



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FORTY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

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Volume XLVII

THIRD SESSION

Number 41

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HANSARD

*Speaker: Honourable Wade Verge, MHA*

Tuesday

November 18, 2014

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

**Statements by Members**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today we have members' statements from the Member for the District of Virginia Waters, the Member for the District of Baie Verte – Springdale, the Member for the District of St. Barbe, the Member for the District of Bonavista North, the Member for the District of Cartwright – L'Anse-au-Clair, and the Member for the District of Exploits.

The hon. the Member for the District of Virginia Waters.

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

**MS C. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize the St. John's International Women's Film Festival as they celebrate their twenty-five years of promoting women filmmakers producing documentaries, short films, and feature works. Established in 1989, it is one of the longest running women's film festivals in the world. It celebrates the many talented local, national, and international artists for their writing, filmmaking, ingenuity, and creativity.

Today, the festival continues to celebrate the best work in the world of all genres and formats, offering inspiring workshops with the world's best filmmakers, and acknowledge and showcase women in this industry. It has continued to raise the bar for networking, learning, and growth of the industry right here in our Province. We need only to look at the success of the internationally acclaimed *The Grand Seduction*, produced by filmmaker Barbara Doran, to see the potential, the impact, and the profound legacy women in film can make.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating the hundreds of dedicated staff and volunteers of the St. John's International Women's Film Festival on twenty-five years, and for many more as they continue to produce

screenings, workshops, and other inspiring events for all the artists.

Thank you.

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

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

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

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

It is with great pride and pleasure that I rise in this hon. House today to commend the achievements of three bright high school graduates in the District of Baie Verte – Springdale.

Kate Oxford of Indian River High, Teri Ann Chislett of Copper Ridge Academy, and Adriana Newbury of Valmont Academy were the proud recipients of Electoral District Scholarships, valued at \$1,000 each.

These scholarships are awarded to the three high school graduates in each district who achieved the highest Department of Education scholarship score. Their performance speaks very well of the school staff and community who partnered to provide a caring, nurturing culture in which students are able to excel.

Kate, Teri Ann, and Adriana are reflective of the many innovative, aspiring students who walk the halls of our schools, to which we look for fresh, innovative ideas and inventions.

I ask all hon. members of this House to help me congratulate Kate, Teri Ann, and Adriana for their notable achievements and to wish them much success in the next phase of their lives.

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.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate Mrs. Ella Moores on her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. On September 4, 2014, Mrs. Moores celebrated with more than 100 family and friends at her residence, Tableland Senior Citizens Complex, Woody Point. People visited from near and far to take part in this momentous event.

I was humbled to be in Mrs. Moore's presence and have the opportunity to remind everyone of the history she has experienced. Imagine living through two World Wars, the Great Depression, the Korean War, Newfoundland and Labrador joining Confederation, and so many more historic events.

I was honoured to be invited to this very special occasion and share time and a few laughs with Mrs. Moores, and her family and friends; and also to celebrate her good health. I also thank all the organizers of this special occasion, including the Towns of Woody Point and Glenburnie-Birchy Head-Shoal Brook. It was a wonderful celebration.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating Ella Moores on her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Bonavista North.

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

I am privileged to rise today and salute a most notable deceased citizen of Badger's Quay. Wherever I travelled, I met new people and declared I grew up at Badger's Quay. The immediate question came back: Do you know Art Wicks?

Arthur Wicks was born at Port Nelson, a community we have lost to resettlement. A young Arthur was an inquisitive sort who peddled his vocation in the lumber woods and on the ocean. He was keenly observant and became known for wishing to improve the conditions of workers and fishers toiling to eke an existence from our waters. He was a humble fisherman who did not mind speaking up for the welfare of others.

The name Arthur Wicks became as famous as the moderators he chatted with on the Open Lines and people respected what he said, simply because Arthur Wicks said it.

Art also loved his family. On a chilly day this past September, his family and friends laid him to his final rest beside Eunice, his partner for seventy-one years. Scores of people, many of great fame, travelled to share in the celebration of his life.

I humbly ask that all of our Assembly today share in my salute. Arthur Wicks endured, but most notably enjoyed his ninety-four years.

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.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize three aspiring young individuals who were recent recipients of the Electoral District Scholarships: Adam Dyson of Henry Gordon Academy, Cartwright; Regan Burden of Bayside Academy, Port Hope Simpson; and DJ Rumbolt of St. Mary's All Grade, Mary's Harbour.

Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Adam, Regan, and DJ are seizing this powerful weapon. They live in a district with lots of challenges; from basic infrastructure to social programs, yet they are overcoming those obstacles, building a solid foundation for their future.

They are passionate, relentless, and dedicated in achieving their goals. Not only do they want to accomplish, but they want to be the best that they can be. This has been portrayed and recognized through the Electoral District Scholarships recently bestowed upon them. I feel very confident in our future with youth like this at our helm.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in wishing those three ambitious young individuals best wishes in their future.

endeavours and remember the starting point of all achievement is desire.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. FORSEY:** Mr. Speaker, the Dr. Hugh Twomey Health Care Centre and Dr. Jody Woolfrey are a phenomenal match made in the Town of Botwood. This is where Dr. Woolfrey began his career seventeen years ago and recently he was named one of the Nation's Top Family Physicians.

The award recipients are nominated by their peers, colleagues, and the College of Family Physicians of Canada's ten provincial chapters: for outstanding patient care; for significant contributions to the health and well-being of their local community; and commitment to family medicine, teaching, and research.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Woolfrey is the Senior Medical Officer at the facility, where he is considered as the epitome of rural health. The facility presently has five physicians on staff and approximately 150 employees.

Dr. Woolfrey resides in Botwood with his wife, Joanne, and children, Amelia and Martha, and enjoys the outdoor recreation that rural communities have to offer.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Dr. Jody Woolfrey on this prestigious award.

Thank you.

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

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

#### Statements by Ministers

**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, from November 9-12 I had the great privilege to lead the Canadian delegation at the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, where over 1,000 delegates from 140 countries participated.

Education for sustainable development provides resources so students have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to shape a sustainable future. The theme of the conference, *Learning Today for a Sustainable Future*, was designed to celebrate the achievements in sustainable development education over the past decade and set the education agenda for the future.

Mr. Speaker, this was an incredible opportunity for me personally, as Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, and for our government, to take part in such informative discussions. Education, specifically curriculum in the K-12 system, plays a vital role in helping to achieve sustainable development and provides us with the tools to teach our young people, the future world leaders, about sustainability.

During the conference I had the opportunity to represent the provinces and territories at a ministerial roundtable that brought together over seventy ministers from around the world. The conference also gave me a rare opportunity to meet directly with ministers from Finland and Switzerland where we discussed their student achievement success.

I also led a workshop discussion of approximately 100 people on education for sustainable development in the post-2015 era and how to develop education policies that address the social, environmental, and economic opportunities of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Speaker, as UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, "There is no plan B and sustainable development is the only way to move forward". Through teaching and learning methods that incorporate sustainable development, Mr. Speaker, students are motivated and empowered to change their behaviour and take action.

This information, along with the many productive and interesting discussions I had

while at the conference, will be very helpful as our new Department of Education and Early Childhood Development continues to focus on the complete continuum of learning.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I am glad to see that the minister had an opportunity to participate in this conference and to share ideas with other delegates from around the world, to share our experience and to learn from others. While the minister was away there were two reports on early childhood education that were released in Canada, one showing us with the highest charges for infant daycare – St. John's being the second highest charges in Canada – and there being no data at all for toddler fees. We have no idea, or at least they could not find out how much toddler fees were in St. John's and in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is highly problematic that we cannot even demonstrate what is happening here in terms of toddler costs.

There is another report that showed us going in 2011 from last place in Canada all the way up to second-last place in Canada when it comes to overall provision of early childhood education in the country. It is extremely problematic and incredible.

While Ban Ki-moon may have said that there is no plan B, I hope this government does have a plan B. There are a lot of working families out there and people trying to get into the workforce who hope –

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

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

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. I am glad to see that she had the opportunity to be at this conference, which was an important conference. It is important that our education policies provide sustainable opportunities for students; there is no doubt about that. One policy I ask the minister to give consideration to is a policy that would give students the tools to master new technologies.

We have fallen behind other provinces and countries in that we have very little computer science instruction in the public school system. If government is really serious about keeping youth in the Province, it should invest more in computer science training starting with more computer science courses in the schools.

I hope, Minister, that your visit and your time in this conference is going to mean more openness to the Department of Education with regard to computer science.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, our government continues to revitalize the child protection system in this Province through enhancing out-of-home care options for children and youth. Fostering provides temporary and sometimes longer-term care for children and youth who are unable to live with their own families. Foster parents are key members of a team dedicated to helping children and youth through difficult situations by offering a supportive, nurturing, and safe environment.

The stability that a foster family can create for a child or youth in need is absolutely vital, and the support provided can have a substantial and lifelong positive impact. Currently, there are 565 foster families located throughout Newfoundland and Labrador dedicated to helping children and youth through complex situations by providing safe and nurturing homes.

In June of 2012, our government announced a new Continuum of Care strategy which aims to enhance the care options for children and youth in need of out-of-home placement. A key component of the strategy includes the *Foster a Future* awareness campaign which has achieved tremendous results to date. In fact, a total of 174 new placements for children and youth in 111 new foster homes have been realized as of August 2014.

Mr. Speaker, last month, we hosted a panel discussion at The Rooms to draw attention to fostering in the Province and highlight the critical need for families, particularly in the St. John's region. The event was moderated by Allan Hawco from the *Republic of Doyle*, and I certainly want to thank Mr. Hawco again for his countless hours he has given of his own time to this very worthwhile cause. The event also included a representative from the Foster Families Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, a foster parent, a former youth in care, and a departmental representative.

Mr. Speaker, it was important to bring these valuable perspectives together at the panel discussion to bolster foster case awareness. I am delighted to report that we had a wonderful response to this event, and a number of inquiries and requests for applications followed. But, we cannot reiterate the message often enough – we are in need of foster homes for children and youth who require safe and stable homes, whether that be for a week, a month or longer. If anyone is considering becoming a foster parent, please contact my department or the Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association.

Together, we can work toward ensuring that we have enough out-of-home placements to help our young people benefit from the sense of well-being they deserve.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. J. BENNETT:** I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Foster families

play a critical role in providing a safe space for children in challenging home environments by providing a bridge at a critical time in these children's development.

Mr. Speaker, foster children spend the entire age range from infancy to adulthood and these relationships can last from a very short period to decades with foster families not eligible to adopt children that they are fostering and still receive the much-needed compensation that is required so they are not economically disadvantaged by their good heartedness. The government's Foster a Future campaign is a much-needed one as foster families are a key to the effective delivery of Child, Youth and Family Services.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, members of this very House are highly regarded in their communities and I would therefore encourage members as they go back to their communities, especially at Christmas time, to pass the word and attempt to encourage people to become foster families.

With 565 families currently fostering children in this Province, we could make a significant difference ourselves by starting that conservation. It could really help boost the number of foster families helping vulnerable children and also helping form long-term family bonds.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. I thank everyone involved in the Foster a Future campaign including the great staff, the generous foster families, and the amazing Allan Hawco.

Last week I visited a foster mom who is doing phenomenal work providing a loving, stable home. Stability is absolutely key and fundamental to the development of a child and must be a guiding principle in all work undertaken by CYFS, whether supporting the

biological family of a child or ensuring stability for all children placed in group homes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

On Remembrance Day, I had the pleasure of attending a ceremony at the Royal Canadian Legion on Bell Island, where I joined residents, families, legionnaires and veterans to pay respect to men and women in service and to recognize the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War I.

The values and traditions of legionnaires and veterans in the room are felt across our Province and country. As a way to help celebrate their contributions, the new ferry that will service Bell Island has been named the *MV Legionnaire*.

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** With every crossing it makes across the Bell Island Tickle, the *MV Legionnaire* will remind passengers of the selfless sacrifices made by those who have served or are currently serving their country, as well as the contribution of legionnaires to their communities. The ferry's name also reinforces the pillars outlined in *Honour 100*, which was launched in 2013 and commemorates the centennial anniversaries of the First World War through to 2018.

Mr. Speaker, while celebrating the role of legionnaires, the new ferry also honours the contributions of four notable Bell Islanders with dedications on various parts of the vessel. The *Harry Hibbs Observation Deck*, the *David Nisk Jackman Lounge*, and the *Tom Fitzgeralds' Lounge – Senior and Big Tom*, are named after individuals who reflect the diversity, culture, and history of Bell Island.

Attendees of the ceremony were delighted with the name of the new ferry and appreciated its salute to the role of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in global conflicts. They were also pleased that well-known Bell Islanders were

recognized as contributors to Bell Island's history.

The new ferry's arrival in February 2016 is much anticipated. The Bell Island ferry route is the busiest in the Province, transporting more people and vehicles annually than Marine Atlantic. The new ferry will significantly improve the reliability and sustainability of ferry service to this busy port.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming weeks I look forward to being joined by my hon. colleague, the Member for The Isles of Notre Dame, to name the new ferry to service Fogo Island and Change Islands. I also look forward to making an announcement regarding the new ferries to service Labrador, and continuing our efforts to further strengthen ferry service in our Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I appreciate the advance copy from the minister of his statement. We believe the naming of the ferry in honour of the men and women who fought to protect our freedom is very fitting. Given the fact that it is the 100 anniversary of World War I, the name *MV Legionnaire* is very appropriate.

I am glad to see that the minister, in naming the vessel, made it non-political. We are also pleased to see that the various parts of the vessel, the naming in honour of notable Bell Islanders is also very fitting.

Mr. Speaker, ferry services around our Province remain an important link for our provincial transportation system and for the residents they serve. We look forward to a time when all areas of our Province that need that vital link can rely on a service that is not only reliable, but meets the needs of the residents they serve.

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 would also like to thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. In this particular case, congratulations on choosing a fine name for a boat.

It is no easy task to pick out a name for a boat. Some might think it is as easy as what it is, but you have to have something that brings a sense of ownership to people, in this particular case, the people who are using the ferry and crossing the straits and gives them also a sense of ownership.

When it comes to the legionnaire himself or herself, we thank government for naming it after the Legion in particular because of the sacrifices that those people have made in the past.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

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

Government promised that Nalcor would publicly release quarterly financial statements. This was supposed to start September 30, or the third quarter. Eight months ago the minister said this: we are going to have quarterly reports from Nalcor, not annually but quarterly reports, for financial updates.

I ask the Premier: Since you now claim that you will hold Nalcor accountable, why has Nalcor not released their third quarter report as was promised?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, the reference that we now hold Nalcor accountable is a bit ridiculous. Quite frankly, it is the peoples' company. The company that is set up in this Province to help develop resources, to help manage what is happening in this Province with opportunities for revenue and to create very important revenue, Mr. Speaker, for the people of the Province; and I will say, having tremendous success, and that will be laid out in the coming weeks.

Mr. Speaker, specific to accountability, particularly around financing and issues around Muskrat Falls, there has been a whole suite of measures that have been implemented. The quarter report is one of them, and we expect it real soon, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. BALL:** I say to the Premier, I thought it was your words yesterday when you said it was holding Nalcor accountable, yet the minister today says that is not the case. Maybe the Premier can clarify that.

I know one thing; the Toronto Stock Exchange requires that third-quarter reports be released by November 15. That is for companies reporting whose quarters end at September 30. Other utilities, like Fortis and Emera, have released their reports but we still have nothing from Nalcor.

I ask the Premier: Are you going to hold Nalcor accountable for the delayed release of a financial report? Soon and very soon is not good enough, when will we see the reports?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I will certainly check with Nalcor in terms of when it is ready, because obviously they cannot see it until it is ready, number one.



Mr. Speaker, when we talk about accountability, Nalcor and the issues they have been driving over the past few days, it is important for the people of the Province to understand that when we talk about accountability to Nalcor, there is a very broad scope of accountability. Whether it is talking about the safety of the work that they do, whether it is talking about reliability, whether it is talking about cost pressures, whether it is about managing their labour force, whether it is about delivering on one of the biggest projects in Canada, whether it is running a very complex hydro system, whether it is developing Bull Arm, whether it is managing the offshore and developing those resources for the benefit of the people of the Province, that is where the accountability lies as well, Mr. Speaker. I will say, we are working very closely with Nalcor and we will hold them accountable.

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

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

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

We should talk to Fortis, or maybe talk to Emera, because they report to their shareholders. Nalcor's shareholders are the people in this Province.

I ask the minister: Have you even asked Nalcor when those reports will be available?

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Order, please!

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, the accountability that has been built in around the finances of Nalcor, there are internal audits, there are external audits, there are annual reports, there are AGMs. Just recently, a few months ago, a decision was made and directed to Nalcor that they would provide quarterly reports, Mr. Speaker.

