep because I said boy, she is rough coming in tonight. I knew they were coming in.

There are a lot of families in Newfoundland and Labrador that see that every day of the fishery. Some people talk about the fishery in a negative way; I always talk about it in a positive way. It is also a huge industry for a Province; it is a billion-dollar industry. People in the fishery work very, very hard. I am just so happy this year that they will get a good price for their crab, and hopefully they will have a good future in it. There is a good minister – that is the reason why the crab price should be good this year is because of the Minister of Fisheries.

In closing, Mr. Chair, I heard the hon. Member for Bellevue talk a little bit there today – just a little touch now on seniors. He talked about the home repair program and REEP, and I do not know how many he said was given out throughout the Province, but I know myself in my own district it is such a good program.

It helps the people that we really need to help: mostly seniors and people who are living by themselves in their home and want to stay in their home. They just may need some repair done to windows, doors, siding or whatever. I tell you one thing, and I know that the hon. Member for Bellevue – I spoke to a couple of gentlemen and a couple of people in his district and they tell me that he goes over and beyond to make sure that these grants get to the people who really need them.

I know most of us do here in the House, but for those out listening today, just think about it, if there is some way that grant can help you, make sure you contact your MHA because we are all here for the right reasons and we are here to make sure that you people are taken care of.

I thank you for the opportunity today.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

I am happy to stand here and speak to Interim Supply. Again, we have had an opportunity over the last week or so for comments on both sides. Again, we are talking about government money. As has been mentioned here today a couple of times, things can get heated.

I have to respond to some of the comments made by the Member for Lab West, and I am sure he knows this is coming. I say to the member, it is certainly not personal, but I have to respond to the comments that the member made. This is the former Minister of Transportation and Works. This is a few of the things that I picked up. He said he was embarrassed at the Member for CBS because I think he might have said \$20 million and \$20 billion. This coming from the former minister who was fired – fired – because he conducted a \$20 million deal in seven-and-a-half hours with no documentation.

So I say again, you may be embarrassed, but I can tell you what, the people on this side and the people in this Province were certainly embarrassed that that is how our Cabinet operated: in complete secrecy. That is just one of the things I want to talk about that was embarrassing.

What is embarrassing is to know that this government conducted million-dollar deals and when they were all done, there was absolutely not one shred of paper to show why they did it. Not one shred of paper. Now they will say: What wouldn't you have done? What wouldn't you have done? Not talking about the money.

Well, one thing we probably would not have done is conducted a multi-million dollar deal that we cancelled in seven-and-a-half hours with no documentation that resulted in having to call in the Auditor General to investigate – because I am sure that he did it for free. I am sure there were no resources expended in doing that report.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** They were forced to call the Auditor General.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Again, forced to call in the Auditor General. After we called for it multiple, multiple times, they called in the AG.

I would note that the Auditor General did a fine job. The Auditor General came back, though,

and there are still some questions. We want to talk about being embarrassed? He was not satisfied; he is not sure. “There is no documentary evidence to indicate what prompted two Ministers to call the Deputy Minister of Transportation and Works the morning of March 13, 2014 to enquire about HVP, which” – and this is the AG’s words – “coincidentally, was the day before the close of nominations for the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador.” Just a coincidence that the would-be Premier’s company was getting a special deal the day before the would-be Premier was going to be acclaimed as the Premier.

Now, I would say to you, Mr. Chair, that is an amazing coincidence. If it was me, I might be embarrassed about that – I might be embarrassed about that if that was me.

He wants to talk about embarrassing, he wants to call out somebody for being embarrassing. The minister “knowingly withheld information from the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador related to the decision to mutually terminate the contract ... This meant the Premier was not given the opportunity to evaluate the impact... .”

I would say if you want to call out embarrassing, let's talk about embarrassing. Let's talk about the fact that the Premier of the Province had no idea that this was going on. He probably did not want to know. It is probably a good thing he did not know because we are talking about a company involving the new Premier, that was the Premier to be Mr. Frank Coleman, who again I note here – now this is interesting, this is the good thing about Hansard. It works for you and against you. I am sure someday it is going to work against me too. I am sure that day is going to come.

