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*Speaker: Honourable Wade Verge, MHA*

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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 Mount Pearl South; the Member for the District of Bonavista South; the Member for the District of Port de Grave; the Member for the District of Labrador West; the Member for the District of Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi; and the Member for the District of The Straits – White Bay North.

The hon. the Member for the District of Mount Pearl South.

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

It gives me great pleasure to rise in this hon. House to recognize the accomplishments of two individuals who have given their time and talents to the sport of soccer in the City of Mount Pearl.

John Nolan has served as president, treasurer, and director with the Mount Pearl Soccer Association's Board of Directors, as well as serving as Mount Pearl's representative with the Newfoundland and Labrador Soccer Association. He also served in the role of coach, official, and convenor in both house league and all-star programs.

Brian O'Keefe has been involved with the Mount Pearl Soccer Association for the past twenty-six years. He is known within the organization as a jack of all trades, serving in the capacity of vice-president, director of house league, communications, registration, officials, as well as chair of the scholarship and awards committee.

John and Brian's accomplishments have not gone unnoticed as just last month they were both inducted into the Mount Pearl Soccer Hall of Fame.

I would ask all members of this hon. House to join me in thanking these fine gentlemen for their significant contribution to my community

and wish them all the very best in their future endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

Honourable colleagues, I would like to congratulate the members of the Heritage Huskies Cheerleading Squad, who are students at Heritage Collegiate High School, located in Lethbridge, in the District of Bonavista South.

These thirty-two young cheerleaders captured their second grand championship of the Newfoundland and Labrador Cheerleading Association in as many years. Fourteen different teams, tiered into three different levels, competed in the Jack Byrne Arena in Torbay.

After the first two programs they sat in third place, and they knew that they would have to regroup to secure a position in the running. Some of the seniors on the squad rallied the team together and performed their next routine flawless with zero deductions. This perfect performance gave the Heritage Huskies a first place finish in level one. The result is fitting for a sport that is athletic, competitive and risky which requires dedication and hard work.

Cheerleading involves choreographing, memorizing and practicing different stunts. The Heritage cheerleaders also finished first in their division at the Cheer Expo in Halifax and did a routine on stage with the Canadian band, Hedley, at Mile One Stadium.

Mr. Speaker, hon. colleagues, please join me in congratulating the Heritage Huskies on their success that was well earned and deserved.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Port de Grave.

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

I rise today in this hon. House to congratulate Harbour Music Dance and Atlantic Community Theatre on their production of Annie, the musical, held this past weekend at the NaGeira Theatre.

This production featured young performers from throughout the region who have worked tirelessly for months practicing, rehearsing and fundraising so they could display their talents on stage to capacity crowds throughout the weekend.

Annie was played by Maya Petten, a Grade 7 student of Amalgamated Academy, and Erin O'Brien, a Grade 5 student of All Hallows, North River. These young actors were truly amazing in bringing the red head New York City orphan to life during the Great Depression. Daddy Warbucks was played by Calvin Powell who brought his booming baritone voice to the show.

As we know, these productions would not be possible without the support of volunteers and local sponsors who ensure the production makes its way to the stage so our performers can display their talents and entertain us all in a very special way.

I ask all hon. members to rise with me and salute the young talent in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. MCGRATH:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate the municipalities in Labrador West in collaboration with the Royal Canadian Legion Branches 47 and 57 for honouring the veterans who served to make our country a better and safer place to live.

The Towns of Labrador City and Wabush, in working with the local Royal Canadian Legions,

have recognized the streets of Vimy, Vanier, Robertson, and Veterans Memorial Drive by engraving the street names with the poppy on the street sign as a tribute to the Allied Forces from the great world wars and subsequent wars in which many Canadians have served.

Vimy recognizes the Battle of Vimy Ridge in 1917. Vanier is named after Major General George Phileas Vanier, a soldier in both world wars and a diplomat who, after the war, was appointed as Governor General in 1959.

Robertson is named after John Irvine Robertson, well known as Scotty, who was a World War II veteran and also a long-time resident of Labrador City. Veterans Memorial Drive in Wabush is the home of Legion Branch 57 in Wabush, recognizing all veterans.

I ask all hon. members to join me in recognizing the efforts of all of our veterans.

Thank you.

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

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

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

It is with pleasure that I salute a long-time resident of Virginia Park in Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi. Olga Richards, known to many as “The Mitt Lady”, is a long-time resident of Newfoundland Court and a wonderful example of the community spirit that defines her neighbourhood.

For over thirty years, Olga has been knitting children's mittens and giving them away. Originally, she gave away about fifty pairs a year every Christmas.

After a few years, she switched to making mittens for Halloween treats. This year, as she has for many previous years, she gave out just over 100 pairs to trick-or-treaters. She is already hard at work knitting for next Halloween – no doubt while she watches us here in this House, as she does most days. I should say that Olga knows children well – she puts candy and treats

into the mittens and ties them closed with a wool string.

Many of the children she once gave mittens to are grown, and bring their own children to her door for their own pairs of wool mittens. The children of Virginia Park have warm hands because of Olga Richards' warm heart.

I ask this House to thank her with me.

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

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate St. Anthony and Area Lions Club for hosting the Sub-Multiple N3 Convention. District Governor Cyril Simmonds welcomed Lions west of Gander to join in celebrating St. Anthony's fifty years of serving the public.

Mr. Speaker, 1.36 million Lions members perform community service in 210 countries and geographic areas around the world to meet local needs and help those abroad. Lions give back to the community organizations and individuals in need. In St. Anthony, many nights the lights are on, hosting a community event, bingo, or serving up a feast.

St. Anthony Lions are dedicated, making four Habitat for Humanity homes available to low- to moderate-income families last fall. Their commitment to organization, willingness to swing a hammer, call contractors, and spend countless hours on site made this initiative possible.

All Lions are outstanding members of their community. Calvin Johnson, James Haley, Eldon Swyer, and Penny Pike were honoured with dedication awards for going above and beyond. As well, Lloyd Luther was honoured for his contribution of handcrafted guitars to assist in fundraising initiatives.

I ask all hon. members to join me in thanking Governor Cyril Simmonds and St. Anthony and Area Lions Club for fifty years of exceptional community service.

Thank you.

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

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

### Statements by Ministers

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Nunatsiavut Day. On this day in 2005, our Province changed forever with the coming into force of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement and the creation of the Nunatsiavut Government.

For more than thirty years, the Inuit of Labrador worked towards the conclusion of a land claims agreement which set out a new regime for land ownership, resource sharing and self-government, including Inuit ownership of 15,800 square kilometres of land now referred to as Labrador Inuit lands.

Mr. Speaker, Northern Labrador is both rugged and majestic. It is a place where the Inuit of Labrador travel and harvest the land and the waters. The name Nunatsiavut means "our beautiful land" in Inuktitut and as a land claim beneficiary and former member of the Nunatsiavut Assembly, I can attest to the beauty of this region and its people.

December 1, 2005 truly marked a turning point in our history as Labrador Inuit began to take control of their own destiny. Over the past nine years, the Nunatsiavut Government has made many strides to improve the lives of Labrador Inuit and our government has continued to work closely with the Nunatsiavut Government on matters of mutual interest. These matters have been discussed through various meetings, including two joint meetings of the provincial Cabinet and the Nunatsiavut Executive Council. In fact, a meeting was just held a few weeks ago between Premier Davis, Nunatsiavut President, Sarah Leo, and me on a number of important issues.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we continue to work together to further develop a positive relationship between our two governments. I believe through continued respectful dialogue, we can see our way through any challenges to find opportunities and solutions together.

I would like to applaud the Nunatsiavut Government on another successful year and I look forward to working closely with the Nunatsiavut Government as we seek to further advance issues of importance to the Inuit of Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members of this House to join with me in recognizing the importance of this anniversary and in offering congratulations and best wishes to the Nunatsiavut Government and all Labrador Inuit on this very special day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. Mr. Speaker, as an Inuk and a land claims beneficiary, along with my colleagues on this side, I would like to congratulate the Nunatsiavut Government on our ninth anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, the Labrador Inuit Association received its first payment of \$4,000 for land claims negotiations in the 1970s. Today, the budget is over \$8 million. I am pleased to hear the minister wants to continue a strong relationship with Nunatsiavut, as there are a number of issues that need to be addressed – issues surrounding justice, housing, transportation, issues which have seen little movement in the last ten years.

The latest proposed increase from Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro for 11.4 per cent increase in hydro rates for residents, 20 per cent for commercial – I say, if this government is truly committed to Nunatsiavut, then I would

expect this government to lobby against the proposed increases.

Happy Nunatsiavut Day to everyone in Nunatsiavut.

Thank you.

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

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

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

December 1, 2005 was an important moment for everyone in this Province, but especially the Inuit people of Labrador who realized their dream of self-government after many years of struggle. I congratulate the Nunatsiavut leadership for the vision they have shown, especially on environmental and resource development issues.

The last nine years have been an exciting time for the newly minted government. I want to take this opportunity, as well, to congratulate them on the recent announcement of their cultural centre, which will be a hub of cultural activity in Nunatsiavut bringing communities and generations together, not just in Labrador but for the whole Province.

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

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

**MR. CRUMMELL:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who in 2013-2014 collectively recycled more than 162 million beverage containers through the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board's Province-wide network of Green Depots and regional collection facilities.