As soon as that report is available, Mr. Speaker, it will be made public. I will certainly check with Nalcor as to exactly what date we can expect that report and gladly report it back to the House.

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

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

**MR. BALL:** I will just ask the minister: Can you confirm that these were your words? We are going to have quarterly reports from Nalcor, not annual, quarterly reports for financial updates. Were these your words?

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I do not recall, but I do not have a problem saying that it was absolutely my words because we are going to have quarterly reports, just as I said we are.

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

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

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

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

Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro has asked the Public Utilities Board to double their hydro's return on equity. Basically, asking for more money from the ratepayers, the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador. In other words, what they are asking for is a utility tax.

I ask the Premier: Do you support Hydro's request to double their return on equity?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro operates as any other utility do across the country, the same process. They manage their system, do their work, and asset management. All of that stuff, Mr. Speaker, and built in around that, obviously, is a return on their work of 8.8 per cent.

Yes, we do support that, Mr. Speaker, because that is what has been laid out in legislation. That is what has been happening in other utilities around the country, particularly around the

competitive aspect of it, but bear in mind, Mr. Speaker, it is not government that makes those kinds of decisions. We facilitate a process, but, Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro has to make an application to the Public Utilities Board who will make that final decision.

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

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

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

We understand the process, and at the least the minister today confirmed that they do support the request from Newfoundland Hydro, which would be to double the return on equity.

Mr. Speaker, the CETA deal, or the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, this CETA deal was finalized in September, 2014. As part of that agreement, there was a \$400 million fisheries fund. The fund was announced over a year ago by former Premier Dunderdale.

I ask the Premier: What is the current status of this fund?

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

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

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

Yes, last year the Province announced an agreement had been reached with the federal government on CETA, and conditions of CETA. I can tell the hon. member opposite, and I thank him for his question, that discussions are continuing with the facilitation and delivery of that agreement and the terms of that agreement. The work is still underway.

We are still working with our partner ministers in the federal government as well and we are continuing to work on the file, but we have not progressed to where we would like to have it at this point in time, I can tell the hon. member.

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

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

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

Well, the federal government noted that the fund was designed to help with job displacement as a result of CETA, but the Province said that it would support industry enhancements in our fishery.

So I ask the Premier: Since it has been over a year since it was announced, have there been any discussions with stakeholders, and has any of this money been committed?

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

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

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

The details of the administration of the fund are being discussed, but I would like to point out and remind the member opposite that when this deal was talked about last year – and again, we stand by – there were five pillars involved with the deal. Marketing, resource development, fishery science, infrastructure, and also workplace displacement were the five pillars of this deal, and we stand by those five pillars today, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Well, the federal government was to put \$280 million into this fund and the Province, of course, contributing \$120 million; but there has been little talk of this fund since it was announced, as I said, over a year ago now.

So I ask the Premier: Are you confident that this money from the federal government will be available?

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, I can tell you the five pillars are laid out, and the fund referenced by the member was part of the deal. We are working with ministers. My ministers in my government have been in contact with ministers in the federal government. We are continuing to have those discussions. I can tell you the fund is part of the deal, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, government committed to putting radiation services in the new Western Memorial Regional Hospital. Last April they announced a \$500,000 study to determine how best to deliver radiation services for the Province. Among other things, this would determine if there would be more than one or two radiation units in the new hospital in Corner Brook. The report was due in August.

I ask the Premier: Why have you not publicly released this report?

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

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

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

We are very pleased with the progress we are making in advancing plans for the new hospital in Corner Brook, and as the member points out, there is a provincial radiation review that is ongoing as well that certainly does impact work that we are doing on the West Coast of the Province as well.

The consultant has experienced some delays in completing the review, but we expect that we will receive it in the next number of weeks. It is not a delay that in any way impacts planning for the new Corner Brook hospital. I look forward to receiving that review in the next number of weeks.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** The other part of that, I ask the minister: Would you make that report public as soon as possible, please?

Mr. Speaker, yesterday an order from Executive Council was tabled here in the House of Assembly. It was a pre-commitment of \$4.8 million for the 2015-2016 year for design on the new hospital in Corner Brook. This hospital was first announced in September 2007.

I ask the minister: How much design work is actually left on the hospital? Will this impact the start date of the construction of the new hospital?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** First of all, Mr. Speaker, I can assure members opposite and I can assure the public, particularly the people who live in the Western part of the Province that construction of the hospital campus is on track. Construction will start in 2015 as previously committed and as promised.

This new hospital that will serve the West Coast of the Province will be a state-of-the-art facility. It will continue to offer the high level of services that presently exist, but will also be offering new services as well.

The design phase has started. The final drafts of the functional programs have been received and they are currently being reviewed by my department and others involved.

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

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Mr. Speaker, on November 6 the Premier and the Minister of Justice announced a new court complex for St. John's. The Premier said, "...we are listening to those who provide critical justice services and further demonstrating our commitment to a strong justice system...".

I ask the Minister of Justice: Will you listen to those who provide justice services in Labrador? How can you justify that clients and lawyers are meeting in washrooms in makeshift courtrooms?

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

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

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

I appreciate the question from the member opposite. As I have said to the member many times before, we take the justice issues in Labrador very seriously.

We completely recognize that there are some very challenging and unique circumstances in Labrador. That is why over the last ten years we have made significant investments in Labrador. It was only last week, I forget whether it was Thursday or Friday, but the minister was in Labrador and met with a multitude of stakeholders to hear their concerns and talk about issues of importance to them.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed. We are committed as a government to move forward and to continue to invest in Labrador. As we face challenges as we have done in the past, we will address those challenges head on working with the local stakeholders and the member opposite.

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

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Mr. Speaker, the provincial court in Happy Valley-Goose Bay is the busiest one outside of St. John's. The Province's Legal Aid director says this is due to the number of charges regarding breeches of conditions the court has had to deal with. Minister Manning claims this is not true.

I ask the minister: Have you spoken with your Director of Legal Aid to inform him that he is wrong?

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

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

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

I am quite confident that any information the minister would have shared would be accurate and legitimate information, but I do invite the member opposite as an hon. member to table information in the House that he has and we will certainly validate the information he provides with the information that we have been provided by those who work in the public service.

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

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

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

I do have that *Labradorian* article where the minister contradicts her Director of Legal Aid. I can table it.

At a recent announcement of the new St. John's courthouse the Premier and Minister Manning were asked about the Family Violence Intervention Court. The media reported the Premier as saying government is studying the issue.

I ask the Premier: Can you provide us with the details of this study, who is conducting it, when will it be concluded and will you make it public?

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

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

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

I would like to reiterate what I said yesterday regarding the Family Violence Intervention Court and that the services are valued and important to the people of the Province, not only in the St. John's courts and service to people from the greater St. John's area but also other areas of the Province such as areas that the member opposite represents. It is my belief that we need to make an effort to provide these services as valuable – as have been stated several times by members opposite – in other parts of the Province, not just only in St. John's

but the people throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

I have asked the department to have a look at the capabilities and opportunities that exist to expand those services to other regions of the Province. That work is underway by the department.

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

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

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

I did ask the Premier when will this study be done. It is one thing to be studying it and it is another thing to see the actual results of that.

That being said, the Premier said yesterday he asked Minister Manning to review the Family Violence Intervention Court. The department actually already did an internal assessment in 2012, less than one year before they axed the court. We requested a copy but we were denied it under Bill 29.

I ask Minister Manning: Now that you are a part of this supposedly open government, will you table the completed assessment here in the House?

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

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

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

To be clear to the member opposite, the assessment that I am asking the Department of Justice and Public Safety to carry out is opportunities that may be available and options that may be available to provide Family Violence Intervention Court types of services to other parts of the Province so that people who have family violence matters before the courts as accused, as victims, as witnesses, can avail of these services in places outside of the St. John's court. That is the analysis that is underway in the department. That is the work that I have asked them to do. I look forward to receiving updates from them in the not-too-distant future.

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

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

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

When he was asked six months ago whether there was work being done to reinstate the court, the minister at the time, Terry French, said, and I quote: No, there is not. No, that is not a plan. That is not going to happen. That is a direct quote.

I ask the Premier: You already have a review completed, which is it, are you going to reinstate it or not? Why are you stalling on this?

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

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

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

This is a very serious matter that the member opposite brings up. Just to be clear so he fully understands. As Premier of the Province, the review that I have asked the department to undertake is the opportunity to provide these services to places outside of the greater St. John's area. It is a different approach, that I am aware of, then had been considered before by the department and I am asking them to carry out that work.

We know, for example, that there are video conferencing abilities in courts throughout the Province when people appear on weekends and after hours and those types of appearances. Those types of technologies have evolved and developed throughout the Province and we are wondering if those types of technologies could be included as an example in the Family Violence Intervention Court.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, it is time for the Premier to stop hiding behind the report. We know he is talking about the rest of the Province.

We are asking about the court right here that was working that you axed.

Will you reinstate that court or not?

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

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

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

The services provided by the court, as I have already said, we see value in those services. Obviously, if I did not see value in them I would not have asked the department to undertake the review on how we can expand those services.

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** The member opposite asking the question represents a rural part of this Province, and I think it is important for people in his own district, if at all possible, to receive such services. That is that work we are undertaking, to consider people in his district and others as well. When we have done that, Mr. Speaker, when we have completed that we will make our decision on the Family Violence Intervention Court.

I reiterate, Mr. Speaker, I do see the value in the services. How can we expand that to provide it to all the people? There are people throughout Newfoundland and Labrador who are looking for those services.

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

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

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

My question is for the Minister Responsible for Housing.

Mr. Speaker, the rental supplement offered through Newfoundland and Labrador Housing is presently attached to the unit rather than to the individual. This is causing undue hardships for individuals trying to avail of housing units or trying to move to more suitable housing.

I ask the minister: Given this will have no additional cost to government, will you change the policy and allow the approval of a rental supplement to go to the individual?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, since I have come into this portfolio I have met with my officials who deal with seniors, and I have met with officials from Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. There is one thing I have to say, the genuineness in these people in trying to resolve situations that face them, their work is commendable.

I have made a public statement, Mr. Speaker, that I am willing to take a look at the portability of these. I have asked staff to look into that, to speak with other departments, to speak with Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. I will continue to look at that option, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that the minister is prepared to look at this.

I am personally aware of situations where individuals have been offered units, but because of limited accessibility in those units, were unable to avail of the unit offered. Yet, those same individuals were able to find accessible and acceptable housing units, but with no rent supplement.

I ask the minister: Do you agree that in these situations it would make sense to offer the supplement to the individual as opposed to the unit?

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member, if he has particular cases he can certainly forward it to me. In my meetings with officials, I have found that they will do their utmost to accommodate the people looking for housing.

I do not see, Mr. Speaker, any individual who is going to attempt to put up an obstacle to find residence for someone. Ask him to forward it to me, I will discuss it with my officials, and then we will see where we go from there.

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

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

**MS C. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, government based this year's Budget on \$105 per barrel of oil. The price began falling in July, and as of this morning oil was at \$78.65, a difference of over \$26. For every dollar the price falls, government loses about \$26 million in revenue. The lower Canadian dollar provides a tiny buffer, but nothing that will mask the impact of the sustained drop this year.

I ask the minister: Given the significant and sustained drop in oil prices, what is the exact impact to date on provincial revenues?

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

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

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

The member is right; this year has been a very difficult year on our Budget. The price of oil, as she has indicated, we budgeted \$105, which was consistent with the advice we got from many people who did not – no one had any ability to predict what has been happening since July month, in particular. At this particular juncture, we are monitoring it very closely.

We want to make sure that we understand clearly the impact, because as she said, the price of oil is dropping. The exchange rates have dropped, which have provided a buffer for that. We also need to look at what impact this will have for the balance of the fiscal year. We will

be providing, as I have said to the media about two or three weeks ago, in the first part of December some time we will provide an update of where we are this year and be able to provide the people of Newfoundland and Labrador a forecast of what next year might look like.

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

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

**MS C. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, the minister has stated publicly that he is following the price of oil daily. Government forecasted a \$538 million deficit for this year, on top of two deficit years under their leadership.

Again, I ask the minister: What is the exact weighted-average impact as of today, of the lower oil price, and what direction has been provided regarding preparations for next year's Budget, which should be underway now?

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

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

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

The member is right; the preparation for next year's Budget is already underway. We have had discussions with all our departments, through the ministers. I have had some discussions with Cabinet, discussions with caucus. The deputy ministers have had a discussion around what we need to look at for next year.

To look at next year's Budget, we need to clearly understand where the price of oil will be next year, make a forecast of what that might look like, understand what has happened in the global economy, so we will understand what impacts that might have on exchange rates. We want to be in a position, Mr. Speaker, to develop a budget for next year that realistically reflects the reality of oil and gas prices worldwide, realistically reflects the economy in Newfoundland and Labrador, and to do what is in the best interests of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

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

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

**MR. SLADE:** Mr. Speaker, the Atlantic Pilotage Authority want to change tanker rules in Placentia Bay. Already identified as one of the risky areas in Canada for an oil spill, APA is proposing to move the pilot boarding station further into the bay by thirteen nautical miles, which will significantly increase the risk of a disastrous oil spill.

I ask the minister: What is government's position on this serious issue, and what have you done to stop these outrageous changes?

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

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Mr. Speaker, a stakeholder meeting was held in Arnold's Cove on November 10, 2014. We had representatives there from the department, and our department and our government, Mr. Speaker, is not in favour with moving the pilotage in the bay. In actual fact, Mr. Speaker, we believe that the pilotage should stay where it is at.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

The Premier said yesterday that his summit on health care will help the government to – and I quote – “make better the health care services for the people of the Province...”. He also has said it is a cost-cutting measure.

In the name of the constituents who came to my town hall on health, I ask the Premier if his summit will deal with the lack of adequate community-based supports for people with mental health needs, as called for in the Mental Health Care and Treatment Act.

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

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

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

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

As the hon. member opposite is quite aware that mental health and addictions is a matter that is very important to me personally. It is very important to me as Premier, and I can tell you and tell the member opposite it is very important to our government as well. It is important that we provide the best services possible to our people of Newfoundland and Labrador for all medical needs, all spectrums and range of medical needs, including mental health and addictions. That would be very, very important to the consultations that we are going to carry out.

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

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

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

I hope that the Premier is going to listen to the people because they are saying the supports are not there and they are not. I heard again today from a parent who was also at the town hall who is desperate for help with her child who has autism spectrum disorder.

Will his summit deal with the needs of children like this child who are waiting years for treatment, Mr. Speaker?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, we have made great strides, particularly in the last number of years, in expanding services and treatment that is available for children with autism in Newfoundland and Labrador. The summit will address issues like that. The summit will address the issues that matter most to people in Newfoundland and Labrador when it comes to our health care system.



We want to look at the delivery of primary health care and how we can make more services available and more accessible to people in Newfoundland and Labrador. We want to look at issues like mental health and addictions. We want to look at chronic disease. We want to look at all of those things. It is not just about listening to what people have to say – that is really important – but we also want to find solutions and that is exactly what this process is about, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I have been this House for eight years and none of this that I am saying is new. I have been listening to it for eight years from the people in my district.

Will this summit deal with the lack of a universally accessible home care program under our health care system?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, home care and home support are major issues for many families and many seniors living in Newfoundland and Labrador in particular. This will undoubtedly be a topic that we will address through the regional forums and through our summit on health care that will take place early in the New Year as well.

I would encourage residents to register for the forums. They start next week, they run over the next few weeks, and there are going to be additional forums taking place in other regions of the Province as well that have yet to be announced.

People can participate online. There is going to be an interactive dialogue app launched very soon where people can have a say. They can e-mail, they can call, and they can write. We want

to hear from everybody in Newfoundland and Labrador who is concerned about health care.

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

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

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

Speaking of health matters, the government has announced the fracking review panel and their terms of reference. There is no mention at all of public health in the terms of reference. Why not?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, the fracking issue is obviously a very public issue. Our government took a very responsible approach. We could frack; we said no. We can say no to fracking. We did not feel that was responsible, particularly around the concern for economic opportunities. The responsible approach was to put an independent panel of very qualified people to lay out a process, Mr. Speaker, for everyone to have an opportunity to have input.

We have been very clear from the beginning, the protection of health of the people of the Province, the protection and safety and health and protection of the environment has always been the number one principle for us in developing our resources, Mr. Speaker. That has not changed.

As for the terms of reference, it is certainly implied, Mr. Speaker. Health is obviously a top priority for everybody in this Province.

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** Mr. Speaker, why is there no representative from the West Coast serving on the panel?