We asked a bunch of questions in this House. One of them I asked, “What was your understanding of Frank Coleman’s involvement with Humber Valley Paving on March 13?” The Minister of Transportation and Works, “...I really do not care who the owners or shareholders are. I had no idea who Frank Coleman was, nor do I care what association he had with the company.”

It is funny, the man – so this is the day. March 13 is the day that they rammed through this multi-million dollar deal which was supposed to be done to ensure that things were done on time and on budget, which I would say was not on time and not on Budget.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** It is still not done.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** It is still not done. So let's make sure that is tossed out of the way. You never got anything done. You made that decision in seven-and-a-half hours involving a company with Frank Coleman the day before Frank Coleman was going to be acclaimed as the new Premier and your new boss. Let's not talk about embarrassing to members on this side when we do not have to go back one year to this. Let's keep that in mind, I say to you.

Let's go back; we want to talk about history. We will talk about it. The member said it makes him nervous to know what gets said over here. Do you know what makes me nervous? It makes me nervous to read the AG's report that was done. It makes me very nervous to know that is what went on in the Department of Transportation and Works. Imagine now, taxpayers' money gone out the window for apparently no reason. Why was it done?

The minister said – and I remember because he talked and the Member for St. John's South. He said: I am going to teach you a lesson on bonds.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** That is what he said, yes.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Yes, that is right there in Hansard too; I am going to teach you a lesson on bonds.

I say, where are those bonds? What has happened? Can somebody answer for me how many small companies, small businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador have been paid back the money that they are owed by Humber Valley Paving? Do you know what the answer is, Mr. Chair? None, not one. Every single one of them were forced to go to court to get paid back the money they should have gotten and the money they would have gotten if the bond had been called in in the first place like it should have, but it was not done.

We do not know why it was not done, but as the Auditor General himself says, it was an amazing coincidence that it happened the day before Frank Coleman was going to get acclaimed. I can remember, I was actually on the road. I remember the Deputy Premier at the time indicated via Twitter late that night that he was not going to be seeking the leadership. So we knew the next day something was coming up. I can still remember that.

We will talk about what makes me nervous. What makes me nervous is when you have these bonds and you are supposed to have thirty days in which to make your claim, but it is hard to make your claim when you do not let people know until thirty-eight days after, meaning you could not even avail of the bond. I do not know much about bonds. I would like to be educated. I am hoping they will teach me, because right now we have not seen anything that shows that this government and this department knows the first thing.

Maybe I should not blame the department. Maybe I should blame the actions of the former minister which, I would state, if you want to talk about embarrassing. Embarrassment is laid right out here in this very glossy report that the Auditor General was forced to do. So, please do not stand up and talk about – I do not know, I think he quit, but I know the Premier said if you did not quit you would have been fired. So don't tell us about embarrassment, I say to you, do not because it is still fresh. It is still fresh right here. It is about one year ago. It was March 13, not that long ago, that this decision was made right here.

We can go through the timeline if we want to get ourselves reacquainted. Sometimes I am like the Minister of Finance, I cannot recall. We have a nice little timeline on how all of this played out. Premier Dunderdale stepped down on January 22; Premier Marshall was sworn in January 24; Bill Barry says five days later I am going to get involved; Frank Coleman says February 11 he is getting involved.

Most people in the Province, I would assume, after February 11 knew who Frank Coleman was. He was not a well-known guy outside the business community. I did not know who Frank Coleman was, but after February 11 I knew who

he was because he said I want to run to be Premier. I would assume most members on the other side knew who he was because he was their prospective boss. It is funny, a month later when we asked questions – sorry, it was months, months later, about a month later after that on March 13 when this deal went down. I did not know who Frank Coleman was, I had no idea. I was only dealing with Gene Coleman.

We can continue on here. We talk about the convention and then Mr. Coleman resigns his presidency. Then we have all of this – it culminates on March 13, because that is when this whole thing went down. I think there was actually a Cabinet meeting that day and all this went down, but the end result is that the taxpayers of this Province were screwed out of money because this department made a decision that was not based in the best interest of taxpayers. It was made in the best interest of the PC Party of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I say in my closing time right here, if you want to talk about embarrassing, that is embarrassing.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

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

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

I have been waiting patiently all day just to get up and to have a few words on this particular bill, it is the Interim Supply. A very important bill, I might add, Mr. Chair, because it will ensure that by the end of the month there will be a smooth transition and that the money is available for us as a government to carry on the good programs, the excellent programs that we have put in place over the last number of years; to give us a chance to ensure that the most vulnerable out there receive what they need to receive to continue to meet the challenges that are before them.