I applaud their efforts to help keep our Province clean and healthy. This is a testament to the passion and commitment of the people of the Province, and dedication and support of the Green Depot network, regional waste management authorities, municipalities, and schools.

Mr. Speaker, youth – and schools in particular – play a critical role in protecting our environment. Last year, through MMSB's school recycling program, participating schools collectively diverted more than 14.4 million beverage containers from our landfills.

Through recycling, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are protecting our environment for future generations by saving energy, water, and valuable natural resources; but there is always more that we can do.

This week, to build awareness about the Used Beverage Container Recycling Program and encourage the people of this Province to recycle even more, MMSB is launching a public education campaign. The campaign celebrates the environmental and community benefits of recycling beverage containers, and also highlights the types of containers accepted in the program.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the busy holiday season, it is important for each of us to continue to do our part to protect the environment. I encourage all hon. members and members of the public to recycle more beverage containers, more often, and help guide our Province towards a greener future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. REID:** I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. The deposit-refund system for beverage containers is a literal buy-in mechanism, placing value on what was considered by many to be garbage. Individual buy-in is crucial to implementing attitude shifts and new ways of doing things.

The system has also helped finance the MMSB, which receives the direct funding from government. Instead they are funded by levies on the sale of recyclables. The MMSB is self-propelling; it is sustainable. It shows us that change is possible one person at a time.

Educating people about the importance of recycling is one major component ensuring –

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

I remind the member his time for speaking has expired.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement today. Mr. Speaker, I also congratulate residents on their participation in the beverage recycling program. Most containers are missed though, simply by a lack of access to recycling facilities.

One example to give to the minister and perhaps something that they can work on: we have an awful lot of recyclable goods like containers, plastic bottles, and that sort of thing that are on the side of the highways simply because a motorist takes it and throws it out the window. Setting up a beverage container recovery program at gas stations might be simple to solve that problem.

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

Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

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

We understand that government will once again provide money to Nalcor in the upcoming Budget. Last year government gave \$552 million to Nalcor; the year before that it was \$531 million. That is over a billion dollars in two years.

I ask the Premier: How much money will government transfer or have to give to Nalcor this year?

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** Mr. Speaker, one of the things that is really important for people to understand and recognize about Nalcor, it is a company that is owned, a corporation that is owned by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Any money that we invest in Nalcor is an equity position, we are making a strategic investment on behalf of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and the future generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, Mr. Speaker.

Nalcor has demonstrated in the past that they have been able to make strategic investments in oil and gas. They have made strategic investments in the development of Muskrat Falls, all with the view, Mr. Speaker, of contributing to this Province's continued prosperity, and we look forward to continuing our relationship with Nalcor as we continue to make strategic investments on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

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

I ask the Minister of Finance, who is in charge of this Province's finances: How much money will you transfer to Nalcor in the next Budget?

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

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

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

Next year, as we have indicated in this House many times, the Muskrat Falls development project itself requires an equity investment of about 25 per cent of the total cost. There is loan been floated, been guaranteed by the federal government, for about 75 per cent of the cost. So the split is a 75 per cent investment through

the loan and the Province has a 25 per cent investment stake.

Just do the math. Based on the current projected cost of that project of \$6.9 billion, our investment over time, over the life of that project, the construction of that project, will be about \$2.3 billion, I say, Mr. Speaker. So between now and the time that we see first power, the total equity investment will be about \$2.3 billion.

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

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

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

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

I ask the Premier, maybe the Premier will answer this because it is a commitment by the people of the Province. We understand the concept of Nalcor. There are two projects. It is just not Muskrat Falls; it is the Hebron project as well. You are now in budget preparation. How much money will these projects require next year?

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

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

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

As I said a moment ago, the total investment in the Muskrat Falls Project over the life of that project will be about \$2.3 billion; simple math, the project is \$6.9 billion, 75 per cent, the loan 25 per cent equity. Just do the math and that is what you will end up with, Mr. Speaker.

Over the course of the next twelve months, in next year's forecast, we would estimate, based on the flow of the money of that project and the pace that it is currently advancing, we would estimate that probably around \$500 million will be the investment in Nalcor as a part of the Muskrat Falls piece for next year.

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

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

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

If the Minister of Finance referred to it as simple math, why don't you just simply answer the question?

How much money will Hebron be required, and Nalcor, next year? How much money next year?

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** It is simple math when I said there is 25 per cent equity going into the Muskrat Falls Project of \$6.9 billion, I say, Mr. Speaker. As I said a moment ago, we will invest next year roughly about \$500 million in the continued investment in equity into the Muskrat Falls Project.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that is an investment that we will get our money back. Nalcor will be a tremendous economic driver of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and as we move forward well beyond next year's Budget, tens and twenty years ahead of us, we will be looking at a significant return on this strategic investment that we are making in Nalcor and its enterprises today, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Last week the Premier announced a hiring freeze on non-critical new hires and a stop to government's discretionary spending.

I ask the Premier: How much money will these actions save?

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

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

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

I am not able to give a firm answer to the Leader of the Opposition on that question. When we introduced this last week in discussion with departments as well, when we talked about critical hirings, critical staffing actions, it is a case-by-case basis that will have to be made by each individual department. Discretionary spending, as well, looks after a number of issues from travel, some purchases for departments, attendance at trade shows, representation of the Province outside of Newfoundland and Labrador, those types of things as well. Again, those decisions are being made on a case-by-case basis, but I can tell you with very careful consideration.

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

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

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

The Premier also announced that he would add a new level of approval to the hiring process where each new critical hire would be reviewed.

I ask the Premier: When is any hire not a critical hire, and who is making this call?

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

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

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

Any time there is a staffing action taken by government – the member opposite is right, they are important for a number of reasons. It is important to the people involved and important to departments, or sections, or branches within departments that provide services and carry out day-to-day functions.

What we are doing is when new staffing actions are requested and new hires are requested within government, an assurance that while we are making these decisions and we are evaluating the impacts of the world oil prices in the coming months and potentially even beyond that, for any staffing actions right now have to be considered



very carefully. Therefore critical staffing actions would be approved only.

There is a Treasury Board process being put in place as well where those decisions will be made on the very ground level. They are all considered very, very seriously, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I ask the Premier: Who is making the call on what the definition of a critical hire would be as opposed to something that is not critical?

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** My apologies, Mr. Speaker, I thought I had explained that.

The departments would have to make a case that the particular hire is a critical one. Treasury Board would review those asks by departments, have discussions on and any consideration of the ask from each individual department.

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

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

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

A chairlift at Marble Mountain was struck by lightning and the cost to replace it is \$5.2 million. Only \$1.2 million came from the insurance company.

I ask the Premier: Why was only \$1.2 million covered by the insurance, and where is the remaining \$4 million coming from?

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

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

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

I am glad the member has raised the question around what we believe is a very strategic asset we have on the West Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** A major piece of our winter tourism, I say, Mr. Speaker. Without that kind of investment, without that kind of infrastructure, and without our government's support to continue to maintain that kind of infrastructure, it would have a huge impact on a district like the member opposite. The West Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador and the entire Province, I say, Mr. Speaker, benefits from that.

A combination of the money that it has gotten from the insurance company, with an investment already being made by the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, together with some funding that has been raised by way of a loan by the Marble Mountain Corporation are all a part of what was put together to finance the replacement of that lift.

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

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

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

Marble Mountain is a tremendous asset on the West Coast.

I ask the Minister of Finance: Where is the money coming from? The \$4 million that is required outside of the \$1.2 million from the insurance company, where is it coming from?

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

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

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

As I have just said a moment ago, this particular project and this particular replacement of this chair, the funding comes from two sources. There is an insurance policy in place that covered some of the cost of that. The rest of it

has been coming from the provincial government. One has been already advanced to them. One of them had already been advanced to them, and members would know, there have been several members of the Opposition who have been a part of a briefing. Bill 31, in fact, deals with a loan guarantee, which is the subject of this particular investment.

The Province is going to be replacing the chair with money from an insurance company. The Province has already advanced money to Marble Mountain out of this fiscal year to cover a portion of the cost. The rest is being covered off by money being borrowed by Marble Mountain, guaranteed by the Province.

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

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

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

The Minister of Finance mentioned, obviously, the breakdown of where the funds are coming from. We understand that \$1.5 million came from human resource savings throughout government.

I ask the Premier: How many, and what positions within government, are affected by this decision?

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** Mr. Speaker, one of the things that happens throughout a particular fiscal year is at the beginning of the year each department will put together a forecast, and we vote on that in the House of Assembly here. The Estimates come to the House where they are debated and there is a motion passed. In recent years, the Opposition has never supported any of those investments, Mr. Speaker, but we have had a government that proceeded to make those strategic investments.

Throughout a course of a year we have a budget-monitoring process. So departments are looking at the forecast they had back in March or April,

how well they have been progressing, and what they anticipate and how they anticipate ending up at the end of the year. Members opposite will also recognize – those who have been here for a few years – in January, February, there is a revised Estimates developed, which is a reflection of what departments are forecasting they will actually spend based on their initial budget.

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

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

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

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

British Columbia are currently having vessels built at \$55 million each. They can accommodate three times the number of passengers and more than twice the number of vehicles as the vessels being purchased for \$51 million here. In other words, they are considerably larger vessels at about the same price.