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

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I guess we could look at the make-up of the panel and the number of the panel. When we put that out – I certainly appreciate the support from the Liberal Opposition in the make-up of the panel – we did look at a number of people who could serve on the panel. Our interest was that it was independent. We have people there who can bring a scientific view, who can do a broad scope with the panel, Mr. Speaker, everything from public health, to environment, to economics, to geology and engineering. We have achieved that with this panel.

In considering West Coast candidates, they did not exactly fit the priority that we needed on the panel. Rest assured, the people of the West Coast will have a fair opportunity to be a part of this process.

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

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

The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

### Tabling of Documents

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

In accordance with section 19.(5)(a) of the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity And Administration Act, I hereby table the minutes of the House of Assembly Management Commission meetings held on April 14 and June 5, 2014.

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

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

Also, pursuant to section 8 and section 10 of the Public Tender Act, I hereby table reports of the Public Tender Act exceptions for the months of

May and June, 2014, as presented by the Chief Operating Officer of the Government Purchasing Agency.

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 in 2006, the provincial government created a commission to review the individualized student support plan – pathways model and make recommendations to improve the delivery of special education programming in the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system; and

WHEREAS in 2007 the ISSP and Pathways Commission delivered a final report to government outlining seventy-five recommendations for creating a better system for the delivery of special education programming; and

WHEREAS to date, many important recommendations of the ISSP and Pathways Commission have not been acted upon, including those related to public disclosure of assessment and wait-list information, guidelines for comprehensive and ethical assessment practices, procedures to address the needs of all at-risk students, creating an effective appeals process for families, meeting the needs of exceptionally able or gifted learners, expanding the role of student assistants into teacher-assistant roles, introducing special education department heads in schools, and improving on special education, teacher qualifications, and certification;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to fully implement the recommendations of the ISSP and Pathways Commission in order to improve the delivery of special education programming for all students, parents, teachers, and schools.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time we have had an opportunity to hear the shortcomings of the implementation of the ISSP and Pathways Commission report. There are still a significant number of recommendations that have not been acted upon, and not just those that are listed in the petition. There are, in fact, others.

One of them is the public disclosure of assessment and wait-list information. We do know that this government had its awakening sometime between the passage of Bill 29 and earlier this year when they decided that openness and transparency is now sort of basic instinct. In the spirit of that, it makes perfect sense for them.

They have already merged the school boards all into one mega board, which is effectively run from the minister's office in the other building. There is no problem to make a telephone call and suggest this would be an important thing to do to make this information available, open and public, and transparent online.

There was also a recommendation in here to ensure there is a more effective appeals process for families. We often see periodically that families and parents reluctantly go to the media to complain about the system as it is.

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

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

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

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

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

assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS computer science is the new literacy and is a vital skill for the digital age; and

WHEREAS computer science is a growing field of employment and is one of the highest paid academic majors; and

WHEREAS computer science education in Newfoundland and Labrador is not keeping pace with computer science education in other provinces; and

WHEREAS the public education system has a duty to expose students to a wide variety of subject areas and careers;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to consider adding mandatory computer science subjects to the public education curriculum.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to present this petition on behalf of those who have signed it, who include students in our post-secondary system, MUN engineering faculty members, and others in the community involved in technology, trades, and training. Many of these petitioners, not all, are part of an organization called Code NL which is very concerned about the lack of computer science in our schools. They have met with government officials on this issue and will continue pushing to show the importance of having computer science.

The information technology sector – as we all know, we all experience it every day – is growing. Computer scientists are in high demand in our country, in the US, and around the world. There is a US study that predicts that by 2020 there will be 1 million more computer science jobs than students.

We should be training people locally. We have two courses in our high schools that are not even connected to one another. We have a complete dearth of people who are learning about computer science in our school system.

In Ontario, for example, Mr. Speaker, there are ten interrelated computer science and computer technology courses in Grades 10 to 12 offered in connection with one another, preparing students to be able to look forward to further education in university and to jobs in this growing technology sector and this industry, which could offer so much to our young people in this Province and help keep them here at home.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to presenting this petition when more come in.

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS the Province of Quebec has lower taxes on tobacco than the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS in Budget 2013 the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador eliminated the tax rebate on tobacco for towns adjacent to the Quebec Border; and

WHEREAS businesses in those towns have seen a significant drop in tobacco sales because of cross border shopping, resulting also in a drop in sales of other products; and

WHEREAS this situation has created a significant disadvantage for businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador and has created a net loss of tax revenue to the Province;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to reinstate the tax rebate program on tobacco products for businesses in the towns adjacent to the Quebec Border, in the Labrador Straits, and in Labrador West.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will every pray.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is a total of about \$250,000 in revenue lost to this Province. Mr. Speaker, it is having very serious implications in my district on the southern end, and certainly in Labrador West.

Mr. Speaker, there are two Lab West retailers, eleven jobs, that have already closed. It is a very serious issue. We should be doing all we can to support small businesses. This is not about the sale of tobacco, Mr. Speaker. We have been very clear on where we stood. We want to put the funds and revenue back into programs, like smoking cessation. It is about supporting small business that support things in the community, like minor hockey and things like that.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, six out of every ten cigarette-buying persons in Labrador West alone are now going to Fermont, Quebec to purchase that. Mr. Speaker, if they are going for that, how much other taxable goods and services are they purchasing while they are there? That is not mentioning non-taxable items like groceries. I say, Mr. Speaker, we are losing enough already to the neighbouring Province of Quebec. We should be doing all we can to support small businesses here.

Let's reinstate, immediately, the border region tax rebate so we can prevent other small businesses from closing up. Let's take the revenue from that, the quarter of a million a year – it is an annual net loss to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador of a quarter of a million dollars. Mr. Speaker, just imagine all of the things we could do with that in this Province to help put back into things like smoking cessation.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for St. Georges – Stephenville East.

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

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

It is an honour to rise today to present a petition from residents of South Branch-Coal Brook area related to the reduction of the highway speed limit in that area.

Mr. Speaker, the petition reads:

WHEREAS the speed limit is reduced along the Trans-Canada Highway in many areas where residents live near the highway; and

WHEREAS the current speed limit presents a danger in the South Branch and Coal Brook area; and

WHEREAS there is a significant danger specifically related to children getting on and off the school bus in this area;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to reduce the speed limit for the highway in the South Branch and Coal Brook area.

Mr. Speaker, a number of people have signed this petition – pretty well every resident in the South Branch-Coal Brook area – and it is a significant number of people to show their support for the change of the speed limit in that area. Also, the danger is evident in the area. There have been a number of close calls in this area, where children are getting off school buses and things like that. So there is a danger there.

I know the minister, as well, has received some correspondence from people in the area related to this issue, and I look forward to him taking some action on this in the House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the petition in and of itself gives absolutely every single reason why the court worked. It gives every single reason why the court should never have been closed. It gives every single reason why the court should be reinstated and expanded.

Mr. Speaker, today in the House during Question Period, felt like the Mad Hatter's tea party. We hear the Premier say we are going to study about expanding the court. In fact, what they did is they closed the court, even though they knew the court was doing well. Then we

had the former Minister of Justice yesterday saying it was a budgetary decision.

We know that keeping people out of jail is far cheaper than putting people in jail. We do know that prevention and reduction in recidivism is far cheaper than putting people in jail and breaking up families, if that is what the families want. It feels like the Mad Hatter's tea party, because the Premier is saying we are going to study expanding it, without even opening it; closing it.

Mr. Speaker, there is no sense to any of that. If the government is saying they are listening to the people of the Province, it is time to simply reinstate the court and then expand it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

WHEREAS the community of Bristol's Hope is expressing ongoing concerns regarding the need for repairs to Beach Road which has been severely damaged by storm waves and has caused major concerns to the community of Bristol's Hope as it pertains to fire protection and safety; and

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

WHEREAS this damaged roadway is also creating environmental concerns as the Atlantic Ocean has washed over the roadway and out into a freshwater pond where the fish are in the pond; and

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

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

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to respond to pleas from the community residents to have this roadway repaired to previous condition, and to urge government to repair the road.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is a petition I had here last fall. Of course, it is something that keeps coming back.

Mr. Speaker, my biggest concern in Bristol's Hope is it is a heavily wooded area. If a fire ever did take place down there those people could very possibly get trapped in. The Department of Transportation, up until three to four years ago, always maintained that area and kept that road open.

Mr. Speaker, this needs to be dealt with. It is very, very important to the residents down in that area. They are worried about the situation down there.

If somebody took a backhoe and went down in Bristol's Hope and started infilling that pond on the other side of the road, the Department of Environment would be out and have something to say about it. Right now that is what is happening there: this pond on the other side of that is infilling. I do not understand why government would not take the initiative to go and repair that road. They always did it. For whatever reason they gave it up, I do not understand, Mr. Speaker. Anyway, for whatever reason they gave it up. They did give it up.

Mr. Speaker, not only that road there, but, I will say this to you, there is another one identical to it down in the community of Freshwater. All I am asking for is due diligence from the Department of Transportation. Own up to their responsibilities to the people in Bristol's Hope.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MS C. BENNETT:** 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 we call upon the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to make literacy a priority by supporting the development of a robust provincial strategic literacy plan that addresses the learning and literacy of individuals from the early years through the senior years; and

WHEREAS we recognize that literacy is intimately connected to all other social issues; and

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is to invest in more funding in literacy programs so that all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can enjoy the benefits of participation in our society and that no one is left behind;

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

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

**MS C. BENNETT:** WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to make funding literacy programs a priority in order to develop a provincial strategic literacy plan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, currently in Newfoundland and Labrador we have one of the lowest literacy rates in the country. One in every two adults in our Province does not meet the desired proficiency level in either language or numeracy skills. It has been proven that stronger literacy skills for our youth increase the chances that

they will complete high school and go to post-secondary learning.

Increased skill levels for adults increase the probability that they will have success in finding employment and will have shorter periods of unemployment. Elevated literacy skills also contribute to other sectors: civic engagement, better health outcomes, and greater connection to family and community.

There are economic gains as well. Increased skills in the workplace provide employers with a more innovative, flexible, and robust workforce, enabling increased productivity while providing employees with the opportunities for advancement. In the absence of strong literacy programs, lower literacy could impact adversely on youth, which may also impact on their ability to complete and participate in the post-secondary education that is available and then go on to succeed in the labour market.

Low literacy also impacts seniors and their quality of life by increasing their dependency and posing health and safety risks. People with low literacy levels are more likely to be the highest health risk with an increased effect on senior citizens. This relationship tends to occur for all age groups and both sexes.

Research clearly indicates that literacy is associated with employability, the types of jobs occupied by workers, and earnings. Those with higher proficiencies have a higher employment rate, higher learning, and work in more knowledge-intensive industries. Literacy has a large effect on earnings equivalent to about one-third of the estimated wage return on education.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS safer alternatives are available to the provincial government for brush clearance such as manual labour, alternative competitive seeding methods, and/or 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, I was approached by several people who wanted to undertake this petition in other areas of the Province, and I put out the call last week to start getting some of these petitions back so I could start presenting them in the House of Assembly on behalf of the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. This is one that comes from the areas of St. John's and surrounding area.

Mr. Speaker, this is something I have been standing up and talking about in the House before. Not only are we dealing with chemicals that are being used that are subject to the government ban, but now we are starting to rely a little bit too much on chemical methods and people in this Province have a right to a clean environment. They have a right to enjoy that environment without having their environment poisoned all the time by having toxic chemicals dumped in them.

It does not matter whether they are being used for roadside brush clearing; it does not matter if they are being used on the Nalcor right-of-way. Either way, we are talking about well over 12,000 kilometres potentially in this Province where we are seeing roadside chemicals being used, or chemicals being used for one form or another to knock down brush.

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** Mr. Speaker, we can create employment and be a little bit greener in things by having a manual clearing done and at the same time being able to look after our highways and everything.

I implore government again to pay attention to the ban that they have on these chemicals and cease and desist on the use of these chemicals. Help keep our own environment clean. There are better ways we can do it, and start looking after the people's health in this Province.

Thank you very much.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to be recognized in this hon. House.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to present a petition today on behalf of the people of Western Newfoundland and Labrador concerning the new Western hospital.

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

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



Mr. Speaker, I am doing this on behalf of all of the residents. It is a big issue out in Western Newfoundland. I asked questions in the House of Assembly today and I was astonished by the answers – actually astonished. The first answer was about the radiation. We have been told there would be a report in August. Now we are told no, it is not done.

Now, Mr. Speaker – and I know the people are going to be asking – if the report is not done, yet the minister here today said the functional plan is complete, how can you have a functional plan when you do not know if you are going to have one unit or two units? It is very big issue.

Yet the minister stands up today and says that the functional plan is completed because they committed funds that are going to be spent in the 2015-2016 Budget for the design. The minister stood up today in this House and said it is completed. So why are we pre-committing funds for 2015-2016 if it is already done? Why? How can you say there is going to be one unit or two units if you do not have the functional plan done?

Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to come out and inform the people of Western Newfoundland and Labrador of the plans for the new hospital because you cannot pre-commit funds to complete the design phase of the hospital, and the minister standing here today and saying it is not.

The minister said today – and I have to correct him because I am sure it is just a slight error. The minister said the construction of the new hospital will start in 2015. I am sure he meant the start of the long-term care facility, the 130 beds, will start in 2015; because 2016 is the estimated time, as the Premier said, the former minister said, as the former Premier said, 2016 is the earliest date for the new hospital. So I will give time for the minister, sometime at a later date, to clarify that because I do not want a false impression put out there, Mr. Speaker.

I thank you again for the opportunity.

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

**MR. KING:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, we move to Orders of the Day.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that we move to Orders of the Day.

All those in favour, ‘aye’.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against, ‘nay’.

Carried.

### Orders of the Day

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

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

I call from the Order Paper, Order 3, first reading of a bill, Bill 26.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that Bill 26, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 3, be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services should have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 3, Bill 26, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 26, and that the said bill be now read a first time?

All those in favour, ‘aye’.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against, ‘nay’.

Carried.

Motion, the hon. Minister of Health and Community Services to introduce a bill, “An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 3”, carried. (Bill 26)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act No. 3. (Bill 26)

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

When shall the bill be read a second time?

**MR. KING:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 26 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Service NL, for leave to introduce a bill, An Act Respecting Chartered Professional Accountants And Public Accountants, Bill 27, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. the minister shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting Chartered Professional Accountants And Public Accountants, Bill 27, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, the Minister of Service NL to introduce a bill, "An Act Respecting Chartered Professional Accountants And Public Accountants", carried. (Bill 27)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act Respecting Chartered Professional Accountants And Public Accountants. (Bill 27)

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

When shall the bill be read a second time?

**MR. KING:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 27 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

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

Once again, I move, seconded by the Minister of Service NL, for leave to introduce a bill, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act, Bill 29, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. the minister shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act, Bill 29, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, the Minister of Service NL to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act", carried. (Bill 29)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act. (Bill 29)

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

When shall the bill be read a second time?

**MR. KING:** Tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 29 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

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

At this time I would like to call from the Order Paper, Address in Reply.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Address in Reply.

The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

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

The first thing I would like to do, Mr. Speaker, as I get one of the first opportunities to stand on my feet – I was here yesterday – is to congratulate you on your new position. It is certainly a pleasure for all of us to see you there occupying that Chair. You did it in a deputy role, and did an extraordinarily good job. I think I speak for everyone here when I say congratulations, we are happy to see you there in the Chair.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The minister has leave to continue.

**MS SULLIVAN:** Thank you.

I would also like to welcome the MHA for St. George's – Stephenville East as well. He is just new to the House of Assembly. I believe this is his first sitting as well, so welcome.

I understand we will have opportunity to welcome other MHAs in the coming days. I understand one of those will be welcomed into the House this week. So, formally, we will be able to do that at that point in time as well.

Today, Mr. Speaker, as always, it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to have a chance to speak to the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne that was given quite some time ago, and to be able to talk about where we are, how things are progressing as a result of that particular Speech from the Throne and so on. Since that time, I now have a new portfolio as well. It is the position of Education and Early Childhood Development.

I want to tell you how thrilled I am to be in that position. Education of course is a background

that I have, having taught for thirty years in this Province, and having enjoyed every single minute of those thirty years working with the young people of this Province.

I am particularly happy that what we have done now is we have included in this department early childhood education and early childhood development, Mr. Speaker. That is so significant. I commend the Premier for having had the vision and the foresight to see the importance of doing this.

It is referred to across the country. It is a growing trend across the country. It is referred to as early childhood service integration, meaning essentially that we are taking all aspects of childhood development, childhood learning, and so on, and integrating them into one department so we have that continuum of services to our children. Mr. Speaker, I am really happy to have the opportunity to lead that integration into the Department of Education and see the positive results that I think will come from the synergies of both departments having come together from that perspective.