Of course, Mr. Chair, I have listened attentively, really for the last two days, and there has been a lot of bantering back and forth. There is no

doubt about that. Again, I remind everyone that we are here to basically see how we move forward, and it is always nice to reflect back upon the past. Listen, I have a lot of past to reflect back on. Of course, I can go back to 1999 and I can match anything that was just thrown across the floor here with the previous Administration, but that is not what I am about today.

We have a responsibility here as MHAs to come and represent our districts. To represent the people of this Province and to try to do the best job we can with the resources we have, and to use whatever opportunities we have to build upon the past.

In Opposition, back in 1999, 2000, 2001, I learned a great deal about the workings of government. Let me tell you, nobody is perfect. Mistakes do get made, but if mistakes do get made and you own up to it, that is a big part of it all. We as a government, we have had to step back and own up to things that should not have happened, and we have to move forward. Because if we do not, we are not taking the responsibility that was given to us in a manner that is going to be in the best interest of the people of this Province.

I understand, especially new members coming in. I remember back in 1999 how naïve I was, because I came in – do you know the reason I came into politics? Mine was the first school that was on the chopping block. I remember on the picket line with the parents, with placards: Don't close our school. I swore to God if I got a chance to ever run in politics I would run on an education agenda, and never, never let happen what I saw happening before me then. That is how naïve I was. I thought I could make a difference, I really did.

You know, even in Opposition I got things done. Believe it or not, I got some roads paved. I could not believe my good luck.

My colleague for St. John's South, we fought some good battles and we won some good battles, but we lost a few too, right? I look at you, where you are sitting there today, and I still have a great deal of respect for you. I wish you well, as I do for any of the members here. We have to make some decisions sometimes, and

hopefully we make the right ones. Do you know something? We are not always right. I think that is something we all have to reflect upon.

The big question I have been hearing from across the way, especially, is: Are we any better off today than we were ten years ago? I will go back sixteen. I tell you, I am proud of the accomplishments of this government. I also will acknowledge that in the years that I was in Opposition, that government did make some really good decisions, absolutely. When they did – and the Member for Bay of Islands knows – I was one of the first on my feet saying, you are doing the right thing.

**MR. JOYCE:** (Inaudible).

**MR. HEDDERSON:** No, I would not go so far as that, I say to the Member for Bay of Islands.

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

**MR. HEDDERSON:** I have to stop there. I say to the member, I was on a bit of a roll until you interrupted me. Now you have me going. I would hope that the Member for St. John's North, as a critic, is using that role to inform government, to inform those around us of the right direction that we should be going, or options that we have.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** A point of order.

**MR. HEDDERSON:** A point of order?

Again, because we all know what our rolls are here, and to get back to where I am looking towards, is that yes, there have been some fabulous, fabulous moments that I could stand in this House and be proud of where we were as a government. We did change how things are done in this Province. We did turn this Province around. Not in 2003 by the way. Not even in 2004. It was not until about 2005 that we got into a groove.

I remember sitting around, even before we got in government, and looking at the first eight years of infrastructure because infrastructure was absolutely the deficit – my colleague for Twillingate has already alluded to that. It was not the money part of it at all; it was the infrastructure deficit: our schools, our hospitals,

and so on. We put down what we thought would be the infrastructure projects that we will take on for the first eight years of our mandate, and we lucked into it. We lucked in big time.

In 2007 and 2008, with the planning that we had in place – we had some good planning in place – and when all across the rest of Canada things were going down the tubes, we were shovel ready. We had projects that were in the hopper that we had planned out, design-wise and otherwise. When the feds came out with the infrastructure strategy during that crisis, guess what province went boom? We got more done in two years than the previous four or five. Why? Because we had done the planning. Those eight years turned into about six years, but the infrastructure deficit that was presented to us in 2003 was a result of about twenty years of two Administrations who did not keep up the buildings in this Province.

All you have to do is look around you in this building here. What a mess this building was in. If you only knew what was in these walls or what was not in these walls, you probably would not be able to sit safely here. Some of the offices when we went behind the walls, it is a wonder the windows never fell in and so on and so forth.