I ask the minister: Will you confirm that you received a proposal for less than \$36 million – \$16 million less than the proposals that you accepted to have those vessels built for Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

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

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

What I can confirm is we are in a contract with one of the best shipyards in this world, a shipyard that has come with a quality ship, or group of ships, that we are going to use for the people of this Province. Mr. Speaker, the return on our investment is second to none here. What we have gotten is quality, we have asked for quality. It is not about pricing. It is about the quality for the people so we can supply the service that they need, and, Mr. Speaker, we are very confident what we are getting is the best value for our investment in this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, we know that cost is not the only defining selection criteria, but all of a sudden cost is very important to this Province. The first proposal was \$37 million in savings to this Province.

Mr. Speaker, I will ask the minister: Can you confirm that you have also received a proposal –

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

I ask the member not to be using props.

I ask the member to continue with his question.

**MR. OSBORNE:** No problem, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the minister: Will he confirm that he has also received a proposal for less than \$30 million, which is a savings of \$22 million per vessel over the proposal that he accepted?

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

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

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

What we have is a process that we put in place to assess the best value for our investments, Mr. Speaker, and that is what we have done here. We have some of the best technical people in our own industry. We have people from outside as consultants who work with us. What we have done is assessed what would be the best service and the best piece of equipment and the best asset for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and getting the best value for our investment. We have done that.

Damen Shipyards came in extremely higher than most of the other proponents here, and we are confident what we are getting here will service the people, and the people of this Province are getting a good return on their investment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, unless all of the details of these proposals are made public, there is no way government can assure us that they are getting the best vessel at the best price.

Mr. Speaker, I will ask the minister: Will he confirm that he has also received a proposal for less than \$25 million, which is over \$26 million less per vessel than the vessels he has purchased?

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

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

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

What I will reiterate is that we are getting the best value for our investment here. It is not about only the price lines here. Some of the companies that bid lower prices did not make the cut.

Mr. Speaker, they did not make the cut because the evaluation looked at the service being provided, the type of vessel we wanted, and how it could best service the communities that are serviced by ferries in this Province. That is what we have gotten. We have gone out to make sure we have a long-term plan to be able to supply vessels to the communities that need them. That is what we have done here and we are getting the best value for the investment here for the people of this Province.

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

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, I will ask the minister this: Is he prepared to say that while some of these companies with proposals much less are building vessels for other provinces in Canada and, in fact, for commercial entities right

here in this Province – is he saying that those shipyards are not providing quality vessels?

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, the process we went through as a government to secure the new vessels for rural parts of Newfoundland and Labrador, those in isolated areas that require ferry services, was a very comprehensive and in-depth process. The member opposite is quite aware of the difference in an RFP versus a tender.

A tender quite often is based on lowest price. When you go based to a tender process to say that you are trying to obtain a product or service, give us the lowest price, there comes with it many, many difficulties and challenges. We have seen that in the past when governments have bought lowest price.

What we were looking for is best value, Mr. Speaker. This is a competent shipyard. It is world renowned. At any given time, it has hundreds of projects underway. It has the best opportunity to keep the price in place, the time in place, and provide the best quality product – not the cheapest that you would get when you buy something like, say, a *Nonia* or something like that.

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

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

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

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, in September the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services confirmed that two more children had died under the Province's care since August.

I ask the minister: Have any more children died under the Province's care since September? If so, have these deaths been reported to the Child and Youth Advocate?

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

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

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

I can assure the member that all deaths have been reported to the Child and Youth Advocate. I would also like to take this opportunity after reading what the member had in *The Telegram* as an editorial this past weekend – I would invite him back to the department because he obviously does not get it.

When he talks about children in the care of government, there were three children who were in the care; the other remaining were receiving protection intervention services. It is very different. All three of those children who were in care died while in hospital due to medical conditions.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, at least thirty-five children have died while receiving service from this Province since 2009.

I ask the Premier: Has he been briefed on these deaths? If so, will he provide a report to the House of Assembly?

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, any time a person loses a loved one, I cannot think of anything that would be more difficult, challenging, and have a greater impact on a family. If it be a family who has a child who has a relationship with a government department, is either under a program or receiving services – because many of those children the member opposite is referring to were not in the care of the government, were not in the care of Child, Youth and Family Services, but may have been receiving some supportive services from government or have had other relationships with government.

Any time those types of incidents happen –

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Have you been briefed?

**PREMIER DAVIS:** I am sorry, I say to the member opposite; this is very important, so just please bear with me.

These are very, very important to us as a government. I know how important it is to the minister, I know how important it is to the staff, and we take every step possible to ensure the safety of all children in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Mr. Speaker, the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services provides a list of daytime and after-hour phone numbers to report child abuse. In Labrador, 80 per cent of the communities listed have to contact the police after hours to report child abuse.

I ask the minister: Why are Labrador communities the only ones having to call the police to report child abuse after hours?

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

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

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

We acknowledge there are obviously challenges with providing services in Labrador, but do you know what? I look at where we were versus where we are. We have made vast improvements over the last number of years in Labrador. I think it is important to recognize those. I am sure the member is aware of many of them.

When you look at the fly-in, fly-out service in Natuashish, you look at the mentoring team, and you look at the planning circles that now happen between the Department of CYFS and individuals in the governments there, the extra team for Sheshatshiu, the MOU that has been signed, there has been a load of work done, Mr.

Speaker. That is not to say there are not challenges because there are; but I assure the member, as I assure all of the public, we are working with my colleague here, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, we work with the government in both the Innu as well as the Nunatsiavut, and we are making headway.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for the information. I would like an answer to the question, though.

Mr. Speaker, one of the Child and Youth Advocate's recommendations is that CYFS must develop protocol with the police to ensure that information is relayed immediately to the local CYFS office.

I ask the minister: Can he provide us an update on this recommendation; and, if protocol has been developed, will he table the protocol to this House of Assembly?

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

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

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

We take all recommendations very seriously, whether they are from the clinical service review with Susan Abell, whether they were from Ms Carol Chafe, the Advocate, we take all recommendations very serious.

If you look at the numbers, there have been ninety-six recommendations in total through those six investigations – some of which I just mentioned. Eighty-three now are complete. Five have not been accepted. Those five that have not been accepted, with the others that are under development – but if I could talk about the five that have not been accepted, three of these are the same request with regard to critical incidents, which was have spoken about quite

frequently here in the House of Assembly. One is through a life skills co-ordinator, which there was a little bit of a differentiation between the definitions, and one other with the social worker program under the organizational structure.

So, Mr. Speaker, we take all recommendations very seriously. Most are implemented and others are being worked through.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I thank the minister again for the information, and I will give him some. Mr. Speaker, it is not unusual for the RCMP in communities in Labrador for the calls to be forwarded to detachments in St. John's or even Halifax.

I ask the minister: How is this an adequate response for reporting child abuse in Labrador communities?

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

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

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

I take his question very seriously and that is why I wanted to frame it with regard to the challenges that exist in Labrador and the progress we have made as a department – great progress to date. There still remain challenges. I would be happy to have a conversation with the member after.

With regard to the RCMP, obviously we partner with them and we work with the RCMP. Any time we can improve the service, I would be more than happy to have that discussion. I welcome to have further discussion.

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

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

**MS DEMPSTER:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, according to AES staff there were roughly 150 apprentices working in Bull Arm this summer whose hours are being denied by AES because journey person ratios were being violated or because their paperwork was not completed. That is just Bull Arm.

I ask the minister: How many apprentices are currently being denied their hours throughout the Province?

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

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentions an issue that was out in Bull Arm this summer and I am glad to report to this House that has been corrected. The ratios are there now in regard to all the apprentices, but, as well, no government across Canada has invested in their apprenticeship programs than any other province like Newfoundland and Labrador. As a matter of fact, we have over 6,000 registered apprentices in Newfoundland and Labrador, and that is an 82 per cent increase since 2007, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MS DEMPSTER:** When we wrote the minister recently, Mr. Speaker, he said they only respond to these cases following a complaint, so I hope he has looked at the whole Province, the issues that are everywhere, not just Bull Arm.

Mr. Speaker, government's Wage Subsidy Program for apprentices provides a financial incentive for employers to hire apprentices.

I ask the minister: How much of taxpayers' dollars did government misspend this year in paying out subsidies for apprentices whose hours were denied by your own department?

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

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot understand how anybody can get up in this House and criticize the apprenticeship program in this Province. No other can be matched in this country, Mr. Speaker. Right across this country, apprentices – my counterpart ministers, we are the envy of all of Canada. I can tell the hon. member, we wasted no money in regard to our apprentices in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

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

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

I ask the Minister of Education: Has this government actually achieved the \$12.8 million in savings you said would occur with the new supersized school board? If so, where is that money being directed in the education system?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development for a quick reply.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, obviously, it will take a period of time before we realize all of the savings. That is something we will do as we work through our updates and as we get close to being able to see another year, and then be able to decide how we will redirect those monies.

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

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

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

Nalcor has cost the people of this Province billions of dollars to date and is still increasing debt, according to the report today, all of which will be carried solely by the people of the Province.

I ask the Premier: When will he tell the people how much Nalcor debt they are going to have to carry?

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** Mr. Speaker, this is simply a lesson in economics here. When a question is prefaced by how much it costs, cost implies if you have spent some money that you are never going to get back.

One of the things I want to remind members of the House – and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador I think already get it. They recognize, Mr. Speaker, the investments the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is making in Nalcor is an equity investment. It is an investment that we make because there is going to be a return on it.

If you think about the discussions we have had in this House over the last three or four years, and the unlimited number of questions that members opposite have asked, one of the things has been consistent, Mr. Speaker. The thing that has been consistent is the investment that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are making in Nalcor will come back in spades in future years and provide guaranteed future sustainability for our Province.