We all understand that the goal of this is better service delivery for children and families, but I would not want it misunderstood to have been that in the past none of that was happening. It was certainly happening. There was great co-operation and collaboration between the two departments of Child, Youth and Family Services and the Department of Education. Now having everyone actually physically under the one roof, which was just accomplished over the last couple of weeks, it certainly makes it easier for us to do our work and to see that we can provide the best for our young people that we possibly can.

We have had examples of this integration, of course, for quite some time in Newfoundland and Labrador through child care being co-located, for example, in family resource centres. That is an example of integration of services within the Province. We see integrations as well when we know that schools provide space quite often for some of the play groups that occur within the Province and so on. There have been many efforts and many successful occasions when we have seen some of this integration come into play.

Now as we formally look to ensure that we are going to see some really good integration happening, I am especially happy to be able to lead that. I think we are going to be able to provide an array of services from birth, and at supporting child development and early childhood development, and supporting and engaging families as well, which is so important, Mr. Speaker, as we work through that transition of what it is we are going to do.

Much research is available to us that will highlight the benefits of such service integration of having the two departments working together. Children's development, first of all, will be strengthened, I believe, as a result of having that kind of a focus from one department. We will have a flexible continuum of opportunities, programs, and services. It is important to note that we will be working on strengthening the programs and services we have now but also on using our resources within the department to ensure we find new services, new programming, and so on.

We will be looking as well to promote that continuity of child and family programming and enhancing the community building, because the old adage about it takes a village to raise a child is certainly true. If we look at the partnerships that exist out in the community, I think we are able to find many opportunities as well to improve the early childhood development of our children.

Again, it is a wonderful opportunity. It is a great privilege to have this opportunity as we continue to do the work that we have been doing already on a program called Learning from the Start, where we see some really good examples of focusing on service delivery.

If any of you have been watching television lately, or listening to the radio, or looking at some of the print ads, you know that some of the work we are doing and some of the campaigns we have put in place around early childhood programming talk about the power of play. If you have seen any of those ads on television, I think they really capture our attention. They say to everybody that the power of play is one of the most powerful tools we have in educating our children these days.

Even this morning I had opportunity, along with the MHA for Harbour Main, to go to one of our local schools here, St. John Bosco, where we actually were talking about bullying. In the course of talking about bullying with the children, they too talked about play and how they learn from play. When we go to our preschools and our daycare centres and so on, then we see some really good opportunities.

**MR. LANE:** (Inaudible).

**MS SULLIVAN:** I am not sure what the member opposite is saying. I would certainly be happy to answer any questions he might have for me. If you want me to sit and ask the question, I would be happy to answer.

**MR. LANE:** How come you did not invite us to St. John Bosco?

**MS SULLIVAN:** There was a press release put out that invited everybody to come to St. John Bosco, so he was certainly welcome to come. Any time that I go out to any of the schools, anybody here who would like to come along is welcome to come. There will always be a press release that will make sure everybody is given fair opportunity to know about those occasions. Everybody is welcome, so consider yourselves always invited.

I just want to continue on, though, about what we are doing around early childhood learning. The MHA for St. John's North made some reference this afternoon to a couple of studies that were done around early childhood and the release of them last week. He was particularly critical of Newfoundland and Labrador and where we were in terms of those particular studies. He left out a couple of things, though.

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

**MS SULLIVAN:** Yes, he is always critical; you are right about that. That is from the member on his side of the House.

What he left out was the progress that we are making. That was clearly identified in the report as well. The report itself identified that Newfoundland and Labrador, in this report called early learning – I cannot remember the name of the report; I will have to get the name of

it after. It talked about the fact that Newfoundland and Labrador has made great progress in just a very short period of time.

In 2011, we received a score on the indicators that were provided – and sometimes we question the indicators and whether or not they are the best indicators of progress. We had a score of 1.5 out of fifteen. This year our score improved to six, Mr. Speaker, which tied us with Saskatchewan and with Nova Scotia, with the highest score only being ten out of fifteen. When you put it in context, it does not sound as bad as what it is that they made it out to be.

Essentially the report said Newfoundland and Labrador has made significant gains in early childhood learning and even though some of the indicators we were not able to score on, they should indicate to us, however, that we have made great progress. They did not give us the points for it; but full-day Kindergarten, for example, is an indicator of progress. We did not get any points on that because it is not yet implemented. Mr. Speaker, everybody in this Province knows we have announced that we are moving forward on full-day Kindergarten and that we have already started the process to see that in September 2016 full-day Kindergarten will be implemented here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I think we need to make sure the people of the Province gain some confidence from the fact that we have been listening and that we have made really good strides in improving early childhood development and in improving early learning in this Province.

One of the other things we should note here is that the third party endorsement for what we have done here has been pretty impressive. Kathy LeGrow, for example, from the Jimmy Pratt Foundation has certainly endorsed what we are doing here. In fact, as the foundation Chair, she credits the provincial government with listening to concerns and responding by way of announcing full-day Kindergarten and increasing the number of child care spaces.

This again, from an interview on VOCM Radio, she says the Province had a long way to go based on the 2011 report, but significant progress has been made. She says removing

early childhood learning from the Department of CYFS shows a changing focus on children. Further to that, the author of the report early years – that is the name of the report, the early years study – Dr. Akbari says, “Newfoundland’s decision to integrate full-day kindergarten programming has helped push the province from being last in investing in early childhood education to being noticed as one of the movers towards improving the system.”

Mr. Speaker, those are people who evaluate what we are doing here. Those are people who have come forward with suggestions to us in the past and who are now saying good for you. You have listened and you have made significant progress.

While the Member for St. John’s North might simply point out the placing on the particular report, he forgot to mention all of the progress that was made. He forgot to mention the fact that the authors of the report have noticed us as one of the movers in the country, that the authors have said we have made significant gains within this area. Somehow he forgot to put those pieces in there.

I just thought I would take an opportunity this afternoon to make sure the people of the Province understand we have, in fact, focused a great deal on early childhood learning, we focused a great deal on early childhood education itself, and certainly in terms of our work around providing other sorts of care for our younger set around the development of the early child care strategy – the ten-year strategy – work that we have done there, the \$45 million that we have invested there, we are receiving accolades; however, it is not showing up on the indicators just yet. It will, however, Mr. Speaker; I have no doubt.

Having said that, I want to talk about the K-12 system as well and some of the work that is happening and continues to happen there. There were many statements made in the Speech from the Throne that referenced the work that would be ongoing this year. I am able to say that work has been progressing, and progressing very nicely as well.

We still continue to make unprecedented investments in our K-12 system; \$872 million

worth this year, Mr. Speaker, in terms of investments in the K-12 system. For those who are statistical in nature and like to understand where we have come from, that is a 48 per cent increase over where we were in 2003 – 48 per cent increase.

Our per-pupil investment in our K-12 system has increased by 75 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Again, it is something that I think the people of the Province need to know and need to be proud of. In fact, our per-pupil investment in this Province is the best in Atlantic Canada and among the best in the country. So we are certainly paying attention to the young people of this Province. We understand how important our young people are, and we want to continue to invest.

We have done some work that we have talked about here in this House, and I have heard previous ministers reference it, around eliminating school fees and around providing free textbooks to the students in the Province; \$56 million dollars to eliminate the school fees and \$21 million, since 2007, to provide free textbooks.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I started out today saying that I had been a teacher in this Province for thirty years. I want to tell you about my experience about children coming to school and the heartbreak I would see in their faces when they did not have the little envelope to pass in to pay for their school fees, the embarrassment they felt, the sense of being underprivileged they felt because they did not have the money to pass over to us when we were collecting school fees. As hard as we tried to make it as unobtrusive as we could, we understood how children felt at those times. When they could not afford to buy their textbooks, Mr. Speaker, and when they would come in with a note from social services and how they would try to slip us those notes in every possible way that they could to avoid the embarrassment, well, we responded to all of that and we removed all of that.

We ensured that everyone in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, has access to education. That embarrassment no longer exists for our students, and for many of the parents who came to see us as well, or who would phone us at night and say: Can I come by and bring that note

to you this evening so my child does not have to come to school tomorrow?

Mr. Speaker, we removed all that. That has made such a difference. It is something I think we all in this Province need to be proud of because it really does make a difference.

One of the other things – and it is highlighted in our graduation results, Mr. Speaker. Our results this year were the highest they have ever been in terms of a graduation success rate: 92.5. I am searching here for the exact statistic. I think it was 92.5 per cent of our students in this Province graduated this year from high school.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that is happenstance. I believe that is a direct result of the investments we are making. I believe that is a direct result of the quality of the teaching we have going on in this Province. I believe that it is a direct result of things such as capping class sizes.

We have done that from K-9. We have reduced the average class size from 20.7, where it used to be in 2004, to 18.1. In fact, our pupil ratio in this Province at 12 to 1 is the best anywhere in the country. It is absolutely the best anywhere in this country.

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

**MS SULLIVAN:** Mr. Speaker, when we talk about replying to the Speech from the Throne, when we would have heard in the Speech from the Throne that we will continue to invest in the young people of this Province, those are indicators that we have followed through on investing in the young people of this Province. What bright young people we have.

We heard two or three people stand in the House today – two, I think, I recall for sure – who talked about the electoral scholarships that were received in their district. There are three students from their districts. Everybody in this House can stand and do that and talk about their three students.

We could talk about our students who go on to post-secondary and the successes we hear about day over day over day in this Province. It is really phenomenal results that are happening. It

is because we have invested in new curriculum. It is because we have invested in new technology. I heard some talk about that in the House here today. I hope to get a chance to address that at another time. It is because we have also invested in our skilled trades area \$13 million since 2005, Mr. Speaker, to invest in skilled trades.

Mr. Speaker one of the other pieces I really quite enjoy has to do with our investment in Cultural Connections. I had occasion to go down to Beachy Cove Elementary a week or ten days ago I guess now, or maybe a little longer, and met with the students down there. We talked about the importance of understanding our roots here in this Province as well. We talked about making those cultural connections through music and through theatre and through arts and all kinds of other ways the children were able to tell me about. Mr. Speaker, those investments are so important to us as well.

If you look at our arts community here in Newfoundland and Labrador, we have one of the strongest arts communities in the country. Again, not happenstance, Mr. Speaker, but some good roots for sure. There is no doubt, our musical roots in this Province run deep, but they have also been cultivated very well through our school system; \$20.9 million, in fact, since 2005 in the Cultural Connections area.

Early Childhood Development – I am running out of time, but I just want to make reference to the fact that we committed, through the child care strategy, to increasing the number of regulated child care spaces in the Province, and we have done that by 70 per cent.

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

**MS SULLIVAN:** By 70 per cent, we have increased the number of child care spaces here in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have invested \$42.5 million for child care. We are going to see better quality child care spaces. We are going to see larger numbers of child care spaces, and we are going to see more affordable child care as a result of that 10-year strategy, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunately, I am out of time. I certainly hope I get a chance to stand again because there is so

much more I want to talk about in terms of a response to the Speech from the Throne.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Leave.

**MS SULLIVAN:** I am hearing leave. I do not know if they are joking or not because I am certainly willing to go on for another forty, fifty minutes. You know I would. There is so much to say. We are so proud of the students in Newfoundland and Labrador.

**MR. SPEAKER (Littlejohn):** I remind the hon. minister her time is up.

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

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

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

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

It certainly is a pleasure for me to stand and speak on Address in Reply. As I indicated yesterday, it is great to be back in the House of Assembly to represent the good folks of Mount Pearl South and the Province as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, I had a few topics I wanted to speak to related to my critic area and also some other issues I have been digging into for some constituents. Before I do, though, I just cannot help but respond very briefly to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

It is amazing how you can spin a good yarn. We have a report that came out, as my colleague from St. John's North indicated, on early learning and care. Basically, we went from worst in the country to second last in the country. Somehow the minister is trying to turn that into a good news story and talking about how much improvement we have made.

If you are at the very bottom, if you are last in the country, you really have nowhere to go but up anyway. I would not be surprised that we would be seeing improvement. God help us if we are not seeing improvement, given the fact we were actually last in the country. If it was not so serious it would actually be amusing.

Mr. Speaker, she also talked about – it is interesting, delving into the past – the student fees in school, and fees for books and so on. I do not think anybody is going to argue – and certainly I am not going to argue, and I am sure none of my colleagues, nobody in this House is going to argue – that getting rid of the student fees is a good thing. I think it was a great thing. I think having free textbooks is a good thing. No one is going to argue that.

We are talking about things that were done ten years ago. While it is good to, I suppose, sometimes celebrate the past, I think really we need to be focusing on what we are doing right now, and what the issues are right now. Not just where we are right now, but where we are going to be in the future. Particularly given the financial state of this Province, I think we should be looking at some of the current issues as opposed to dwelling on some of the things that were done maybe ten years ago.

With that said, I have a couple of issues which I do want to raise. Mr. Speaker, the first issue, and this is an issue which came my way as a result of – I was contacted by some residents in the Avalon region, residents of St. John's area, residents of Mount Pearl, constituents of mine in the District of Mount Pearl South, as it related to their cottages they had up in Ocean Pond.

Mr. Speaker, I met with them. I heard their concerns. I went up there a couple of times and basically viewed the area to try to get a handle on what their concerns were.

The concern they had, basically, was that for the last, I am going to say thirty years, and I stand to be corrected one way or the other, but I will say approximately thirty years there have been people up there – there are some people who live in Ocean Pond, a few, not a lot, and a lot of people who have cottages in Ocean Pond, and for the last thirty years there has been a land freeze on all the Crown land up there.

Individuals have been unable to expand their property. If someone came in and said I have an old cabin I want to expand it and make it bigger, I have more money now, whatever the case might be – no, you cannot do that.

The reason given by the Division of Crown Lands and Environment was environmental

saturation. We also had situations where somebody may have had a cottage and there was a piece of land next to them, Crown land, and they might have said: Look, there is a piece of Crown land here, my son or my daughter or whatever, they would like to put a cottage here next to mine. So they would go to Crown Lands and they would be told no, no development, we have a land freeze here; environmental saturation being the reason why they could not do that.

Now, many years later, and we fast-forward into, say, a couple of years ago, and all of a sudden you have a road, a full-fledged road connecting up to the existing cabin road – which, by the way, the residents are responsible for, responsible for maintaining it themselves. The government used to at one time, but then it was considered, I think, a Class 4 road. The government stopped maintaining it and snow clearing it, so they were responsible.

All of a sudden they see a full-fledged road with culverts, wider road, better road than what is actually there, connect up to their road. There was never any notification given to the people, the existing cottage owners. There are over 300 of them. There was no notification. They were not asked for permission, and had no opportunity to have any say whatsoever.

They come to discover that there is a 110-lot cottage development being approved to go in there, into an area which at one point there was a parcel of land there, I believe, that was under some sort of dispute as to whether it was privately owned or it was actually leased to somebody many, many years ago for a mill operation. Now, all of a sudden, there is some sort of a settlement made between Crown Lands and this individual. Anyway, the land changes hands, all of a sudden there is a development going there and the land is sold and now they are going to put in a development.

All this happens with no notification of the persons there, no normal processes in place to make the public aware so they could have their concerns, if they have them, dealt with – and they have many concerns. Mr. Speaker, they made many attempts to contact Crown Lands. They have made many attempts to contact the various ministers who were there and they could



not get any response. I have made attempts to get answers. I have not been able to get any response. People have been calling for a public meeting. They cannot get a public meeting.

This full-fledged road is gone right through existing frozen Crown land to get to this new development, but for some reason that land is not frozen. I contacted Crown Lands and asked: How can this development be? If nobody else can build cabins, how come they can? They said: It is private land. I said: Well, give me the information as to how this became private land and so on. I could get no information from the minister's office.

I had to do an access to information. They took the full sixty days and no response. I finally get a response saying we are going to take another thirty days. Another thirty days comes and goes, still no response. I had to go to the Privacy Commissioner and put in a complaint. Now they are given another thirty days. We are going to be four months trying to get a bit of information as to how this could occur.

People want to know: How did this land change hands? What part of this land was under dispute? Was there any Crown land thrown into the deal? Who is the proponent? Who claimed to own the land? Who bought the land? Who were the legal people involved in this whole transaction? Who are all these people?

There are a lot of questions and a lot of rumours, which I am not going to talk about, but there is certainly a lot of speculation. People want answers. We have been unable to get any answers, Mr. Speaker. I think that is a real concern.

Mr. Speaker, I wrote the now Minister of Fisheries and asked to meet with him and I wanted him to hold a public meeting. I never even got a response from the Minister of Fisheries. He was the Minister of Environment and Conservation at the time – no response. I let some time go by and I wrote him again. There was still no response.

It is interesting, all this is so-called approved, we have a full-fledged road built through frozen Crown land, and all this is done before there was even an environmental assessment. There is an

environmental assessment process which should take place before anyone does any developments. The road is built. There is a full road built before the assessment is even completed. What are people to think? How could that possibly happen?