Some people complained and said: What are you doing this for? Because it needed to be done. It had not been touched since 1959-1960. I make no apologies for that and no one on this side makes any apologies, because this is the legacy that you keep talking about. We are investing in what should be invested in which would be the seat of government, our hospitals, our government buildings, our schools. Those are the legacy projects.

Alberta is putting aside a legacy or contingency money for this year. Do you know how many months it is going to last? It will get them through, I think, eight months, their contingency fund, the millions that they put aside for a rainy day.

Our investment was to make sure that we got our buildings up. That deficit that was this wide is probably this wide now. We are not finished; there is no way. Roads that were done in my district back in 1999, 2000, guess what? They



are almost in as bad a shape and need to be redone.

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** You never paved the road to Conche.

**MR. HEDDERSON:** The road to Conche would be part of our plan. I say to the member over, you know very well that we look at priorities. The cross-country road is the priority there. When that is done, then we can move to the Conche road. You know that. You have been told that. That is how it works.

Like I said, I would like to talk a little bit more. Time does wind down. I will say and I will stand by it, that I am proud of what I have been part of for the last sixteen years and that yes, my constituents are better off.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

I am happy to have an opportunity to speak to the Interim Supply bill. I have to go back a couple of speakers because I was truly taken aback by the comments made by the Member for Labrador West. I truly was sitting here in disbelief to what I was listening to.

The Member for Conception Bay South – with all due respect to the Member for Conception Bay South – has been here for about two or three handfuls of legislated sitting days. He misspoke when he said – he meant to say \$20 billion and he said \$20 million or he said \$20 million. It is irrelevant. To make such a big deal and talk about embarrassed and how you are embarrassed, now he should be embarrassed, and we should be embarrassed because the man misspoke is absolutely absurd. It is absurd, especially considering the source of that hyper criticism.

The Member for Labrador West was the Minister of Transportation and Works who resigned. Shortly after he resigned, the Premier said he would have fired him had he not

resigned. It is clear from the Auditor General looking into all of this, from all the information that has been more or less uncovered, and it all was not uncovered unfortunately, that this minister conducted a backroom deal in secret with Humber Valley Paving costing the taxpayers of this Province some \$19 million and there is no documentation for it.

That is embarrassing in my opinion and that reflects poorly on all of the Members of the House of Assembly. One member misspeaking and saying million instead of billion is nothing compared to squandering \$19 million of taxpayers' hard-earned dollars conducting a backroom, shady deal in secret with no documentation.

The Auditor General who went looking into this embarrassment said he could not figure out, could not satisfy himself as to why two ministers within just a half an hour, within thirty minutes, independently, just coincidental, I suppose, went and contacted the Deputy Minister of Transportation and Works. The AG said we have not been able to satisfy ourselves why two ministers within a half an hour, independently somehow, contacted the Deputy Minister of Transportation and Works to inquire about the status of Humber Valley Paving on the morning of March 13, 2014. I would be embarrassed if that was written about any member over here, and I am embarrassed that it was written about that former minister over there.

At 8:45 in the morning, the Minister of Transportation and Works, at the time – who is now not in Cabinet, is sitting so far to the door there he is almost a way out through it – called the Deputy Minister of Transportation and Works asking if the deputy minister had heard anything about Humber Valley Paving. Then, coincidentally enough, 9:30 in the morning, the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills called the same deputy minister asking if he was aware of the Humber Valley Paving. What a coincidence, Mr. Chair? At 9:45, the deputy minister visits the Minister of Transportation and Works outside the Cabinet meeting and briefs the minister on Humber Valley Paving.

I should say, because I forgot to say, Humber Valley Paving is connected to the fellow who is coming in and is supposed to be the minister's

boss, Frank Coleman. Of course, the minister here sat right over there in the House of Assembly and said he had no idea Gene Coleman was related to Frank Coleman. I would be embarrassed if I said that in here. I am embarrassed he said that in here. It is embarrassing.

In any case, from the time that the first call was made to the deputy minister at 8:45 in the morning to the time that the decision was made to terminate the contract with Humber Valley Paving was two hours and forty-five minutes. Unbelievable! What an embarrassment that this government is over there playing footloose and fancy free with taxpayers' hard-earned dollars conducting business in this way – two hours and forty-five minutes. It took the department another four hours and forty-two minutes to send a letter to terminate the contract – unbelievable. That is what is embarrassing. Not one member here misspeaking, but a government that is conducting secret deals in the dark for which there is no documentation – and I will get to that in a minute.