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

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

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

I ask the Premier: Will the \$500 million that government says they are ready to give Nalcor include the \$55 million shortfall that Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro will carry if the PUB rejects Nalcor's latest applications for rates?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, today Nalcor presented its third-quarter financial report, as was talked about and promised and committed to, and they will continue to do that as the Province's company, the Crown corporation. In that, it was indicated that there is a current loss on the books for Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro up to the third quarter, but there is a rate application submitted to the Public Utilities Board looking for interim rates as well. That is a process, Mr. Speaker, that both Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and the Public Utilities Board will go through. They will do their due diligence and a decision will be made.

At that time, Mr. Speaker, if the proper rates are returned to Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro they will certainly be in the positive. Again, we want our Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro company focused on safety and reliable power, and they need to be able to afford to do that, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MS MICHAEL:** Yes. All I am asking, Mr. Speaker, is what is the Premier going to do if the PUB says no?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, if the PUB says no, then obviously Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro will go back to the PUB with some more information. Because the reality is, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure the member opposite knows because we have all stood in this House, we have an expectation of Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro to deliver safe, reliable power to the people of the Province.

We all know the experience we went through last year. We all know the outcry that they would deliver on that promise to be able to get the power into the homes of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Mr. Speaker, to do that there is cost. There is labour cost, there is fuel cost, there is capital cost, Mr. Speaker, and we expect

them to spend the money. We expect them to deliver on reliable power for the people of the Province. In order to do so, it has to be paid for. We will wait for the process to go through, but, Mr. Speaker, we have every expectation that they stay focused on safe and reliable power for the people of the Province.

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

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

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

Part of Nalcor's read shows that the Hydro division is applying to the Public Utilities Board for an increased rate of return.

I ask the minister: How much is this going to cost the average household on the power bill?

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, the question is raised and the Public Utilities Board will make that decision. What is important here is about the viability of Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro. We have to have a company in this Province that can deliver the power that we need, and that is what Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro does. That is what they are expected to do, and to do that, Mr. Speaker, there is a cost. In order to get a return on that cost they have to go through the PUB and go through a process. That is what it is about.

As for the 8.8 per cent, Mr. Speaker, they have to be viable. We are making investments. It is long term. They have to be able to borrow. They have to be able to plan.

Mr. Speaker, as a government we said Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro should get the same rate of return as Newfoundland Power, another very important utility in this Province. It is all about that balance of cost and reliability.

**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!

As required under section 51 of the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act, I am pleased to table the annual report of the House of Assembly Management Commission for the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

Notices of Motion.

### Notices of Motion

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice of a motion for Private Members' Day, a private member's resolution inquiring into the cancellation of Humber Valley Paving contract 1-12:

WHEREAS the Auditor General found there is no documentation to support the decision to cancel the contract for Project 1-12 between Humber Valley Paving and the Department of Transportation and Works; and

WHEREAS the Auditor General did not receive a response from Humber Valley Paving to its request for information and solicitor-client privilege for the company was not waived; and

WHEREAS the Auditor General was left with many unanswered questions following his review of the cancellation of the contract for Project 1-12; and

WHEREAS a public inquiry would allow an independent third party to require that all public and private parties involved in the contract appear under oath to answer questions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House urges the Government of Newfoundland

and Labrador to conduct a full investigation into Humber Valley Paving and the cancellation of Project 1-12 using a public inquiry under subsection 3(1) of the Public Inquiries Act, 2006 which states, "The Lieutenant-Governor in Council may by order establish a commission of inquiry to inquire and report on a matter that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council considers to be of public concern."

This is seconded by the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 63(3) the private member's resolution just entered by the Member for St. John's South is the motion to be debated this Wednesday.

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

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

### Petitions

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

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

I stand on a petition on behalf of the people of Corner Brook, Western Newfoundland and Labrador:

WHEREAS we wish to raise concerns 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 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 just stand on this petition again. I know of the meeting that the minister had with the health care committee. I heard the Premier talk the weekend about all major projects have to go through the budgetary review. I am not saying that it is going to be delayed any further, but it is a concern of some people who have brought it to my attention that if this regional hospital has not already gone through a budgetary review and it has not already gone through all the necessary steps in government – I guess people are getting a bit nervous. Why would this project have to be considered again?

The Premier was out and made the announcement about it going to start in 2015 for the long-term care facility part. The minister was out in Corner Brook probably about ten days ago announcing that the new hospital, the acute care part of the hospital, will start in 2016, Mr. Speaker. Yet, we hear the Premier talking about all major projects will have to go through a new budgetary review.

Mr. Speaker, I know it is not Question Period, but it has been brought to my attention again that the Premier should explain himself that. Is the hospital one of the projects committed to this budgetary review? Because if it is, it is contradictory to what the Minister of Health said in the last two weeks – ten days just before the by-election, I might add, in Corner Brook.

I just urge the government to not have any further delays on this hospital. If it is going through a budgetary review, at least give the residents of Western Newfoundland and Labrador the courtesy and the respect to explain what this budgetary review will entail, when will it go ahead, when will it be finished, and when will they give the final word if the hospital is still on budget and on time, as committed last week by the Minister of Health while out in Corner Brook.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I stand in this House today to present a petition to the House of Assembly around literacy and skills development:

We, the undersigned, urge the House of Assembly to 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 to the senior years;

Furthermore, recognizing that literacy is intimately connected to other social issues, we urge the House of Assembly and we call upon the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to invest more funding in literacy programs so that all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can enjoy the benefits of participation in our society and so that no one is left behind.

Mr. Speaker, we have signatures on this petition from people all over the Province: Leading Tickle, Summerville, Baie Verte, South Brook, Port aux Basques, Heart's Desire, Carmanville, Burgeo, and the list continues. One of the reasons why I would stand in this House of Assembly today and ask the government to support this request is that as the minister understands there is funding available. I am getting questions from the people of my district around the accountability of the funding as it relates to the Newfoundland and Labrador literacy foundation.

The minister last week said that there had been no decision about how that funding would be used. My understanding is currently there is about \$2 million in the account with about \$364,000 of interest accrued. It is not the minister's responsibility, as he indicated last week, to make a decision on where that funding is, but I would certainly encourage and implore him to work with the board and expedite that particular piece of money coming out into the community to support literacy.

The minister also spoke today about the amount of money that has been spent on the apprenticeship program and the ability for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to avail of the jobs that are going to be available in the next number of years requires them to have a literacy level that is much higher than we have currently

in some places, in some segments of our population.

I would ask the minister to consider intervening and getting in touch with the Newfoundland and Labrador literacy foundation and make sure that funding gets out to the community as quickly as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I am rising once again to present this petition on behalf of the thousands and thousands of people who have signed this petition over the period of almost two years now. They signed this petition because they believe that cancelling the Family Violence Intervention Court was a huge mistake, and I believe almost everybody here in this House agrees. As a matter of fact, the majority of the government members even stood up and said they wanted to see it reinstated.

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

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

**MS ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, one cannot help but wonder: What are the priorities? I think it is really important that the chairlift in Marble Mountain is operational again. However, government can find \$1.5 million to help fix a chairlift in Marble Mountain, I think that is a noble cause – and that was not even budgeted for – yet \$500,000 to protect women and children across this Province could not be found. What is that all about, Mr. Speaker? It makes no sense whatsoever.

What does make sense is that the Family Violence Intervention Court, in fact, saves us money. It dealt with domestic violence cases in an expeditious manner; it reduced recidivism, thereby lowering the cost to the court system, lowering the cost to the overall judicial system. Mr. Speaker, this government says that they are listening to the people of the Province. Obviously, they are not.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS most communities in the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair do not have adequate broadband service; and

WHEREAS residents, businesses, students, nurses, teachers, and professionals rely heavily on the Internet to conduct their work and cannot afford to wait until 2016 to access a potential plan in partnership with the Muskrat Falls development; and

WHEREAS there are a number of world-class tourism sites in the region including UNESCO site at Red Bay, Battle Harbour Historic Site, and the Mealy Mountains National Park;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to work with the appropriate agencies to provide adequate broadband service to communities along the Labrador Coast.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, every time I am back in the district, I do not know if there is a community that I go in where I do not have to deal with the – or people are asking me questions about the broadband. We have twenty-two communities. The three unconnected communities are paying for their own Internet through satellite, but the communities that supposedly have broadband, it is very inadequate. We have businesses that are struggling to run just a basic Interac machine without paying for boosters. We have hotels that can only check their Internet at certain times a day.

Mr. Speaker, we live in an age where increasingly we rely on Internet services. Mr. Speaker, I think the farther you live away from urban areas the more dependent you become on Internet right now, for things like banking. We have increasingly more students doing what we call CDLI courses.

In the last budget that came down federally, we saw over \$300 million set aside for broadband. I am urging government to work with the federal government and to work with the local service provider, Mr. Speaker, to try and come to an acceptable resolution to address this very important issue to try and bring the people of the District of Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair on par with the rest of the Province.

Thank you.

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

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

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

WHEREAS the Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) program for children with autism, is funded by the Department of Health and Community Services; and

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of

Newfoundland and Labrador to implement a review of the ABA program with considerations given to alternate programming options, and to extent autism programming beyond Grade 3.