I have contacted Crown Lands since and asked: How could the road be done? You are saying the development is private. I want the information on how that happened and I cannot seem to get it. The road is going through Crown land; how could that be? I have been told the roads are different. Now, how roads can be different is beyond me. I have no idea how they can be different. I cannot seem to find out, but I am not letting the issue go. The residents up there, the cottage owners, are not letting it going until we get answers.

That is certainly a big concern people have up in Ocean Pond as to how all of this could have transpired; how come there was no public process; how a road can be put through frozen Crown land when no one else could develop any Crown land; how the land got transferred; who is involved in this; how it could be connected to their existing road which they are responsible for and now you have heavy equipment going up tearing up their road. There is no compensation, no communication, nothing – how could all of this happen? People up in Ocean Pond want those answers. I have done everything I can to try to get those answers and I will continue, including raising it here in this House of Assembly.

Now it is interesting, as I said, I actually wrote the then Minister of Environment twice and got no response. The environmental assessment took place after the fact, after the road was built. They were supposed to make a decision. Well, lo and behold, after I wrote my letter to the then Minister of Environment, now Minister of Fisheries, a news release comes out and says a decision was supposed to be made this week but the minister is going to take an additional week or ten days, whatever it was, and he will make his decision a week later. That date came and went and no decision was made. We were continuing to try to get answers.

Interestingly enough – and this is really interesting – the then Minister of Environment,

now the Minister of Fisheries, gave that project the environmental green light, I think it was, on a Monday afternoon. I stand to be corrected on the day of the week, but for argument's sake on a Monday afternoon, and Tuesday morning he was sworn in as a new Cabinet minister and changed departments. Now, that was interesting timing. He was supposed to make a decision, a date was given, the date went by, no action for over two weeks, and he finally gives the green light the afternoon before he switched departments. That certainly makes people very suspicious as to what is going on as well.

Now since that time, I have written the new Minister of Environment and Conservation and, I guess, true to form, just basically being consistent with his counterpart, he has refused to respond to me also. So that is three letters, two different ministers, ATIPP requests, and there is still no information from this government as to how this could happen. I do not know why they would not, because this is not about me. This is not about just my constituents. I have constituents up there, but guess what? There are constituents there from St. John's, for some of the members. There are people there from the Southern Shore; I have spoken to them. There are people there from the Bay Roberts area – a lot of them from the Bay Roberts area. There are even people from Grand Falls. I spoke to a gentleman from Grand Falls-Windsor. He lives in Grand Falls-Windsor and has his cottage down there. They are from all over.

These are not just my constituents. These are everybody's constituents who have had this thrown upon them, with no answers, no explanations, and nobody wants to give them any information. I think that is absolutely shameful, absolutely shameful that we could have this going on in this day and age. You talk about openness, transparency, and accountability. There is an opportunity. There is an opportunity to prove you are open and transparent. It is not happening, and it is absolutely shameful.

Mr. Speaker, speaking of writing letters and getting no responses, I have also taken the opportunity in my role as Opposition member responsible for Service NL, I have written the Minister of Service NL now twice. Twice I have written, requesting a meeting to deal with

concerns around workplace health and safety, concerns around workers comp to speak about issues around the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Review Division, the Marystown Shipyard Family Alliance, who I went out and met with in Marystown to hear their concerns. I wish the minister would do the same, but I did – two requests for meetings, and no response from that minister either.

I even tried to ask the minister some questions in the House of Assembly yesterday, and the Premier had to answer those. He does not want to talk. I do not know why. I do not know what the problem is. I do not know why they would not want to talk about these important issues, for the life of me.

If the minister is chirping back there now, he had lots of opportunity to answer questions and he has not done it. I hope he gets up on his feet and explains what is going on in his department, because there are people who have serious concerns that are not being addressed. We talk about concerns not being addressed in that particular department. We are talking about issues, for example, around the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Review Division.

Now we all know the story about the new unelected Minister of Justice, Ms Manning, and her nineteen cases which never got done; a sixty-day time limit and none done within that sixty-day time limit. I think there was one draft report on one case in six months, five or six months, something like that I believe; but, I cannot blame it on Minister Manning. She is only one commissioner. We have 150 outstanding cases at the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Review Division. The only response I received so far, at least from the Premier, was that we are improving things. We had a lot more backlog cases last year than we have this year.

It is almost like the Minister of Education when she was talking about a report, as I said earlier, where we went from dead last to second last and somehow trying to say we are improving. Well, I guess we are. If you are at the bottom you have nowhere to go but up. I guess in the same vein, if you have 350 cases or whatever it is outstanding, backlog cases, and people's lives

on the line, injured workers and their families, now all of a sudden: well, we are not as bad as we were last year. We only have 150 cases outstanding. We only have 150 injured workers and their families who are not receiving the justice they deserve. Only 150, that is okay, we are doing great. I do not think we are doing great.

I want to know from the Minister of Service NL what his specific plans are to deal with these outstanding cases. We are working on it does not cut it. We are making improvements does not cut it. I am talking to my officials, does not cut it. Specifically, what are you doing? Are you appointing additional commissioners? I would like to know, why don't you appoint additional commissioners? Why don't you use multiple venues? Why don't you extend the hours for hearings?

Instead of having them – I do not know if they are 9:00 o'clock to 5:00 o'clock Monday to Friday, or whatever they are. Let's have some in the evening. Let's have some on the weekends. Whatever we have to do, let's get these cases heard. That would be a concrete action plan to be able to come back and say, do you know what? We have 150 injured workers and their families who are suffering because they cannot get their cases heard and we are going to resolve this ASAP because I have additional commissioners. I have extended the time, the venues, and we are doing whatever it takes. We are giving them solid timelines that this must be completed by a certain period of time.

Once the backlog is cleared up, then you need, Mr. Minister, to start addressing the systemic issues that are leading to these unwarranted, unacceptable delays. That is what needs to happen. We are not hearing any of those answers. It is disturbing. It certainly is disturbing.

Mr. Speaker, it also ties into the overall picture of the statutory review. We have the workers' compensation statutory review that was done and completed. It went out for public input. The government has been sitting on that now for several months.

We are still not hearing anything from the government as to what are they going to do with

these recommendations and the commentary? What changes are you proposing? When will we see changes in legislation to improve the system for employers and for injured workers? When is that going to happen? I am not seeing any answers.

There are a lot of issues and there are a lot of people who are suffering because they cannot get cases heard because of flaws in the system. One which I am going to talk about in great detail when I get another opportunity – unfortunately, I am running out of time – is the Marystown Shipyard Family Alliance and the issues they have been having with industrial disease, and the fact that our workers' comp system does not have a comprehensive plan to deal with industrial disease which involves using specialist occupational medicine and industrial hygienists like they do in Ontario.

That is something I want to talk about at some point as well. That is another concern we have that needs to be addressed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I was not planning on standing up and saying a few words at this moment in time. The Member for Mount Pearl South prompted me to get up there and just correct some of the facts that are out there.

I was accused a few minutes ago of not responding to a letter that he had written me recently, Mr. Speaker. It is in your mail or it is somewhere upstairs on your desk. I have the letter right here, dated November 10, that I sent to you responding to exactly what you were just talking about. If you do not have it, we will check with the mail system.

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

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

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

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

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South.

**MR. LANE:** I would ask the minister to table this letter, as I did not receive it.

**MR. SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Mr. Speaker, we will make sure that he does get a copy of the letter. Perhaps it still has not been sent yet. I cannot comment on that, but I know the date when I sent it.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** What is the date of the letter?

**MR. CRUMMELL:** November 10. Mr. Speaker, we will continue on.

With regard to the Ocean Pond cottage lot development, I understand the concerns of the cottage owners in the area.

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

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

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Mr. Speaker, I have a cottage in the country as well. As a matter of fact, my wife's family had a cottage in Salmonier Line for almost forty years. Back in the days in Salmonier Line, Deer Park and that area, the developments that happened down there, it was a relatively small development.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at what is happening down there now there is a huge demand for cottage lot developments and cottage lots here on the Avalon Peninsula. There is planned development in the Salmonier Line area, in the Deer Park area, and there are double, triple as many cabins in the area. Over time, government has deemed it acceptable to use that land in that area in the Salmonier Line. Cabin development does occur, that is planned and done in the right way, as long as it passes through the

environmental assessment process, which it did in this particular case as well.

When it comes to Ocean Pond cottage lot development, Mr. Speaker –

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile, on a point of order.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** The minister has raised the letter. He has referred to it constantly in response to comments from the Member for Mount Pearl South. I think it would be appropriate for the minister to table the letter so we can see it.

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

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

**MR. KING:** Mr. Speaker, what we have here is a disagreement between two members. The member here who is speaking today is referring to notes, as all of us do in this House. It is a disagreement between two members. Mr. Speaker, there is no point of order.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, the minister clearly is referring to a letter. He has put it out, he has identified the date on the letter and it is actually highlighted. I think it would be appropriate for the minister to have the fortitude to lay the letter down.

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

**MR. KING:** The Speaker ruled no point of order and the hon. member continues to persist on the Speaker's ruling.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** The hon. the minister keeps bringing the letter up.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I am going to take the point of order under advisement. I will adjourn the House for a short period of time.

Thank you.

**Recess**

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

I have reviewed the broadcast tape and I also reviewed the ruling of Speaker Wiseman on March 24 of this year. In Speaker Wiseman's ruling at that time referring to a document or its date is not a quote, or a citation.

There is no point of order.

Thank you.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

In the discussions and the lead up the hon. Opposition House Leader raised a point of order. I responded to the point of order. The Chair made a ruling. The Opposition House Leader then continued to challenge the ruling of the Chair. Standing Orders that we follow in the House are very clear that the ruling of the Chair is not to be challenged and that it constitutes a breach of privilege.

I would ask you to consider that.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I did not consider it a challenge. I reviewed the tapes. I have made my ruling on the point of order and I am now prepared to move on.

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

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

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Mr. Speaker, I have no problem tabling the letter. The copy I had here had markings on it, but I do have a fresh copy here that I will table. You are welcome to it.

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

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Mr. Speaker, this letter that was dated November 10 got lost in the mail en route from the West Block to the East Block. Obviously, the hon. member did not receive it and I guess we will have to talk to the mailroom

and get that straightened away. I apologize for that, Mr. Speaker.

I just wanted to stand up to clarify and correct some of the things that were said – most importantly, that I did respond to your letter in a timely manner and that the letter certainly was sent. If it has not been received, I cannot comment on that. I cannot say much to the member opposite. So, it is there now, and it will be a public record.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I remind the hon. Minister to speak to the Chair, please.

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Yes, Sir, I certainly will.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to call out a couple of things with regard to this development on Ocean Pond. Again, like I referred to earlier, I have a cabin in the woods and my wife's family had a cabin in the woods, and there were developments that went on around us. At the time, we were not overly happy that there were more cabins going up around us, but that is sort of a fact of life that where you choose to build your cabin, other developments might happen or might not happen are not within your control.

Like I said, I referenced Deer Park and Salmonier Line and how that has expanded. It is amazing how that sprung up and how many cottage areas there are in that area. There are needs out there, there are demands out there, and obviously they are fulfilling these needs and demands.

Mr. Speaker, in the situation with Ocean Pond I certainly have empathy for the people who live in that area, knowing that there is another development going in there. We have done the assessment on it. We have looked at it very closely. Our officials in our department, we went through the environmental assessment process – which is a very rigorous process, Mr. Speaker – and it was deemed suitable for cottage development. So, the –

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl South, on a point of order.

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

I just want to note that the assessment took place after the road was fully built.

**MR. SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Do you know what? I will give the hon. member that, that there was work that was being done that should not have been done. When our department were aware of it, we approached the developer. We let him know that development should not progress until the environmental assessment process has concluded. He complied, Mr. Speaker.

We went through that process, and I am pleased to say that the proponent co-operated with our department, did all the things that we asked him to do. As a matter of fact, we put significant terms and conditions on the release of the environmental assessment, and to date, the proponent is following his terms and conditions. So, that is a situation that did occur, and unfortunately the proponent got a little ahead of the game on that one; but he complied and co-operated with our department, which I think that should be acknowledged as well.

Again, we considered that very carefully, Mr. Speaker. There are so many considerations when you make the decisions for development and planned development for cottages, or any in our Province. Again, at the end of the analysis, it was deemed suitable and appropriate for further development in that area.

We looked at many things, including how many cottages are in the areas. In that area right now in Ocean Pond there are 140 waterfront cottages on Ocean Pond, 100 non-waterfront cottages, for a total of 240 cottages in that particular watershed; as a matter of fact, within two watersheds in the area. This proponent that came forward was looking at another 110 cottage lots for that area. As a matter of fact, on that part of the Avalon Peninsula there is probably room for more development as well, but there is nobody coming forward looking at that area at this point in time. It is not unusual to see these types of developments occur.

The only unusual part of this was it was not Crown land; it was private land that was being developed. We, in good conscience, could not stand in the way that if the environmental assessment process concluded that it could be released for future environmental assessment and conditions and terms are met.

We look at other things as well. He talked about the access road that was going in there, Mr. Speaker. We twinned the highway out that way when we put in the twinned highway going through. There were significant dollars spent to have an off ramp and to have an underpass to access Ocean Pond.

To get access to that property, it just made common sense that that access road would be used, Mr. Speaker. We allowed the proponent to have access as well through the existing cottage lots to get access to his property. I just made the most sense. The proponent would have had to put in another road as well and that was not necessary in this circumstance. So it just made sense for sure.

Again, the advanced construction is referenced in the letter as well. We talked about the public consultations. The EA process, Mr. Speaker, is a very vigorous process. We want to make sure we are making the right decisions in the best interests of the people of the Province. When we look at that environmental assessment process in this Province, part of that is a public consultation period. It is a forty-five day period altogether but it is thirty days or thirty-five days for public input. There was public input into this. We did receive twenty-two letters from cabin owners. We took their concerns into consideration when we released that project from the environmental assessment.

The terms and conditions that we put in place were very significant. There was water quality monitoring that was required to be done (inaudible) in terms of just making sure things are done in the right way from an environmental acceptable way. Significant conditions were put in place as well.

The proponent was very co-operative. With this project, there was nothing untoward that went on here. Everything was by the book. The proponent did go in a bit too early before the

environmental assessment was concluded, but he stopped and complied. The development is progressing as we speak.

Mr. Speaker, I just have to make sure that I get the facts out there and get them on the table. The hon. member had a few facts I think that were a little wrong. We clarified that in my correspondence to him on November 10. Hopefully that will help you in further deliberations. I would be happy for the hon. member to meet with myself or our officials if there are any more questions that he does have. I will offer that to the hon. member.

Development is sometimes a tough thing for people. It changes their lives in some respects. If we can do this in an acceptable way, that is what we are all about as a government. We have to make sure that we protect the environment, and we protect the people and their quality of life at the same time with any development in this Province, whether it is cottage development, a mining development, or anything along those lines, Mr. Speaker. In this case, we certainly did take our responsibility seriously and we executed our responsibilities very seriously.

Mr. Speaker, I have about ten minutes left. I just wanted to get up and respond to the queries from the hon. member opposite. I do not really have much more to say. I was not really prepared to speak to Address in Reply at this point in time, but I will maybe call out a few accomplishments. I have only been in the Department of Environment and Conservation for a few weeks. One of the first things I did was respond to this letter and dig through that file. I think I have been doing my job diligently.

There are so many good things that have happened in this Province. There is so much development that has happened in this Province. Our department takes huge responsibility and it takes very seriously what we need to do to make sure that development, economic development, and social development occurs, while we are protecting the environment and while we are protecting the wildlife.

It is just amazing how far we have come as a Province in the last ten years and the developments that have happened out there that made our lives much better, the job

opportunities, the bigger projects and even the smaller projects, Mr. Speaker. It is the role of our department to make sure that these developments go forward in an environmentally acceptable manner and as well, being acceptable to the people of the Province in terms of the quality of their lives. I just want to call that out.

Mr. Speaker, we have in this Province a total of fifty-eight protected areas that we have responsibility for in the Department of Environment and Conservation. I am a guy who spends a lot of time in the woods. Anybody who knows me and knows me well knows I do not take a lot of holidays down south. As a matter of fact, I cannot remember the last time I was down there. When I take my holidays I am out moose hunting like I was this past weekend with my father.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Did you get your moose?

**MR. CRUMMELL:** We never got a moose, but I spent quality time with my eighty-three-year-old father as I was passing through. I spent a few hours with him and enjoyed the Province.