The Auditor General asked why the process has come to an arrangement with Humber Valley Paving, why it had to be concluded the day before nominations closed for the Progressive Conservative Leadership, the day before Frank Coleman of Humber Valley Paving was going to effectively be acclaimed as the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and eventually occupy that seat over there, the seat that is now occupied by the Premier of the Province.

The AG said, “We have not been able to satisfy ourselves why the process to come to an arrangement with HVP to terminate the contract related to Project 1-12 had to be concluded the day before nominations closed for the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador.”

That is what is embarrassing, Mr. Chair. I would be embarrassed if that were me, and it is poor reflection on all Members of the House of Assembly. We are all embarrassed by that. Not by one member saying billion instead of million, or million instead of billion. This is about conducting secret, shady deals in the dark and squandering taxpayers' money and there not being any explanation as to why.

The Auditor General talked about the lack of documentation. No documentation was prepared to support the March 13, 2014 decision to terminate the contract between Humber Valley Paving and the department. The Deputy Minister of Transportation and Works was actually instructed not to prepare a briefing note. Effectively, do not put this into writing, do not create a documentary trail, and do not create a paper trail so the taxpayers of this Province can know why their money was squandered by that member over there, Mr. Chair.

The Auditor General says on page 7.33, the minister “knowingly withheld information from the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador related to the decision to mutually terminate the contract... .” He withheld that information from the Premier. That is embarrassing. What a legacy, what an absolute embarrassing legacy that is to withhold information regarding squandering \$19 million of taxpayers' money from the Premier of the Province of the day, who he was supposed to be reporting to. That is what is embarrassing here.

“We can find no operational reason why the mutual termination of the contract” occurred. There was no operational reason why this happened. Nudge, nudge, wink, wink, Mr. Chair, that is what went on here. A secret, shady deal conducted without documentation. Then the Premier stands up and says – he said twice – that the Auditor General had unfettered access to information, so he was satisfied with the report. Now, the Auditor General said he was not satisfied with what went on here, and I have outlined that.

He says, first of all, there was no documentation in any case. So, I am not sure what he had unfettered access to, because it was not documentation. The Member for Labrador West when he was the minister instructed the deputy minister not to prepare a briefing note on this so there would be a paper trail. So, there was none to follow. There was no documentation to review, so unfettered access to nothing is useless, and that is what is embarrassing here. Not somebody misspeaking here in the House of Assembly, which happens practically every day here. There is nothing embarrassing about that compared to what went on here.

In addition to this the Auditor General said: We did not receive a response from Humber Valley Paving regarding the request for information. They would not even talk to him. The Gene Coleman who the minister at the time, the Member for Labrador West, did not know and he did not know it was connected, they did not want to talk to the Auditor General about this matter. In fact, the solicitor, the lawyer, for Humber Valley Paving would not waive the solicitor-client privilege in this matter.

No documentation was prepared to support at all – there was no support whatsoever regarding the cancellation of this. The other thing that was a great embarrassment as far as I am concerned is the minister stood up right here and he told us one day he was going to give us a lesson in bonds. Well, he needed a lesson in bonds. Because there are small business people, companies who have contracted with Humber Valley Paving in this Province, because he let those bonds go beyond thirty-eight days, he should have known that they had to call that before the thirty-eight days were up. All those companies now, those small business people, work hard every day, do their jobs, they are out money now because of the embarrassing situation that this minister, this member, set up.

So that is what is embarrassing. Do not stand there and lecture us about what is embarrassing, because you know well what it is.

**CHAIR:** The hon. member's time has expired.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Thank you.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Mr. Chair, I move the Committee rise, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

**CHAIR:** The resolution is that the Committee rise, report progress, and ask leave to 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):** The hon. the Deputy Speaker.

**MR. LITTLEJOHN:** Thank you, 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 progress and asking leave to sit again.

When shall the report be received?

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Tomorrow.

**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 Health and Community Services, that the House do now adjourn.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that the House do now adjourn.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

This House now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2:00 p.m.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 2:00 p.m.