Mr. Speaker, this is obviously a very serious issue. We have heard a number of questions in this House; we have heard the debates in this House when it comes to this particular issue. The numbers in this Province, as I have listed on numerous occasions, are staggering and they continue to grow every year. We need to review the policy that we have in place here.

There are two issues. Number one, the fact that it was defined so long ago that we need to have a serious look back at it now. It has been, I would say, over fifteen years now since we have had a serious look at the ABA treatment. The second factor – and we understand there are cost pressures when it comes to providing services. The fact is we have health care and education that we have to take care of. The problem seems to be that when you do not have a strategy in place to deal with the problem, you have no idea on how you are going to deal with the problem. You have no idea what the cost is going to be.

I mentioned questions in this House a couple of years ago. The Minister of Finance at that time said we invested this amount of money and we invested that amount of money. The problem is when you are measuring outcomes with the actual investment, as opposed to the outcomes, that is a recipe for failure.

We are not talking about extra money. We are talking about looking at the problem and figuring out a solution talking to educators, talking to advocates, and talking to health care professionals. We need to look at this.

This petition was drawn up speaking directly to parents and advocates. They want this out there. I am putting it out there. I am hoping the different areas, especially health and education that have not exactly gotten along in the last number of years. It seems like they operate in silos. I am saying let's put that to the side. Let's sit down and figure out the situation, which is for the betterment of our children who are going to grow into adults.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

WHEREAS the communities of Castor River South, Castor River North, Shoal Cove West, Bird Cove, New Ferolle and Bartletts Harbour were contracted under Phase 2 of the Rural Broadband Initiative to receive Internet service in May 2013; and

WHEREAS the above communities were scheduled to have that service installed in the fall of 2013; and

WHEREAS the company contracted to provide that service, EION Inc. experienced delays and the new schedule for Internet service for the above communities was for March 2014; and

WHEREAS the equipment has now been installed to provide this service, but due to technical difficulties, the company, EION Inc. has not yet completed the installation of this service; and

WHEREAS even though contracted, residents have been advised that not all areas and/or all residences included in the contract will get Internet service;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to immediately resolve the issues and delays associated with providing Internet service as contracted through EION Inc. to all of the above named communities.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is in Phase 2 of the Rural Broadband strategy, so imagine my delight when I heard the government announce Phase 3. They announced that Phase 2 was absolutely completed, it was all done. In fact, on checking

with the residents – actually I did not have to check with the residents, because the residents quite regularly advised me that we still do not have the Internet service. We are supposed to receive the Internet service. It looks like in many of these communities – some parts of the communities are receiving the service, other parts are not receiving the service. Some of the communities, in the case of Bartletts Harbour and New Ferolle, are not receiving any service whatsoever.

The government seems to have moved on from Phase 2 to Phase 3. It is almost like somebody decided, well, I guess if Phase 2 is difficult, we will leave that behind. We will do sort of a hodgepodge and make the best of whatever we can. We will go on and take credit for having it completed, even though it has not been completed, and we will go on to Phase 3.

Mr. Speaker, these residents are extremely concerned since the government pretends or maybe even believes the work is done, that they will not receive their Internet service when in fact the government goes forward into Phase 3 and it has not even completed Phase 2 yet.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS safer alternatives are available to the provincial government for brush clearance such as manual labour, alternative competitive

seeding methods, and/or the mechanical removal of brush; and

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

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to represent the people who have signed this petition today. They come from between St. John's and other areas of the Province: Paradise, Bellevue, Kelligrews, Old Perlican, St. Phillips, Paradise, Goulds, and again back to St. John's.

Mr. Speaker, last week in this House of Assembly there was an awful lot of conversation around environmental liabilities and what is going to be left behind by various industrial processes. This is no different, Mr. Speaker, when we are talking about things that are left behind for other generations to worry about.

Again, Mr. Speaker, by ignoring the problem of the use of chemicals we are kicking the can further down the road for other generations to deal with, and we do not know how they are going to deal with it, especially when we are considering the full issue of people's health. We do have better ways of doing things these days. One of them, of course, that I have talked about in this House of Assembly is the use of mechanical brush clearing having to deal with the issue of vegetation on the sides of the road.

We do not have to use chemicals to do this particular process. There are better ways. Again when you are talking about people's health concerns, I fail to see the reason why this government does not adhere to its own cosmetic ban on these pesticides and start to deal with the issue itself of keeping an environment healthy and stop adding to not only environmental liabilities in this Province that are only going to

have to be faced by government in the future, but how about the liabilities to people's health at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, it is a grave concern amongst the residents of this Province. I continue to get these petitions in. I can only hope that on their behalf this government will address their concern and begin to answer the issue.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that 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.

At this time, I would like to call from the Order Paper, Order 1, Address in Reply.

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

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

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

It is an honour to rise today in the House to give my first speech. As someone who has worked around the House of Assembly on and off since

back in 1989, it is good to finally be allowed in the House and participate in the proceedings. It is certainly a different perspective on things and I would like to thank the people of St. George's – Stephenville East for placing their confidence in me and electing me as their member.

Mr. Speaker, my understanding of the first speech, or the maiden speech, is that it is a little different from a normal speech in the House in that you are given a little bit more leeway to talk about the district you represent and tell people about yourself. It is also an opportunity for the member to talk about some of the issues that are important to them.

In starting, I want to depart a bit from the normal partisan practices in the House; I want to say something good about a member of one of the other parties. I want to recognize the previous member and minister who represented the District of St. George's – Stephenville East from 2003 until this past summer. I know the previous member worked hard for the district and made a significant contribution to government during her time of service. I want to recognize her contribution over the years and thank her for the work that she has done.

I would also like to recognize the other candidates in the by-election held in August. By running, they made a contribution to the political process. It is a big step to come forward and to offer yourself for public office. They were both very strong candidates and they continue to make significant contributions to the district in the work that they do.

Since this is my first speech, it is a bit of an ice breaker. I want to tell you a bit about my background. Both my parents are from Codroy and many members of my extended family still live in the area. I grew up with my aunt and uncle in Jeffrey's, which is a little farther along the coast in Bay St. George.

Mr. Speaker, after graduating from high school, I went to university – first, in Corner Brook, and then in St. John's where I finished my first degree in Political Science and Economics. While at the university, I got involved in the Liberal Club on campus and worked on a few election campaigns. After graduating, I moved back to the district and lived in Stephenville for

two years where I did a journalism program at the community college there in Stephenville. It was there that I met Shaunna, the woman who would later become my wife. She was from Isle aux Morts and was going to the college in Stephenville at the time as well.

Leading up to the 1989 election, I worked to help get the Clyde Wells Liberals elected. After the election, I got a job as a junior researcher with the Wells Administration. Part of my duties at the time was to staff the government caucus room. It was a job really that no one else wanted to do, but for me it was really a dream job. It allowed me to learn more about the operations of the House of Assembly and it gave me an opportunity to witness some of the most significant debates, I guess, that have happened in this House: the Meech Lake debate and the debates around denominational education.

It gave me a chance also to talk to MHAs and ministers and to gain some understanding of the different qualities and the uniqueness of the people who were elected to the House at that time. It gave me a really good insight into the political process and how things worked.

As the years passed, I served in various positions as a political staffer with Liberal members. I was a policy analyst, Director of Research, Director of Communications for a government department, Director of Research in the Opposition office. I was also executive assistant to the Leader of the Opposition for a while.

Since starting at this kind of work in 1988, I have gone from Opposition to government, then from government to Opposition, and who knows what the future will hold.

Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed my time as a political staffer, but I wanted to try something different. I wanted to get some new and different experiences. I went back to university part time and eventually completed a master's degree in Education Policy at Memorial.

Just having completed the degree in 1998, my wife and I decided to try something different. Teaching overseas at a university in South Korea was a life-changing experience. It made me more appreciative of the quality of life we have

in this country and especially here in this Province.

When we returned two years later, I decided I would pursue a Ph.D. at the University of Ottawa. I took a year and a half to complete the course work and then returned to work as a political staffer in the Opposition office while I completed the thesis part time.

Just as I completed the Ph.D. and was starting to look for employment outside of politics, another interesting opportunity arose within politics. Siobhan Coady, then a newly-elected Liberal MP, asked me to be her chief of staff. The lure of this new experience in politics – this time at the federal level – was too interesting to resist. I worked in that position for two years while I taught part-time at the Department of Political Science and the Faculty of Business at Memorial.

After those two years at the federal level, I then made a transition into teaching more courses, doing some consulting work, and starting a small community newspaper in Mount Pearl and Southlands called *The Pearl*. I was enjoying teaching at the university and doing research. I was enjoying the challenge of starting a new business, which was really a return to my roots in journalism.

When the previous Member for St. George's – Stephenville East resigned this past summer, the call to run was too strong. I knew that if I did not run, I would later regret it and always ask myself what if. I also knew that by running I would have an opportunity to make a difference for the Province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take some time now to talk about the wonderful district I represent. It is one of the largest, most dispersed districts in the Province. It includes towns such as Stephenville, Stephenville Crossing, and St. George's; but it also includes many rural areas such as Cold Brook, Noels Pond, Black Duck Siding, St. Teresa, Flat Bay, the communities in the Bay St. George South area, and the communities in the Codroy Valley.

Politically, the district could be classified as a swing district or a bellwether district. Over the years, it has been represented by both the



Liberals and the Conservatives. It is usually represented on the government side of the House, but it has deviated from this pattern several times. For example, in the 1970s it was in Opposition when it was the first district in the Province to elect a woman MHA since Confederation.