I am the type of guy who likes getting out fishing. I like getting out hunting on occasion. To be in this role as Minister of Environment and Conservation, to me, I am fascinated with what the department is doing. I am fascinated about how it affects me personally in my life, in what I do and enjoying the outdoors. There are so many things going on in this Province that we want to make to protect the environment, the ecology, the wildlife, the birds, the forest, and the fauna. It is a gamut of things that we are proud of doing in this Province.

Mr. Speaker, we have established a partnership with the Mistaken Point Ambassadors to develop a nomination dossier for the proposed Mistaken Point UNESCO World Heritage Site. The very first thing I did when I was sworn in as minister was go with the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs to Mistaken Point, up through Trepassey and that neck of the woods.

The ambassadors had their AGM. The town hall was full. It was packed. The people in the community were just so engaged in Mistaken

Point and what it means to the community, what it means to the Province, how to protect it, and how to get the designation for the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Our department has been working very diligently on that in the last little while. We have staff dedicated. We have one staff person dedicated full time to getting our application in on time. Our deadline is in February. We are on time, we are on budget, and we are going to have that put forward. Sometime late next year, Mr. Speaker, we are going to find out if we are going to have another designation, which is a world-class renowned ecological site. We are looking forward to that happening.

Mr. Speaker, when we look to other things that we are doing in this Province with regard to my department; we talk about moose management, we are talking about the management of the caribou herds. We understand the challenges that we face in this Province managing our wildlife in the face of developments and in the face of what is happening with caribou herds globally. There are fifty-three herds in Canada that are in decline. Our Island herd right now is down to some 30,000 animals. It was at a peak of 60,000 or 70,000 just a few years ago.

We are putting measures in place to make sure that we protect our wildlife. We put \$50 million in for a five-year study a few years back. We just concluded that study. The results are going to be brought forward very soon. We are going to communicate to the people of the Province exactly what our scientists and our biologists have found out about the Island caribou and what is affecting them. We see predators affecting them. We see a little bit of development, but not much. It looks like it is a cyclical thing, Mr. Speaker. That money is well spent. We will be talking about that in the near future about exactly what is happening with our caribou population on the Island.

With regard to the moose population we are coming out with a Moose Management Plan in the coming weeks and months. We are going to talk more openly about that one as well to the public and to the people of the Province. There has been a lot of talk and a lot of concerns about the social considerations of moose on this

Island. Our government has listened to the people. We understand their concerns.

When you look at rural Newfoundland and Labrador and their heritage and culture, the moose population has become a very important part of who we are as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We have to find a way to manage the population in a wise way that is beneficial to all, both economically and socially, and biologically for the herds themselves to make sure that the moose do continue to do well in this Province.

We understand the conflicts between people and moose are growing, in particular in the more populated areas. On the Avalon Peninsula we see a little higher rate incidence of moose-vehicle collisions than we do in other parts of the Province. We need to address that and we need to have a look at that. We have talked to the people. We did broad consultations a year-and-a-half ago. We had over 2,000 people who responded in this consultation process. They told us many things that we are using right now to determine exactly what the plan is going to be going forward.

I have had the opportunity the last month to go through this plan in detail with my officials. I see some really good positive things come out of that which I think a lot of people in this Province will be happy with. We still do not have everything done to get out there and roll that out to the people of the Province. I know there are members opposite here who have been advocating for certain things to happen.

What I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, is that moose are important to the people of this Province. It is important to me and my family, and to people who I know well. We also have to make sure that when my daughter drives home tonight and comes out over the highway – she is a little ways out of town today – that she comes home and she is safe. We need to make sure that the safety of the people of the Province are taken into consideration, but we also want to make sure that our wildlife is sustainable on a go-forward basis.

This Moose Management Plan that we are going to be rolling out in due course will address these issues. I am looking forward to being the



minister who is going to bring that forward. We will have a debate with the people of the Province at that time, and a discussion about exactly how they are going to respond to our plans and what is happening there.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about promoting clean, sustainable environments and healthy ecosystems, meeting the social, cultural, and economic needs of present and future generations, it is a huge responsibility. I am Minister Responsible for the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board, and there is a lot of – yes, it is a mouthful, I know, I need a sip of water probably before I go any further, although I only have a minute left.

There is good work being done in this area. We have a goal of reducing solid waste by 50 per cent by 2020. We are en route to making that happen, but we need participation from everybody in this Province. Managing solid waste is an important piece of what we need to do when it comes to our sustainable environment.

We have to get up to speed in dealing with things like what we do with electronics. That is going to be an issue, certainly, that we will be talking about in this House in the next little while. In other parts of the country and the world they are doing it in a way that we are mirroring and we are going to follow, and we need to do that. Composting is a huge piece that we need to – about 30 per cent of waste that goes to our landfills could be composted.

Mr. Speaker, there is work to be done. There are a lot of things happening in our department. I am happy to stand up here today and discuss that at the tail end of – I am just making sure we get some facts out there for the member opposite, making sure he is aware of the concerns that he has raised on behalf of his constituents, because I understand where they are coming from. I am a fellow who likes the outdoors, and I totally get it.

When there are developments that are happening you have to make sure it is done right. You have to make sure the environment is protected. You have to make sure the people and their quality of life is protected. All of that can be done in a balanced way, Mr. Speaker. The

whole mandate of my department is about balance. It is about protecting the environment, and it is about protecting the quality of life of the people of the Province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to the rest of the debate.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take some time today and discuss Child, Youth and Family Services, having recently been appointed as the critic, and I would like to review some of the highlights and otherwise of Child, Youth and Family Services for approximately the last eleven years. Why I say eleven years, is typically in an organization or in a time, it is useful to pick a seminal event that gets everybody's attention – or it is a watershed event, it changes things.

The event I will go back to was August 18, 2003, which was the murder of Zachary Turner by his mother, Shirley Turner. That was on August 18, 2003, just a few months before this government took office. So virtually everything since that date, as regard to Child, Youth and Family Services, will have fallen at the responsibility of this government.

Zachary's untimely death, and that of his mother, resulted in the Turner Review and Investigation. The report is more than 1,000 pages long. It concludes that Zachary Turner – some say Zachary Bagby, in honour of his father who was also murdered. It was found by the investigation, by the commissioner, Peter Markesteyn, that it was preventable. He was a child in need of protection. This looks like a two-sided legacy. One is people, who are out on bail when they are facing really serious charges, and Shirley Turner was facing charges of murdering Mr. Bagby, Zachary's father at the time, and she was fighting extradition to the United States being a dual citizen of both nations.

The Turner investigation was published in 2006. If we go forward from 2006, one would believe that anybody in the Province who was aware of what was going on, or took an interest in child protection and bail issues, would be well aware of child protection in the Province, how it is handled or mishandled from that date forward. In spite of this, only four years later the Auditor General – the Auditor General at the time was Mr. Noseworthy – commented on the protective intervention program and long-term protection. The Auditor General rarely writes reports that are complimentary. I guess that is the nature of being the Auditor General, any more than the Child Advocate writes reports that are anything less than tragedies.

In response to the Auditor General, the minister at the time, on January 28, 2010, in a press release responded to the Auditor General and said, “With respect to the key issues highlighted by the Auditor General, Minister Burke noted that the ability to monitor and audit program activities will be greatly strengthened under the direct management of a department.” That would be the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services that has just been formed.

She went on to say, “The new Department of Child, Youth and Family Services is mandated to build a revitalized child protection system that operates within a culture of accountability and excellence... We are focused on getting back to the basics of solid case management and service delivery. This is the start of a transformation from the ground up.”

The minister continued on later in that year. Clearly she was active in the department because on November 19, 2010, which will be four years tomorrow, she hosted a play group to mark the celebration of National Child Day. She joined child care providers and children. She read a couple of stories to excited children in the reading corner.

She said, “This celebration is all about you... When you are a little older, you will understand how lucky you are to have the right to enjoy your childhood freely and to be treated with dignity and respect.” She went on to say, “Our government understands that children are our greatest natural resource and we are committed to ensuring children, youth and

families are supported and have access to quality programs...” et cetera. This was November, 2010.

In August, 2011, the office of the Child and Youth Advocate came out with Joey’s Story. Joey’s Story was truly a tragedy. Recommendation 9 was, “Protocol must be developed with CYFS and OCYA to ensure immediate reporting to the OCYA of any critical incidents or sentinel events occurring with children and youth throughout the Province.” That was August, 2011.

In November, 2011, by now we had another Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services. This minister joined children from the age of eight months to four years in a number of fun and educational activities such as reading storybooks. She said, “Our government is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of children and youth in this province”. That was fine, that being November 18, 2011.

The following year, in July, 2012, the Child and Youth Advocate released a report called, Turning a Blind Eye. This is another horrific story about neglect and abuse of children in our Province. She said, “Protocol must be developed with CYFS and OCYA to ensure immediate reporting to the OCYA of any critical incidents or sentinel events occurring with children and youth throughout the Province.” Mr. Speaker, that is word for word what she had said eleven months earlier.

Also, in September she released another report titled, Out of Focus. This is a terrible tragic story about a child who was almost – it was as if this child William was more or less treated like a stray dog until he tragically died in a house fire. He was definitely in need of protection, and definitely fell through the cracks.

In that report the Child and Youth Advocate said, “The Department of CYFS must develop protocol with the OCYA to ensure immediate reporting to the OCYA of any critical incidents or sentinel events occurring with children and youth throughout the Province.” It is word for word but turning a blind eye to what had been said and what Joey’s story had said.

I am not sure if the minister was listening or not. The minister on National Child Day, which is November 20, 2012, said, "Earlier today, I had the pleasure of marking the occasion by reading a story to a group of children with Family and Child Care Connections in Conception Bay South." "Our government believes that children and youth are our most valuable resource in Newfoundland and Labrador, and continues to make great strides in ensuring their safety and well-being". The minister went on to say in this press release, "Our government's dedication to helping children thrive and grow is unwavering and we look forward to our continued work in serving the best interests of children and youth throughout Newfoundland and Labrador".

Not to be outdone by the previous two ministers, our current Premier, when he was minister last year in November, announced National Child Day. He said thank you, Mr. Speaker, "During story time and the play group, Mr. Speaker, I was able to interact with the young children and their parents" et cetera. He said, "The Provincial Government recognizes that children and youth are truly our most valuable resource".

He said last year as minister, "Our government's commitment to ensuring the health and well-being of all children and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador remains at the forefront and I ask all members of this Honourable House to join in marking National Child Day". Mr. Speaker, National Child Day comes up on Thursday this week. I am quite certain that we will get another report from the minister which says how important it is to celebrate National Child Day.

Mr. Speaker, we come to June 18 of this year, the Child and Youth Advocate issued a media statement and she communicated directly with the government. She said, "I am saddened and growing ever more concerned that there has been a steady increase in cases that have come to light, where children are found to have been living in circumstances where they have been subjected to physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse while government services are involved with their families. Despite assurances of change, both systemically and in practice on the frontlines, children and youth continue to be victimized".

She said, "The systems currently in place in this province to protect children and youth continue to have significant gaps which place children at risk and most regrettably, in three of six cases under investigation, the children have died. If significant changes are not made, we run the risk of witnessing another generation of our children who will group up with mental health issues and addictions and who will be subject to the continuing cycle of abuse". That was in June, Mr. Speaker.

She said, "It is imperative that I receive accurate and timely information in the event of a critical incident or death of a child or youth. It has become apparent that the current mechanisms to inform my office of a critical incident or death of a child or youth are simply not adequate." She says, "This immediate notification mechanism – similar to that which already exists in other provinces in Canada – will allow my office to mobilize quickly to investigate, produce recommendations and to ultimately prevent further harm." Mr. Speaker, that was on June 18.

On August 19, two months later, CBC ran a story saying twenty-six children died while under the Province's protection since 2009. Mr. Speaker, it almost seems as if the only thing meaningful that the ministers have chosen to do over the last several years is acknowledge National Child Day on one day in November. They go read a book to some children who seem to be already happy, content, and probably doing well, while other children at the very same time have been dying. Their deaths have not even been reported to the Child Advocate.

The nature of these deaths as reported was of the twenty-six who died, eighteen were receiving some form of protective intervention. If they are receiving protective intervention, why did they die? We know that children can die of many causes as can anybody. She said, "...three were involved with youth services, and the remaining two were with youth corrections." Two died in youth corrections, not reported to the Child Advocate. "Eight of the deaths were cited as being caused by a medical event or condition, 12 were accidental, and the remaining six were labeled as suicides." How is it, Mr. Speaker, that we can have all of these deaths in this

Province not brought to the attention of the Child and Youth Advocate?

She went on to say in this CBC story that, “the province isn’t required to notify her about the death or critical incident involving a child or youth under the department’s care, a rule she wants changed so she’s aware of the incidents rather than finding out through the media.” She said, “I think all the deaths should be reported to me, and/or any critical incidents of children and youth receiving government services, because then I can determine if there’s something I need to look into further”.

Mr. Speaker, if this was on in late August, well September 24 government had to acknowledge and the minister had to acknowledge that on a further search they discovered seven more. Seven more children had died in that period of time and two more had died during that reporting period, for a total of approximately thirty-five children who have died while government has had the department of Child, Youth and Family Services.

Why I bring this to the attention of this House today is that surely it should not be necessary for a private member’s resolution to have to be presented tomorrow, as it is due to be presented, to urge the House of Assembly to urge government to introduce mandatory reporting of child deaths and also other critical incidents. Surely, Mr. Speaker, this government, having seen the outcomes of Child, Youth and Family Services, with a department responsible for all of it, should not need this kind of additional urging.

I agree with some aspects of what the various ministers have said, and we have had in the order of five ministers in the last sixty-six or sixty-seven months. If we really believe that children are our most important resource, if one of them dies, shouldn’t we report that to the person who is charged with being their advocate? Shouldn’t we report to the Child Advocate and say, such and such a surgical procedure happened and this child died, there was a motor vehicle accident and this child died?

If these children are in care, are they in care because – clearly they are in care because they

need to be in care. The staff at Child, Youth and Family Services is not going to apprehend children who do not need care. They are not going to put in place protective orders for children who are not the most vulnerable, who are not the ones who are susceptible to the most danger. Why is it necessary to have to press government to simply agree to mandatory reporting as you would have in many legal cases?

For example, if notification is required of a parent or a spouse – we have done this type of legislation for mandatory notification. This is simply to notify the Province’s Child and Youth Advocate that a child has died. Maybe there has been a really serious event in the child’s life. This could be a major assault. It could be a major sexual assault. It could be an abduction by a parent clearly showing that a child is in need of protection, or at least in need of the advocate looking into the situation to make a determination.

The advocate is the only person after the parents, who speak for a child. The children maybe who are most at risk are children who not necessarily have no parents available, maybe they have parents who are subject to substance abuse, mental health issues, criminality, the whole range of issues that make parents, maybe, less suitable then would be best for the child.

Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely critical that this legislation be introduced. It is not new legislation as defined by other jurisdictions in Canada. It is not new legislation that would need to be drafted.

We saw yesterday how fast government was to whip up a bill when they made a mistake on the by-elections. They could whip up a bill in a matter of a few weeks having made a mistake on the by-elections, run it through the House with everybody’s consent, and have it here for an afternoon.

We could have a very simple bill that could be produced by the government members, by the overall bureaucracy of Child, Youth and Family Services. Engage Justice for issues that would involve maybe children who are in the criminal justice system, engage the Department of Health for children who are maybe suffering health

issues, and all of the children who are in this Province who are at risk, who are vulnerable, who may need oversight from the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, clearly, when they have a serious adverse event in their life or death, the Advocate should be notified.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I recognize the hon. the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, at the pleasure of the House I would like to say a very, very happy eighty-seventh birthday to my dear sweet nan Maud Russell back up in Goose Bay.

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

**MR. RUSSELL:** I am sorry I could not be there for supper, nan. I will see you when I get home. I miss you.

With that, Mr. Speaker, while I am in a congratulatory mood I would like to say to the Speaker as well congratulations on your appointment. Also, a quick congratulations to Ms Mckenzie Hutchings from North West River who was just crowned the Miss Teen Achievement of Newfoundland and Labrador too.

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

**MR. RUSSELL:** To Mckenzie out there, you have made us all very proud in the Big Land.

Mr. Speaker, as I always do when I get on my feet in the House – and it is so good to be back here – I would just like to say thank you to the great people of Lake Melville for their continued support throughout all of our communities. We always spend time together. It is always good to get together and just talk about the issues in the district. I thank them for their continued support.

On a more sombre note I would like to extend condolences to the Penashue family of Sheshatshiu for the loss of Anthony and Germaine in a tragic car accident. They were loved, respected, and they will certainly be missed. To the Penashue family and all of the Innu Nation, we send our heartfelt condolences.

Back to business, Mr. Speaker, I would like to go back in time a little bit in the district and I want to talk about long-term care right now. I would like to thank the current and past Ministers of Health and the Premier for doing what we do on this side of the House, which is listening to the people and recognizing the needs and delivering.