The district is one of the most diverse districts in the Province in relation to the heritage of the original settlers. There are many people of Aboriginal background in the district, and it is exciting to witness the revival in this culture in recent years. This revival is evident from the Pow Wow held in Flat Bay and St. Teresa this summer, which attracted over 5,000 visitors. It is also evident at the museum in St. George's which has many displays related to Mi'kmaq culture and heritage.

Later settlers included Scottish settlers in the Codroy Valley and Heatherton Highlands area. These areas are amongst the few places in the Province with a significant number of people of Scottish descent.

There were many English and Irish settlers as elsewhere in the Province, but there is also a French heritage in the district that is a major part of our history. After all, this used to be the French shore, and Sandy Point in particular was a thriving international seaport in the 1700s.

Another major cultural influence in the area was the American presence at the Harmon Air Force Base in Stephenville. The base was in place from 1941 until 1966.

There are many issues in the district, and I only have time to highlight a few today. One of the most prominent issues in the district is health care. In fact, a serious crisis situation is developing for residents in the Bay St. George area. The clinic in Jeffrey's has been without a regular doctor for about a year now. This situation is about to get worse as the doctor in the Town of St. George's has announced he will be leaving in the middle of December.

The absence of these two doctors will add even more stress to the overburdened emergency clinic at the hospital in Stephenville. I have talked with officials at Western Health and I have had an opportunity to discuss this matter

with the Minister of Health to make sure he is aware of the seriousness of this situation. People with serious medical issues are not getting the service they need. It is a serious problem and it has gone on for too long.

Another issue is the state of roads in the area. Some of this problem is based on the deteriorations of roads over a long period of time. These are major problems that need to be dealt with. For example, this would be the state of Fortunes road in Jeffery's and the road to the Highlands. These are barely passable and are comparable to roads in Third World countries. Many of the roads in the Codroy Valley are in a similar state.

Another related issue is the lack of proper road maintenance. This lack of regular maintenance has allowed small problems to eventually become big problems. This is not a criticism of the people who do the work. It is more a problem of the way things are set up. People in this Province are reasonable in their expectations, but they want to be treated fairly as well.

Mr. Speaker, another issue in the area I represent is fracking. I was pleased that the Liberal Party has been in the forefront in calling for an independent public review of this issue, and I am also pleased that government, although reluctantly, have arrived at the same position. At this stage it is important to keep an open mind and listen to what people have to say about this topic. One of my basic beliefs is that if people have an opportunity to ask questions and gather information on a topic, they are capable of making good decisions on issues that impact them and their communities.

Many on the West Coast are asking why people with expertise in environmental science, public health, tourism, and fisheries are not included in the review panel on fracking. They have also pointed out the failure of the government to appoint any women, anyone of Aboriginal descent, and indeed anyone from the West Coast.

Mr. Speaker, the concerns and questions which have been raised are reasonable. If we look at the panel that examined the fracking issue in Nova Scotia, it had a much broader composition.

It had fourteen members and in making his report, the chair of the panel noted how the diverse composition really added to the work of the review panel. The panel members who have been appointed so far are all fine people. They have extensive qualifications, but I ask the minister to listen to the concerns that have been raised and consider adding more members to this panel.

Mr. Speaker, there are many issues in the district which I could talk about today: cellphones and Internet access in rural areas; opportunities for growth in agriculture; Port Harmon and the potential that exists at that port; the airport is another area. The community college headquarters and maintaining the presence there in Stephenville and exploring ways the college presence can leverage economic growth in the area is also important. The Province's T'Railway Park has lots of potential to be an economic generator. The Codroy Valley Wetlands and the significant Ramsar designation is another issue as well. There are many other issues, and over time I will touch on more of them in the House I am sure.

Mr. Speaker, over my first few weeks in the House I have been observing and thinking about how my experiences relate to some of my previous work, how it relates to the political science courses I have taught and some of the research work I have done in the field of political science. One paper that I did a few years ago, and presented at the Canadian Political Science Association, comes to mind. I did a comparison of the rules in provincial Legislatures across Canada. The paper looked at things such as the way questions, petitions, private member's bills, and other things are dealt with in Legislatures.

The thing I want to talk about a bit today is the committee structure. The whole purpose of committees is that they do tasks that would be too cumbersome for the full Legislature to do. The roles and powers assigned to these committees vary by province. For example, in Nova Scotia and Ontario committees have a role in reviewing government appointments to agencies, boards, commissions, and Crown corporations. In other provinces, they have a role in developing and reviewing legislation.

In this Province, with only a few exceptions, the committee structure has basically been inactive for the past fourteen years. Only in the last few years has the role of a crucial committee like the Public Accounts Committee began to reassert its role in monitoring government expenditures.

During the Wells years there were legislative review committees which examined pieces of legislation and often held public sessions. The process seemed to work quite well and in several circumstances led to better legislation coming to the House. The question I think we should be asking ourselves is: What is the cost of not having committees? What are the costs of inadequate debates and review of legislation?

Usually the consequences are pretty subtle and not very dramatic. It is a piece of legislation that passes but comes back to the House for amendment a short time later. It is a piece of legislation that causes unexpected problems. It is less effective public policy decisions. The whole idea around our democratic institutions is that through debate in the House we arrive at better decisions.

I look forward to continuing to learn from more experienced members about how this Legislature could be more effective. It is important to look at what we can learn from other jurisdictions and our past experience to improve what we do here.

Mr. Speaker, I have talked briefly today about the district and some issues that are important to me. In the time ahead, I will get an opportunity to expand on these items and to talk about many other things as well. In the months and years ahead, I look forward to making a contribution to the district I represent and the overall government of the Province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

Before I start off – we are into a new session this time around, being a couple of weeks into it now

– I want to issue some congratulations and some good luck in your new position as Speaker. I wish you all the best there.

We have new Pages. I would also like to welcome the new Pages who are here, and also welcome the new members here to the House of Assembly, Mr. Hillier and Mr. Reid. I am pretty sure they will make fine representatives here in the House of Assembly. I wish them all the best in their future deliberations.

I know that we have heard some interesting comments from Mr. Reid. His ideas pretty much on committees is one position that this party here has been presenting now for a long time, the need for committees in this House, and his reasoning as regards what can happen with a piece of legislation when you have a failure of not having committees in the House talking over legislation – they are marked anyway and we do know what can happen from there. I appreciate the experience of the new members who are coming in and congratulations on their election.

Mr. Speaker, the other day when we were in Question Period we had a stark, staring realization on the part of this government that it was time to hit the panic button when it came to a much lower price of oil being projected now in the world market in the situation that we are dealing with. Knowing that government had dealt with a situation where they forecast the price of oil to be coming in at \$105 a barrel was not unpredicted by some people out there in the marketplace.

During the Muskrat Falls debate in December of 2012 we quoted several reports. One report that was of note that talked about the imminent collapse of the price of oil happened to come from a gentleman who worked at the Harvard's Kennedy School, a Mr. Maugeri, M-a-u-g-e-r-i. If anybody wanted to Google that report, it is out there for public consumption.

Mr. Speaker, we had gone on the year before that, indeed, when government came out even with its projections. I think it was in 2012 when they came out with the initial projection, I think it was \$112 for the price of a barrel of oil, West Texas Intermediate – or for Brent, I should say, that there was a situation developing in the States, Mr. Speaker. I spoke extensively about

that when I was talking about the situation that was evolving and that the world market for oil was changing.

At that time, I told government to be careful and to be cautious, that we were going to be paying dearly if we happened to have our expectations higher with the price of a barrel of oil than what the market was actually beginning to show. I said at that particular time that the fracking industry in the States and the growth in US domestic production was growing as such that it would influence Brent prices and drag Brent crude oil prices down as a result of West Texas Intermediate dropping.

What we have now is a situation where government is going to have to try to strike that balance somehow because this world is going to have trouble in the next little while even gaging what is going to be happening. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, what I am hearing out there is that there is going to be some sort of a war for juxtaposition in the markets. What has been happening right now is just but the start of what is going to be happening in the future. So government, whoever it is, even now, and into the future, the next Administration, is going to have a world of trouble on their hands trying to balance the books.

One of the positions, just to give everybody an example of what some people are talking about out there, is the value of the oil now that is being fracked out of the ground in the United States. The value of this stuff needs very little refining. So the price of it is very, very high and a lot of people are saying that even though the profit margin, or the breakeven point, for the frackers – I guess we will call them frackers – the small-time oil producers, is anywhere between \$40 and \$60 a barrel, but we have a product here that is being torn out of the ground in a process that is relatively new. Since 2005, they have been using the slickwater form of fracking, 2005-2006. The stuff that is coming out of the ground is of such high value, it is valued much more highly than what Brent ever was priced, and probably \$30 or \$40 more per barrel on average.

So, you have a high-quality product that is being turned out that is wanted by the refining industry, so the war against the Saudis, the economic war that is going to be carried out in

the future if US domestic production increases, it is very telling because if you have a high-value product and a low production value at the same time there is lots of room for movement. That is why government needs to be very cautious about the volatility here and that is why you are seeing what is happening in the markets right now. That is part of the reason why, anyway. This is very highly valued stuff and everybody wants it and everybody is benefiting from it.

Mr. Speaker, we have a very questionable bottom line that we are going to be dealing with in the future. Having said that, it is going to be a question, too, as to how we are going to pay for those expectations at the same time. Where are we going to get the revenue? How do we pay, for example – like some things that I deal with in my constituency. I have a couple of seniors now, for example, who have to deal with the simple cost of Lucentis injections. Right now, government has it subject to a cap and right now these injections are about \$1,800 a shot. If you do not have insurance, \$1,800 is a lot of money.