It was my pleasure and absolute honour to stand with the Minister of Health and our mayor to turn the sod and see \$10 million worth of investment money going into Happy Valley-Goose Bay for long-term care for an expansion to our facility for twenty more beds. What an investment for our seniors, Mr. Speaker. It was well received. Even when you drive by right now, you are seeing that construction underway and it makes me proud to be part of a government that is going to be attentive to the needs of the people.

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

**MR. RUSSELL:** Mr. Speaker, as I transition from an MHA into the role of Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, I would like to take just a second here to thank the incredible staff. From Lab West into Happy Valley-Goose Bay to here in St. John's, the staff of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs are simply spectacular. Whether we are talking about the Air Foodlift Subsidies, trail grooming, supporting Combined Councils of Labrador, whether we are talking about implementation of Land Claims negotiation, dealing with Aboriginal groups, and administration of the Northern Strategic Plan – which, by the way, since 2004 this government, this Administration has put over \$4.9 billion into Labrador.

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

**MR. RUSSELL:** That is a combination of the strategic plan, Mr. Speaker, and other investments in Labrador. I want to thank the

staff because they have done a top-notch job, and I am certainly proud to be a part of that organization. Again, it comes back to what we do as a department and what we do as a government. We listen and we deliver. It is as simple as that, and I am glad to have such professionals with me along that road.

Mr. Speaker, in early October I had the privilege of being accompanied by the President of NunatuKavut, Mr. Todd Russell, on a South Coast tour, if you will. By the way, they said we would never see Central Labrador and Southern Labrador connected by road, but we went down the road and the road is in great shape. There is always work being done on that road.

We went down to St. Lewis, Williams Harbour, Port Hope Simpson, and Cartwright. We met with mayors, we met with councillors, we met with councillors in NunatuKavut, and we talked about opportunities, issues and needs in these communities. The hospitality was simply fabulous. They are beautiful people, wonderful food down there; they took care of us. We had very, very productive meetings, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the President of NunatuKavut for doing such a fabulous job of being that tour guide, if you will. I was left speechless at the beauty of the land and the beauty of the people as well, Mr. Speaker.

In late October, I had the pleasure of representing the government and the department at the National Aboriginal Women's Summit in Membertou, up in North Sydney, in Nova Scotia. It was simply wonderful. There was representation from all across the country. We had all of the Aboriginal groups in Newfoundland and Labrador there.

I just wanted to give a special mention to the breakout sessions that we took part in. Again, what do we do on this side of the House? We listen, we take notes, we liaise, and we interact with the people to find out where people's views are on the issues.

What we have had was a fabulous group. The breakout sessions, we all got together in small groups. We got to list the issues, talk about ideas, and generate some good thought patterns about where we want to go in terms of dealing with the issues that Aboriginal women face. It

was my pleasure to attend the Inuit portion, if you will, of that with a lot of representation for Labrador too. It was a wonderful, wonderful opportunity to get out and meet people of different cultures, share and exchange ideas, see some wonderful entertainment, have some wonderful meals together, and get to know each other. I am certainly glad to have had my staff accompany me on that, and I think it was a very productive session.

Then, Mr. Speaker, in late October, and going into early November, we hosted in Happy Valley-Goose Bay the Provincial Aboriginal Women's Conference. We had reps, of course, from all over Newfoundland and Labrador. It was a wonderful, wonderful time to sit, again, and listen, exchange ideas and talk about the issues that people are facing.

One specific highlight of that, Mr. Speaker, was when I watched several cultures come together. On the Inuit side we had the qulliq, which is the traditional seal oil lamp. That was lit during a ceremony of welcome to everybody to make sure that we can reflect on the past values of the Inuit and reflect on lessons learned from our elders, Mr. Speaker. That was done with a smudging ceremony of the Mi'kmaq that were in representation of their parts of the Province, the Island portion, Mr. Speaker. In that one we had a medicine bundle where we were all blessed and we gave tribute to our ancestors. To see the two ceremonies not collide, but gel together in respect was a beautiful thing.

We also got to sit in and hold the talking stick in the sharing circle, which was a new experience for me, and to have myself and my ADM as the only two men in the entire conference was wonderful – a little bit outnumbered, but what we did was take the time to liaise, listen, and be respectful to different cultures and to the women in our Province, to make sure that we left with a very clear message about what they expect of government and how we can come together and move forward to address some of those issues, Mr. Speaker.

I see the time ticking away. I would just like to move on now and talk a little bit about the district. I just recently came back from Churchill Falls, and I had a wonderful time – again, at my third consecutive firemen's ball.

They put off a good party, very respectful to our firemen.

When it comes to Fire and Emergency Services, Mr. Speaker, these are some of the bravest people in the Province. To sit there and listen to the speeches and then get up myself and present a thirty-year service award to the chief, Larry Edwards, and then a twenty-five year service award to Gord Burry, was simply wonderful, and then to listen to some of the activities that happened. There was a near-miss situation in Churchill Falls, but the quick reaction and the professionalism of the team averted any real damage.

Just recently, some of the people from Churchill Falls were called to come out to the Island portion of the Province and use their expertise in dealing with electrical fires. I am not exactly sure, but I think it was a transformer. It was one of those speciality fires, if you will, that takes a certain skill set to address. I would like to commend the Churchill Falls Fire Department for being absolutely 100 per cent successful in coming out here and lending a hand. That is what we do in Newfoundland and Labrador, is lend a hand wherever we are needed.

I may as well mention while I have a few minutes here. I drove over the road – I would like to thank past and current Ministers of Transportation and Works, in terms of seeing us – they said as I was growing up, the Trans-Labrador Highway would never be paved. I said it in this House many times, hunting and trapping and fishing with my father, that was a cow path at best. Now, it is immaculate pavement, immaculate.

Yes, we made the call, Mr. Speaker, of saying, did we come up eleven kilometres short? Sure we did, but in order to provide the safest and the best product for the people, which is what they deserve in Newfoundland and Labrador, we cannot control the weather, Mr. Speaker, and we had to make that call. I commend the minister for making that call. All this means, though, is when you are on the way to Churchill Falls from Goose Bay, or vice versa, going at the speed limit, you have ten minutes of a gravel section, which is actually immaculate because it was ready to go, Mr. Speaker.

Now we are going to focus our efforts, we are going to go down south, I say to the hon. member across the way as well. I tell you what, people really appreciate this, to be able to go to hockey tournaments, take your kids out, do some shopping, visit other communities, attend events, and be safe and have a nice wide road with beautiful blacktop on it. I am proud to be part of a government that listens to the needs of the people and delivers on our promises.

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

**MR. RUSSELL:** Mr. Speaker, I will tell you what leadership is. It is about sometimes making a hard call like that. It is about making a hard call. Do you know what? You are not going to be popular all the time, but you are going to do the right thing because you have to have the responsibility as a government to do right by the people. If that means making a tough call and maybe not getting all positive reviews on that call, then so be it. We will do it time and time again to do the right thing because that is what we do on this side of the House.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I have a few minutes left. Again, I am back to the same theme of listening to the people, addressing those needs, and having a calculated approach in order to do what we need to do. I am going to talk again about Lake Melville.

Mr. Speaker, we have a beautiful, wonderful society here in Newfoundland and Labrador where we take care of our own; and, of course, we are always going to have issues. With prosperity and success and an economy like we have today, which is second to none, you are going to have some issues, but I want to talk specifically about housing and homelessness.

When we have a megaproject like Muskrat Falls, of course, people come for opportunity, Mr. Speaker. I will talk a little bit more about Muskrat Falls a little bit later, but when people come to our communities – to Lake Melville specifically, because that is where Muskrat is, of course – you are going to have some challenges.

When it comes to housing and homelessness, just recently we have opened a new unit in order to deal with some of the things that had happened with the Newman's boarding house

closing down. Now we have space for another twelve individuals, where they can get the care they need and the supervision they need in a safe environment. I am proud to say, and I thank the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills and the minister for housing for making all this stuff happen.

We understand that you are always going to have challenges, but we face them head on. We have worked with the coalition for homelessness down there, and worked with the Salvation Army. Since I am talking about the Salvation Army, they have worked with us because we are also working towards a homelessness shelter to deal with – not just housing units where we can put individuals with complex needs, but for those people who are finding themselves in a bad place in life.

Right now in the interim, before we get to have our out of the cold solution, we have a block of six rooms available now, Mr. Speaker, so that when people are unfortunately experiencing some really hard times, we have the capacity. We have listened. We have delivered yet again.

What we are doing is working with local groups. We are working with all the stakeholders involved. When you have a lot of Aboriginal content in your communities like I am blessed to have, sometimes people come down from the north, they come from the south. Sometimes people hook into those opportunities and then they get into a really, really good place. Sometimes it does not work out, but we are a government that is going to be ready and waiting to serve those people and take care of the most vulnerable in our society. That is what it is all about, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. RUSSELL:** I cannot thank the ministers enough. I cannot thank everybody who cares enough to give of their time. A lot of volunteers are involved in this as well, Mr. Speaker, where they are coming out and they are just giving freely of their time because they care in their hearts about people. I get calls every now and then about people reaching out.

Just the other day my wife, God love her, said she had seen a couple of people she thought

were in need. It is what we do in Newfoundland and Labrador. Whether it was her at that time just buying them a hot meal, doing whatever it takes, we come together, Mr. Speaker. I am very proud to be part of this society.

I am going to talk a little bit, Mr. Speaker, now about Muskrat Falls jobs. We have taken some criticism. This is the biggest project in our history, and it is right in my back door. There are always going to be challenges. Earlier I talked a little bit about the prosperity and the strength of our economy, all things that we have delivered on and we have created on this side of the House. We are very proud of that.

You are also going to have those challenges, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to Muskrat Falls, we stood up in this House and we argued time and time again in the past. What we have said is that we are going to create jobs. We are going to put money into the local economy. We are going to support partnerships. We are going to support Aboriginal groups. We are going to support training programs, and at the same time make sure that we have – in the future now as soon as we get ready to flick that switch – reliable power. We are going to make sure we can keep the ceiling on the cost of that power as best we can over time, and Muskrat Falls hydroelectric generation was the answer. It is the answer, Mr. Speaker, and we are right there in the middle of that.

I just want to talk about a couple of stats. We talked about creating employment, Mr. Speaker. We have over 3,400 people – as of September numbers, of course – working in the project. We have 85 per cent, so a little over 2,900 people are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. That is a fabulous stat. You have thousands and thousands of people being employed, and we can say we are at 85 per cent. That is a wonderful number. Of that number, Mr. Speaker, we have over 2,800 people working directly in Labrador, and of that number, hopefully I am not layering it too thickly here, what we have is 1,053 people who are residents of Labrador. I am proud to say that.

We are talking thousands and thousands of jobs, Mr. Speaker –

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



**MR. RUSSELL:** That is worth celebrating.

You are always going to have those challenges to get everybody employed, but to look at a project – the biggest in our history – of that magnitude and be able to say as a Labradorian, as a proud son of Labrador, that one in three people are from Labrador working on that project, it makes me very proud to be part of this government.

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

**MR. RUSSELL:** A government, Mr. Speaker, that has vision for the economy. We have done well creating prosperity and we want to keep this going.

Of that, as a son of Labrador who happens to have an Aboriginal background, I am very proud of my heritage too, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that 16 per cent of that total number, over 400-odd people are members of an Aboriginal group from our Province.

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

**MR. RUSSELL:** Wonderful stats!

Up on the Web site of Nalcor today you can get those stats. You can actually get a breakdown of what Aboriginal groups they belong to. I really would like to see everybody check out those stats, to let everybody know we are really doing a good job and we are serious about what we do, Mr. Speaker.

We have 532 women working on the project, Mr. Speaker. We have seen it from the Women's Policy Office, commend the minister. We have seen women in trades. There is a surge, Mr. Speaker, where we have competent women coming into skilled trades, operating cranes, working on power lines. I am so proud to be part of a government that is going to foster an environment for women so that they can go into non-traditional positions, succeed and be right up there, Mr. Speaker, with the best of them in their field.

We talk about the numbers and all of that, too, but I talked earlier about partnerships, Mr. Speaker, how we encourage Aboriginal people to get out there, get partnerships, get people

working. We had \$44 million in September that went to Aboriginal companies. Newfoundland and Labrador businesses, and of course, Aboriginal businesses included in that figure. That is something to be very, very proud of, Mr. Speaker. So we are fostering an environment where people can become entrepreneurs, they can set themselves up with larger outfits, and then carve out a piece of our prosperity directly for themselves and their families.

One more thing I would like to say, we talked about training. When we got up here and we looked for sanction and we looked to get the go-ahead for Muskrat Falls, we talked about training. Here is one thing I want to go back to – and I will thank the Minister for Advanced Education and Skills again for this, I will thank Nalcor for this, and I will thank our government for this. We have up in Labrador the Labrador Aboriginal Training Partnership.

This, Mr. Speaker, takes groups from NunatuKavut, from Innu Nation, beneficiaries of Nunatsiavut, and we bring them in, we get them trained, certified, and ready to go for this project. To date, over 200 Aboriginal people have been through the Labrador Aboriginal Training Partnership and have found employment at Muskrat Falls. That is a wonderful, wonderful step, Mr. Speaker.

If you look at this project as a whole, this is the right move for us. I hope to see further development in Labrador. Not only are we going to take care of people on the Island portion of the Province by providing reliable power as well, but we are going to put ourselves into a situation to see Labrador blossom and bloom over time. We are going to get to a point where hopefully mines are going to come up. There are always the economies, and we see the peaks and the valleys in terms of the markets. Those are always going to be factors, Mr. Speaker. We will be ready to adjust.

We have seen, as was mentioned in this House too, with some of the troubles that are happening in Lab West, we have seen our departments, our government, come together with municipal governments and aid people in those times of need too. Going back to the power, we are going to see as markets recover and everything changes, Muskrat Falls is going to allow us to

continue to develop. We are going to see new mines spring up.

With those mines, comes opportunity for all parts of Labrador, Mr. Speaker. With mines and opportunities like that comes infrastructure, comes roads, comes power lines, and comes more amenities in the communities. We have programs that deal with rural and isolated communities up in Labrador; but what we are doing is by driving our economy, by making sure that prosperity is kept in our sights, we are going to see more of those things on a daily basis for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

At the same time, we are going to connect all the various communities. We are going to make sure that, one, we not only worry about the economic side and the economic prosperity for our residents of the Province, but what we are going to do is by default serve the most vulnerable in our society and look at the social aspects as well as we go, and improve life for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, no matter where they live.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

I am nursing a bit of a cold, but I am going to try to get through the next twenty minutes. I am happy to stand in my place again. It is my third sitting in the House and I have to say the only thing constant so far has been change. You are dealing with three or four ministers in every department. I am gone into my third sitting under a third Premier. There are a lot of changes happening.

Like my colleague across the way, before I start I have to mention that I, too, was at the Miss Achievement Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Scholarship Program on Sunday night. It is a wonderful program. It is not a beauty pageant. I think sometimes people get that

mixed up. It is very bright, young women who are going to go out and make significant contributions to our society, I believe, in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I am a little biased, Mr. Speaker, as a Labrador girl. We had twenty-three participants there. They all did wonderful. I want to highlight that three of the participants were from Labrador: Miss Achievement – I know is residing now in Lake Melville. She comes from good stock. Her grandparents Elsie and Cyril Chubbs are in my district in St. Lewis. She is now the reigning Miss Achievement.

The first runner up, Mr. Speaker, is Lindsee Clark, her family is from Charlottetown. Regan Burden of Port Hope Simpson walked away with the environmental award. We had three from Labrador and it was a fine showing.

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

**MS DEMPSTER:** Mr. Speaker, we have lots of challenges in Labrador. I have always been a firm believer – and the Member for Burin – Placentia West heard me say many times when he was the Minister of Education. I said that is the most important job in our Province. No matter where kids live, we have to give them a fair chance and a fighting chance. That means making sure that they are able to learn in an environment that is clean, and that they have the textbooks and the things they need.

I just listened to the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs talk. He talked about the most vulnerable in society and helping those people and social programs. He was looking through a lens somewhat different than I am looking through, Mr. Speaker.

I want to take some time today to talk about the latest application to the PUB by Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro. They are asking for an increase of 11 per cent to residential customers in isolated Labrador, in my district, and a staggering 20 per cent to small businesses.

I have to say when the Member for The Isles of Notre Dame, when our speaker today asked do you support that Hydro is wanting to increase the rate of return on equity from 4.47 per cent to 8.8 per cent, without any hesitation, he never

missed a beat, he said yes, we do. I want to talk about what some of the implications of that increase is going to have to the people in Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

It was funny, it was ironic really, right after that when my colleague got up and asked a question about pilotage in Placentia Bay – which yes, we are all very concerned about; it is an environmental issue if they come in another thirteen nautical miles – the minister across the way immediately got up and said no, we do not support it either. We are concerned about the environment, but lives here and hardship is going to be placed at stake on those people, but nobody really cares. Let's continue to make a profit on the backs of people like seniors on fixed income, people who are seasonal workers, our most vulnerable.

Let's talk about that for a few minutes. Mr. Speaker, I have heard from four businesses in my district that said if they have to incur a 20 per cent increase, they will close doors. Small motels that right now are paying \$5,000 or \$6,000 a month to heat their establishment and keep the lights on – \$5,000 or \$6,000 and 20 per cent on top of that; they cannot afford it, Mr. Speaker.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the non-profit group. Non-profit groups pay commercial rates. We have homes like in Mary's Harbour, the Battle Harbour Assisted Living; they have come to me a number of times and said we are struggling because our hydro rates are so high. We have 50 Plus Clubs trying to maintain the overhead costs of little buildings.

What are we trying to do, Mr. Speaker? We are going to wipe out all of these small communities. More than half of our Province is rural. It really, really disappoints me when the minister can say yes, we support – if they want to double their rate of return from 4.47 per cent to 8.8 per cent, yes we will support that.

So I already know where the minister stands on that. What I want to ask to the Minister for Labrador is will he commit to supporting the residents of coastal Labrador in their efforts to have those proposed rate increases denied? Will the Minister for Labrador stand beside the people?

He just talked about being out in my district. He visited some beautiful communities of St. Lewis and Port Hope Simpson and Williams Harbour. Now I want to ask him to put his money where his mouth is. As the Minister for Labrador, will he commit to supporting the residents of coastal Labrador in their efforts to have those proposed rate increases denied? Will he fight with us?

I just went through the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair and I held seniors' forums. We already know that we are an aging population in our Province. My district is no different. We have 500,000 people in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador; 93,000 are seniors. In 2025 we know there are going to be staggering stats; one in every four people are going to be seniors, Mr. Speaker.

I went out into the communities and I asked the seniors to tell me what your issues are. There are lots of issues. It is sad. People who have worked hard all their lives to blaze the trail, to make life better for us, many of those people are not picking up the phone, they are not getting on Open Line, they are not advocating for themselves. That is why we have to do that. We have a responsibility to be a voice for those people, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things I heard was that we struggle to pay our light bill, so we keep the heat down. I am thinking of a lady in Port Hope Simpson, a widowed woman whose adult disabled son lives with her. He could not go out and get wood, which is like a normal tradition in many of our small communities, Mr. Speaker, so they moved into a house where they have all electric heat. The lady is full of arthritis and she keeps her house cold.

I just think now if she is going to have another 11 per cent, right now her bill is \$300 a month, so now we are saying you are going to pay another \$35 a month if that goes ahead, Mr. Speaker. How can we sleep at night? Thirty-five dollars a month may not be very much to the people who are sitting here in the House of Assembly. Thirty-five dollars a month is a lot of money to someone living on a fixed income, when they have to decide am I going to go to the clinic and buy those pills that I need which were prescribed for me, or am I going to put it on my light bill?

I am not making this up, Mr. Speaker. I am putting a human face to the situation. I am talking about Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, but I listen to the Open Line show sometimes and I know that this is the case for many small communities around. Every day press releases come out. There are millions of dollars for this and there are millions of dollars for that. Sometimes we cannot dig down and find a few thousand dollars to make things easier for those people. I have serious concerns.

I am talking about a proposed rate increase of 11 per cent for residents and 20 per cent for commercial, which the non-profit groups will also bear the brunt of, in an area that has been denied access to Muskrat Falls power. Yes, Mr. Speaker, those big fifty-foot towers are going to come down across our land. We see the destruction on the other side.

The member across the way talked about the jobs for Labradorians and how many are there. Good for him, he has some good numbers. I have a fair number in there from my district too, but mind you it did not come without a hard fight. It came with taking my resumes under my arm and going to meet with Gilbert Bennett and saying why are those people not on site when they are qualified?

Mr. Speaker, do you know something? We cannot go by those stats. When I asked Nalcor myself, when somebody puts a Labrador address on their resume, do you check it, because people were calling me saying this person is in there and that person is in there and they are not from Labrador, but that is what they put on their resume, nobody checked it. The stats and the figures are nice and fluffy, but they are not reality. What I am talking about here today is reality. Those people who are going to be hit with the hydro increases are the people who were denied access to Muskrat Falls power.

I know they are going down through with a DC line, Mr. Speaker, and I know that means a more reliable power source. There is nothing coming back in a subsidy for those people. Do you know what is happening? Not only are we going to incur 11 per cent and a 20 per cent increase, but we are going to remain on a dirty diesel generator source of power. It is not reliable. That is what we are dealing with in Cartwright –

L'Anse au Clair. All we seem to get are more increases and idle promises when it comes to alternate power sources.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister for Labrador and to stand with me and commit to fight this.

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

**MS DEMPSTER:** In the winter, Mr. Speaker, I will be making a submission to the PUB. I will be asking them to deny Hydro this rate application because it is just wrong. Those people cannot afford it.

Mr. Speaker, mom and pop businesses are what keep our communities going. Right now the economy is doing okay in places like Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair because we do have the Muskrat Falls Project. That is going to be over in the blink of an eye. When Muskrat Falls is over all we have left in our little communities are those small businesses that employ four and five people. Why are we trying to sell them out? We are not doing anything to support them.

Last night we were at a fundraiser at the Sheraton, a very successful fundraiser, where we listened to our leader take questions. There was a gentleman there from Gander who got up. He said, as a business person – and I know the man, he has been in business a long time. He talked about the struggles with red tape.

Instead of slamming people with increased electricity rates, why are we not helping them in other areas? We have at least 17,000 I think it is, small businesses in our Province. We are trying to address the unemployment rate and things like that, if we help these businesses, if we support them, if we help each business to hire one more person, Mr. Speaker.

I am going to ask the minister for Labrador, will you sit idly by and allow Hydro to double its rates and profits on the backs of seniors and businesses in Coastal Labrador, those beautiful communities that you just visited? Or will you stand with me and will you fight for those rates, Mr. Speaker? That is what I say to the minister for Labrador.

Yes, we have tough issues. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this dividing – do you know what is happening? There were areas of Labrador that were supposed to have big, big proposed increases in the initial application in 2013. When they refiled, in areas like the minister for Labrador's, they are not getting their 26 per cent increase now. Do you know why? There is a larger population in Lake Melville, and they knew that Muskrat Falls would be shut down. Let's do it on the backs of those handfuls of those older people, those Aunt Nelly's and Uncle John's out in the small communities.

Mr. Speaker, it is not right. It is an injustice. I cannot sit there and be quiet at this time. When I hear the president of Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro say that the proposed increase is being structured to be fair to all residents of the Province, the increases are structured to slam those who can do the least about it. There is something wrong when we will sit in society and let those things happen and not do anything about it.

If the PUB is going to allow Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and Nalcor to gouge the population on the coast, Mr. Speaker, I am asking the government right now to step in with subsidies and tax breaks to offset that cost. Raise the northern living allowance for the affected areas. Give a tax rebate on the power bill. As I said, this is going to destroy small businesses and it is dragging down the social structure.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we have seen over the last couple of years is the closure of many services in our small communities. We heard people get up last night at the Sheraton and talk about what the loss of zonal boards meant to their community. I opened my eyes and I listened because these were people from the Island. I know what the loss of jobs like the kind of work the zonal boards did to my communities in coastal Labrador. It has also impacted places across the Island as well. When 226 employment counsellors lost their jobs overnight, Mr. Speaker, that was huge, that was history. Not in a positive way, history making in a negative way. Small communities are still bearing the cost of that.

Mr. Speaker, not only are we looking at an 11 per cent increase right now proposed and 20 per cent to commercial, but I fear the cost of Muskrat Falls. Every time I go back into my district someone mentions it to me. We are going to be paying for it right up until maybe my great-grandchildren. It started out to be a \$4 million to \$6 million project, and now we are looking at \$14 billion. Newfoundland and Labrador people will pay for that \$14 billion. We do not yet know the cost of the North Spur. It is very, very concerning.

One of the things I did not mention, Mr. Speaker, is when we think about these small businesses that will incur a cost of 20 per cent, we also have to consider the fact that these small businesses already have a very small expense-profit margin because they have a high cost to getting goods and services into the area. They pay a lot in transportation. We talk all the time about the transportation woes, the ferry not running on schedule. I cannot wait for us get our new one, actually. I hope things improve.

I have been up many times calling on a full feasibility study on a fixed link, Mr. Speaker. I do not know if it is viable, but right now we do not know. We had a pre-feasibility study. We need a full feasibility study that includes a geological assessment and a cost analysis, because until we are able to move goods and services, have an easy ebb and flow of goods and services to and from a region, Mr. Speaker, we are not going to be able to grow.

There are people who think many towns are going to die. Mr. Speaker, what I am talking about is the whole of the Big Land of Labrador, 30,000 people, a big road that runs right through; businesses on that main artery that runs through being hit with these high rates. I will do all I can to help them fight this, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have to mention again, I was up yesterday on my feet petitioning for improved broadband services. The Member for Lake Melville talked about all the jobs. You cannot even apply for a job unless you apply online. We have many, many communities where the Internet is closed to sales. The Internet people do have is very, very slow. They cannot function there to run a business. They cannot function to check e-mails, to see if people want

to book in their hotel. So, lots of issues, Mr. Speaker. I could take the entire afternoon to talk about it.

We have moved to a technological age where increasingly people are expected to do things online, renew their fishing licence online. They are expected to apply for jobs online, renew their vehicle registration online; but, small communities have not moved along and been given the infrastructure to do that, Mr. Speaker. It is causing a lot of havoc and a lot of hardship.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say again, there was a business yesterday that sent me a copy of his hydro bill, \$5,000 to keep the heat and lights on in his place – \$5,000, Mr. Speaker. We are paying the highest energy bills in the Province, paying the highest. How can we sit and say now that it is going to be okay for those businesses to incur a 20 per cent increase?

Mr. Speaker, the businesses that do stay open, I talked about the seniors earlier, the seniors are going to pay for it twice. They are going to pay for the 11 per cent increase on their bill, and when that business incurs the 20 per cent increase, the senior is going to pay for it again through their milk, butter and eggs, because any businesses that do stay in, obviously they are going to have to increase the cost of it to be able to stay in business.

These are some of the stories that I hear every day, Mr. Speaker. If we do not go out and try to make things better for those seniors, they become sicker. They do not take their meds. Then on a different level, through another department, it actually costs this Province more.

We talk a lot about health, Mr. Speaker. We are paying almost forty cents of every dollar of our provincial budget in health care. It is a big issue. When you have people saying I cannot buy my pills because I have to turn up my heat because it is January and it is cold, we are running into bigger problems, Mr. Speaker.

I look forward to making a submission. I was very disappointed in the minister today to stand and say I support; very disappointed. I do not know, it is probably – I know he comes from a beautiful district. I know he was in my district as well in the spring of 2013, I saw him there.

There are some wonderful people, but there are some very sad stories, very sad stories with the high rates. Now we are going to stand idly by and allow them to increase their equity, Mr. Speaker, from 4.47 per cent to 8.8 per cent.

I ask the Member for The Isles of Notre Dame, Mr. Speaker, when he goes home tonight to rethink what he said today, rethink what he said, and think about these older people who have helped pave the way to make life better for us and say, no. Sometimes you have to stand for what is right and you have to fight back. This is an injustice and it is incorrect.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward again to taking my place, and I was happy today to speak on behalf of the residents of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

Thank you.

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

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

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

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

It is a pleasure to stand and make a few comments. Listening to the member opposite – and, Mr. Speaker, a lot of what she said I would agree with her, there is no question about that. I would not agree to her suggestion that we do not care.

Mr. Speaker, some of the comments made about the concerns about seniors, the concerns about increased cost to running their households, these are important issues. Coastal Labrador, whether you are in Port aux Basques, you are Trepassey or Twillingate, or down in Harbour Breton, Mr. Speaker, those are issues, as a government, and I am sure as members opposite, we have to be concerned about household incomes. We have to be concerned about increased cost. There is no question about that, and we are, but there are a few things she had suggested in her speech.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to clarify a few things. First and foremost, for the people of the Province, government did not submit an application to the PUB. Newfoundland and

Labrador Hydro submitted an application, it is not government.

Mr. Speaker, what is important is that government does not make the decision around what is going to be approved by the PUB. The process is led by the PUB. There is opportunity through that process for intervention, and for members to have an opportunity to have some comment, but it is important to understand, it is the Public Utilities Board that will make that decision.

Having said that, I want to talk a little bit about the GRA and understanding – again, we are absolutely empathetic to the needs, whether it is on Coastal Labrador, anywhere in the Province, we have to. I will give you some examples of how we have demonstrated that, Mr. Speaker, but first and foremost, I think it is important that we understand where it is coming from.

There has been no general rate application increase in our rates in eight years. So we understand, the submission of the application from Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro is a general rate application. There have been other increases, but the general rate application has not been submitted in eight years. It was in, it came out. It is back in again with current information. Mr. Speaker, within that we have to recognize in recent years –

**MS DEMPSTER:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, on a point of order.

**MS DEMPSTER:** Mr. Speaker, I say to the member across the way, the government overruled the PUB when it came to Muskrat Falls and they can certainly, if they wanted to, if they had the will, do it now.

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

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

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources.

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

I will get to Muskrat Falls, you hang on.

Mr. Speaker, the rate application over the past eight years, we all recognize the increase in cost of fuel and we absolutely recognize the public expectation and demand around reliability and the investments that are required by Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro to upgrade their aging facilities. We all know that. Added to that, in eight years we all know the cost of labour has increased. If you look at what is being applied for here, it is eight years of increases in investment, in trying to add reliability to the system, increase in operations.

Let me add, Mr. Speaker, so that we are very clear, it is the Public Utilities Board that will evaluate these expenses and make these decisions, not the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. The process is important because it allows everyone to have their say. Whether it is Coastal Labrador or around the Province, it is important that everybody understands there is a process to have input.

The second point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is that the member opposite alludes to the fact that this government does not care and has not done anything. The actual cost of providing electricity and power on coastal Labrador is enormous, something that is a problem in many isolated communities around the country.

What this government has done, along with the ratepayers of the interconnected systems on the Island and Labrador, is that we help subsidize what is happening in coastal Labrador. We are very pleased to do it, whether it is through the Home Heating Rebate, whether it is through the Residential Energy Rebate.

Mr. Speaker, there is a \$400 rate increase deferral subsidy that we provide to help keep rates down. As well, through the Northern Strategic Plan there is \$2 million provided to help keep the rates down. In the rural deficit ratepayers' subsidy, over \$18 million goes towards helping lower the rates for coastal Labrador.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, we need to do that because it is a challenge on coastal Labrador. It is a challenge to get goods to Labrador. It is a challenge for the people of Labrador. They enjoy the lowest rates in all of Canada in Labrador, and the coastal areas are among the lowest rates in the country with respect to isolated communities.

Mr. Speaker, it is there for a purpose. It is still challenging, it is still costly, and we recognize that. As a government we are quite prepared to continue to support coastal Labrador and do all we can. Outside of that, the utility system has to operate in this Province and provide the people of the Province, including coastal Labrador, with what they need. That process, arm's length from us, will go through the Public Utilities Board.

Mr. Speaker, adding to that – I only have a minute – she referenced Muskrat Falls. This government through vision, through planning, and through a tremendous amount of effort decided that we do not want the rates to continue to go to this rate. We do not want the rates to go sky high for the elders of this Province, the seniors of the Province. We need to control the rates. We need to grip the rates. We need to figure out a way to get away from diesel, to get away from fuel.

Do you know what we did, Mr. Speaker? We decided to develop Muskrat Falls. We would have been better served if they stood up and supported us.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, it is okay to stand and talk about rates, but when the time came to stand up for the people of the Province and Labrador included, the development that is going to benefit this Province and protect rates, they sat in their seat and said no to Muskrat Falls. That is what this government did. We have a vision and a plan to control rates, and I am looking forward to it.

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

**MR. DALLEY:** On that note, Mr. Speaker, if I could –

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** On that note, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that we adjourn debate for today.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that debate be now adjourned.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

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

The Deputy House Leader.

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** (Inaudible) adjourn debate.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Minister of Natural Resources –

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

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

Just so we are clear on the procedure. The Minister of Natural Resources adjourned debate, and I look to the Deputy House Leader for adjournment (inaudible).

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that the House now be adjourned.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that this House now adjourn.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.



This House stands adjourned until tomorrow,  
Private Members' Day, at 2:00 p.m.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned  
until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 2:00 p.m.