We have to take the position from government, if you will – we are against government on this – that by having a cap and not protecting the people who need the injections, we have the possibility of people losing their eyesight, and government having to fork out even more resources to look after people who are now blind and who are going to be needing more government services.

It is a situation where government should be taking a look at what they are going to be paying up forward versus what they are going to be paying in the back end. I think that government, if they do not pay attention to that and deal with that particular situation, the problem is going to creep up to them and we are going to have a more severe problem on our hands.

An interesting statistic, Mr. Speaker, is that about 20,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are going to be dealing with some form of an eye condition that is going to cause them blindness. Government has ways of dealing with this so that they can remove the future costs to the health care system or remove the future costs off their bottom line.

Mr. Speaker, that is one situation. Another situation I will talk about is the need for this government to protect the taxpayers from what they are going to be facing in the future, and one of those things has to do with the municipal funding formula.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot reiterate how many times I have gotten on my feet and spoken about the need for the residents of St. John's and for St. John's East to be granted some form of protection – I will call it “protection” in quotation marks – from being insulated from any possible increase in municipal taxes because the government is not paying its fair share. Government has promised – they said so last year in the Budget process. They said not too long ago, actually, that they have a commitment. They will be making that commitment to municipalities in 2016 to address the funding shortage. We all know that. We all know that government has said those words.

Now we have a situation where if government does not have the money because we are not going to see \$105 a barrel for oil this year, and they were so dependent on these revenues, then we have a serious question to ask. What sort of a funding arrangement is this government going to provide for municipalities, so a municipality like mine, the City of St. John's, does not have to go back to its taxpayer and say to the taxpayer: I am sorry, but because the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador was not going to be meeting its funding commitments, we now have to tax you additionally for the residence you have?

Mr. Speaker, that can amount to quite a lot of money under the present arrangement. I would encourage government to look at that and to come up with the best arrangement that is going to insulate the taxpayer in every municipality in this Province from the risk of any increases they will be facing in the future. It is pretty important to me, Mr. Speaker, because what we are talking about here is keeping it affordable for some people and to make sure they are going to be able to stay in their homes. That is part of what government has been saying too, is it would like to see people staying in their homes a little bit longer. Part of that is affordability. We have to address it.

Mr. Speaker, the other part of that at the same time when it comes to that, when it comes to the affordability issue, now we have a government that has made a commitment to a massive project in Labrador, and we have a risk that is ongoing, now going through the Public Utilities Board stage in the next little while where Nalcor's hydro division is going to be looking for an increase in rates. Mr. Speaker, now we have the consumer here that is under pressure. We have the taxpayer here that is under pressure. We are still having the revenue problem here that government does not have.

If government does not have the revenues from \$105 a barrel oil, it does not have the money directly to pour into Nalcor, it is going to turn around, as this application is saying, to the Public Utilities Board and to the public out there: Sorry, we do not have enough money to carry on with the project. We are going to have to go ahead and increase rates. We are going to have to take the money out of your pocket to help pay for this project. That is what it is saying to me, and that is what people are saying to me out there on the street.

They do not want to be paying any more because they are already taxed. They are already to the limit. They have already been pressed to the wall. Their backs are against the wall now. The taxes are being taken out of their pockets, Mr. Speaker, and they do not need to be contributing any more than what they already have. They do not need to see any more money taken out of their pockets.

Just when the price at the pumps goes down, just when we are about to see that the Public Utilities Board is probably going to have to go back to the rate adjustment formula and drop the price of electricity that is being generated through Hydro by oil generation, just when we are about to see these prices start to come down to the consumer, what happens? Nalcor steps in and they are looking from 4.75 per cent, I think it is, to looking at 8.8 per cent return on investment, return on revenue. Mr. Speaker, we have these pressures on the taxpayer again. I do not want to see it happen. I do not think anybody does.

I want to come back to health again and talk a little bit about diabetes. I would like to see a few more dollars go into the diabetes registry,

and see more money go in for preventative maintenance, or preventative health care costs when it comes to diabetes. We know it is a scourge in this Province.

I have to say one thing about somebody I hold very dearly, who took a different way out when it came to diabetes control, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to see government invest a few more dollars in it. I know she is probably watching today as regards to this because I had a great debate with her. Somebody I hold very dear had a surgery called bariatric surgery because they had a problem with weight control. Along with the weight control issues, also came along the problem of the amount of drugs she had to use to control her diabetes.

Mr. Speaker, I am so proud of her today. Because the bariatric surgery kicked in and all the side effects of the bariatric surgery are working out positive in her favour, she has gone from four injections of insulin a day – and these were up to seven, eight, nine units of insulin per injection. She has gone from that down to one nighttime injection in the run of a day. She is down about forty-five pounds in weight. Her Metformin use has also gone down. Her blood pressure is back under control. The surgery we consider to be a success.

I am so proud of her for doing that and to go to that means. I had to talk about that. The cost savings to government when it comes to insulin that had to be purchased to look after this person, plus the drugs like Metformin that government is saving at the same time, Mr. Speaker, can only be multiplied by hundreds for the amount of people who may be able to avail of that particular surgery.

I encourage government, and the Health Minister too, to research a little bit more about that. There are some pretty good studies out there when it comes to bariatric surgeries. The stampede study comes to mind. I went through that one. Mr. Speaker, I think government will be well served by even providing that possibility to some of the sufferers of diabetes in this Province, and I think they can save a lot of money.

Mr. Speaker, one of my critic areas happens to be environment and conservation. I want to talk

a little bit about liabilities as well, environmental liabilities. It has come up in the past. I touched on it earlier when I stood on the petition having to do with the banning of cosmetic pesticides in the Province.

Mr. Speaker, when we are talking about environmental liabilities, like I said earlier, we are talking about kicking the can down the road and the last thing we need to do is kick the can down the road in a failure to deal with these environmental liabilities. Of course, we should see a line in the budgetary process. We should be able to talk about our environmental liabilities and what can possibly happen in the future and how to deal with it.

We are talking about, for example, from the Muskrat Falls Project, the buildup of mercury in Lake Melville. We are talking about mining projects that are proposed in Labrador, for example, that are talking about the draining of lakes and the diversion of rivers just so they can get at the resource. We are talking about interest groups that are out there. For example, we are talking about the Big Triangle Pond project that is out there on the Trans-Canada Highway immediately before Salmonier. The project borders on the Avalon wilderness area. It comes very close to it, and, of course, we are talking about fracking. We still do not know what to do with the waste water, was one of the big concerns that came up at the town hall.

That is not to question, as well, the number of members that were on the panel, the environmental representation that was on the panel, the health interests that were not on the panel. The public health interests were not represented on the panel. We encourage government to have another look at that panel and make sure there is somebody there who is going to be looking after the public interests in that.

The environment, it seems, especially the Environmental Assessment Act, on all these projects brings into question government's commitment towards the environment. We ask that question every day. We hear various ministers get up from time to time and talk about the environment and the positive things that are happening out there.

We had another minister again today talk about beverage recycling and the containers, and there are various other initiatives out there. There are valuable returns to our own personal environment and the environment here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

There are times, like I say, where environmental liabilities are not taken into consideration, and the fracking issue is one that we should be taking due note of. We know that the environmental concerns are ranging all over North America when it comes to this industry, but we do know of one province so far. In Nova Scotia, the Liberal government of Nova Scotia banned fracking as of two weeks ago now, two Fridays ago in their own Legislature. They parked the issue, and hopefully they parked it for lifetime.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to environment, I think that there is a cost to government by not acting in the defence of our environment and not taking a precautionary approach. That is why I keep getting these petitions in when it comes to the use of chemicals in this Province. It is a simple problem that can be dealt with. We do not have to be using chemicals on our roadsides. We could be using mechanical brush clearing. I know that the conversations I have had with various members of this House of Assembly, they seem to agree with me, and I do not know why government even presses on with it.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit in the minute and a half I have left about the people's bottom lines out there. It is only now when you actually get cheaper fuel prices that you see how much it means by keeping a dollar in people's pockets. I cannot put a number on it how many people have actually talked about how much it means to have fuel prices low the way they are. I am happy for them, because it is these people who are going to keep the Newfoundland and Labrador economy. What these people are really saying is this: because they have a dollar in their pockets, this is an opportunity for them – this is a litmus test for this government, that I do not know if government is going to be able to pass or not.

I will leave you with this final comment in the short time I have. If government has done all the things right when it comes to economic

development – but they cut out the RED Boards, so there is some question as regards future economic development in this Province, especially when it comes to rural areas. The true litmus test is this, if government has all its ducks in a row when it comes to economic development and all the proposals that it has put forward, saying that they have done this and done that to sustain the Newfoundland and Labrador economy, then they should be able to pick up a fair level of taxation the same from that, from their investments that they have made. They have lost when it comes to predicting the price of crude oil, they have lost revenue there –

**MR. SPEAKER (Littlejohn):** I remind the hon. member his speaking time has expired.

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

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

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

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

Thanks for the opportunity today to be able to speak on Address in Reply. I, too, would like to welcome the two new members into the House of Assembly: the Member for Conception Bay South and the Member for St. George's – Stephenville East.

Unlike their newly elected member in Humber East, today, I must say that the Member for St. George's was very kind to the former members there, the good work that they had done, and this government had done; but when you listen to the Opposition, you listen to a new member get on the news and say that the district was neglected, I think it is shameful –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** What district?

**MR. FORSEY:** The District of Humber East.

I wanted to get in a lot of the other good things that we have been doing as a government, Mr. Speaker, because I do not think we do enough of it. However, now that I have the opportunity, I would certainly like to just touch on a couple of things that the former member, who happened to be a minister and former Premier in that district,

the investment – and I do not know what this new member is going to do when it comes to wanting to give it better representation and not have the neglect that it had in the past, if he can improve on the new long-term care that was put in there, the dementia units, the Grenfell Campus and the new residence, the new arts building, the Corner Brook Regional High School – \$22 million – the new eye care centre strategy, Margaret Bowater Park rentals, fire trucks and fire equipment, not to mention our investment in the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, a tremendous investment, keeping the industry going and securing the pensions for –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible) most recent contributions there.

**MR. FORSEY:** Somewhere around \$110 million that this government invested to help the industry and the residents of that area in Corner Brook, to secure jobs and to secure the pensions for the hard workers who had already been retired and deserved to get their pensions that they duly worked for, and hard, I must say. My father worked as a logger as well and I know first-hand that it is not that easy. They worked for it and this government supported them, Mr. Speaker.

I do thank the Member for St. George's for his kind comments of previous members and also the investments by this government, Mr. Speaker. It is always great, when we are given the opportunity, to be able to get up there and explain what we have done as a government. We do not do it enough. I know we do not because sometimes you hear the words, oh, we need a change, and sometimes we do not know why we need the change.

I had really a couple of good topics to speak on that I wanted to touch on today, but when you listen to the Opposition and you are sitting here, Mr. Speaker, it is difficult. They are so negative when they stand up. It is like the sky is falling, the glass is half empty or the glass is half full, whichever. We want it half full; they want it half empty.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Poor management.

**MR. FORSEY:** Poor management and so on.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. John's North got up today and wanted to know what we were doing with the \$12.6 million that we were supposed to save from the amalgamation of the school boards. I think – certainly I do not think, I know that it was the former government, the Liberals, that amalgamated the schools and did away with the denomination system. They were saving hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars.

It probably was a good move. I am not saying that it was a bad move, Mr. Speaker. Guess what happened in 2003 when this Administration came in? Everything was falling down. What happened to the hundreds of millions of dollars they were going to put into the schools, into the infrastructure?

When we came in all we could listen to was dilapidation, schools were falling down, the windows were falling out, and the roofs were leaking. Mould, mould, and mould, and more mould is all that was listened to. Every time I came into this House that is all I listened to. It was the Opposition that was getting up and complaining about it when they were the ones who saved the millions of dollars on amalgamating the schools and did not have a plan and did not invest it wisely, I say, Mr. Speaker.

Just for a mention of some of the things, Mr. Speaker – fortunately enough, I had a couple of things written down here with regard to the education system and what this government has done. Just touching on a couple of things, I think this is very interesting on what this government has done in education, notwithstanding the free textbooks, the elimination of school fees, and the introduction of the skilled trades into the high schools.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** The lowest tuition in Canada.

**MR. FORSEY:** The lowest tuition in Canada.

Just for this year, Mr. Speaker, about \$99.3 million has been allocated for ongoing major projects, including \$20 million to continue construction on a new high school in the west end of St. John's, \$14 million to complete planning and begin construction of a new K-6 in

Paradise, and \$11 million to complete planning and begin construction of a new K-7 school in Conception Bay South. Is that neglect?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** No.

**MR. FORSEY:** I ask, Mr. Speaker, is that neglect? Mr. Speaker, \$10.4 million to complete planning and begin construction of a new Grades 5-7 school in Torbay.

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

**MR. FORSEY:** There you go; the Member for Cape St. Francis is very pleased with it. He does not think there is neglect and it is far from it; it is a very good investment. It is not an expense, by the way; it is an investment. That is what this government has been doing: investing.

Mr. Speaker, \$9 million to complete planning and begin construction of a new Grades 5-9 school for Portugal Cove – St. Phillips; \$8 million to complete planning and begin construction of a new school replacement in Virginia Park Elementary; \$6.5 million for the continued redevelopment of Roncalli Elementary in St. John's; \$6 million for the continued reconstruction of William Gillett Academy in Charlottetown.

I can see the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, her eyes pop right open when we talk about Labrador, especially Southern Labrador. There has been quite a few investments down there, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MCGRATH:** Listen to her cheering you on over there.

**MR. FORSEY:** Yes, she is giving us accolades and cheering me on. I appreciate that because she knows it is a good investment. I am willing to take the applause and the credit as part of the government, absolutely. She is similar to the Member for St. George's; they are finally admitting to the good work we are doing and the good investments we are making.

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

**MR. FORSEY:** That is what we are doing.



I am just going to finish these couple of little tidbits here, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. KING:** Take your time.

**MR. FORSEY:** Sure, I say to the Member for Grand Bank; I have to take my time because, like we say when we are talking to Mainlanders sometimes, we talk slow so they can understand it. We are going to try to do the same thing so the Opposition can do the same thing. So far, I have found that by talking slow, it has worked for two members over there already. I really appreciate their support acknowledging the investments we are doing.

**MR. JOYCE:** (Inaudible).

**MR. FORSEY:** I will not mention the other member right now; he has his mouth going too. I will not mention his name right now, but I am sure he is speaking loud enough that everybody hears him anyway.

Mr. Speaker, \$2.3 million to continue redevelopment –

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

**MR. FORSEY:** Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult to try to explain what we are doing as a government when the rest of the Opposition over there will not listen and they do not want to listen. It is too bad that they are not like the two new members they have over there – well, the one from Cartwright is fairly new and, of course, the new Member for St. George's. I am sure in time they will probably listen to them.

Mr. Speaker, \$2.3 million to continue to redevelop former Regina High in Corner Brook; \$2.3 million for the continued redevelopment of Exploits Valley High; and \$1.6 million to finalize work on several projects throughout the Province.

Apparently, Mr. Speaker, they are getting really excited about the people who are seeking nominations for their party. Even though they have all kinds of – and they do. They have a number of people coming out in my district seeking the nomination, but guess what? They are still phoning some of my own PC colleagues to see if they want to run. They do not want the

ones who are coming out for them. They are still phoning our party people. So just for the information of the ones who are really challenging each other for the nomination – and it is happening in Terra Nova apparently. They have four or five or six people out there now who want to run for the Liberal nomination in Exploits, but they are still calling our people, our known PC people, to see if they want to run because apparently they are not interested in the ones who are already putting their name forward. I do not know why, but I mean that is their choice.

If the people who are seeking the nomination for their party still want to come on board with them, go to it. That is up to them. They can –

**MR. JOYCE:** (Inaudible).

**MR. FORSEY:** Yes, I spoke to him Saturday night at the Fireman's Ball and I would like to –

**MR. SPEAKER:** I remind the hon. member to make his remarks to the Chair, please.

**MR. FORSEY:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am sorry; I apologize. I get a little bit excited sometimes. Only because the Opposition, the ones across the floor there, are intimidated. They know what we have done and what we are doing and they do not want to acknowledge it so they just want to use some other derogatory words and just challenge us.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Exploits.

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

I appreciate your support, and I will address the Chair.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to try to leave anybody out over there, because they get upset when you do not leave them out and they get upset when you do, so you do not know what to be doing.

The Member for Burgeo – La Poile last week got up, he was speaking, and he was talking

about the dialysis unit in Port aux Basques, Mr. Speaker. We have made tremendous investments – again, investments in health care. This year, over \$3 billion in health care, over 40 per cent of our Budget going into health care and a lot of that is going into diagnostic equipment.

We have gone from seven sites to what will now be sixteen sites when Bonavista is up and running.

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

**MR. FORSEY:** The Member for Burgeo – La Poile, now that he has his dialysis unit there probably does not want the rest of the Province to have one because he is saying that we should be putting more money into prevention and so on, and not into the dialysis. He almost thought it was a waste of money when he got up and spoke, Mr. Speaker. He almost thought it was a waste of money.

**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:** I am not sure if the member opposite heard me. I was referencing Dr. Joshi, the pre-eminent physician in the Province on diabetes who said that dialysis is a failure; but again, I just referenced that. He is only the leading doctor.

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

The hon. the Member for Exploits.

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

I appreciate it. Personally, Mr. Speaker, I do not think that the dialysis units are failures. I am going to speak from experience. I am not going to go out and listen and watch through some reports or something that comes out, but I will listen to the experts, and I will chat with the experts like I did last Friday morning in my own district, Mr. Speaker.

I was glad to do it, but let me tell you, back twenty years ago a very, very close relative of mine needed dialysis. He had two choices: He

had to drive to St. John's or drive to Corner Brook; six hours one way, five-and-a-half the other way. It was not where he wanted to be. Unfortunately, he lost that kidney again last year. Now he is back on dialysis with other complications, of course, and it is not easy.

Guess what? It was from an Alport disease. It was not from overweight or diabetes. We are putting a lot of money into prevention and into diabetes, Mr. Speaker, and you can pass that along to the Opposition as well.

I did a member's statement here last week on a young lady from Bishop's Falls. At two weeks of age she was diagnosed with congenital kidney disease. It had nothing to do with prevention, Mr. Speaker, but it had a lot to do with having the services of a dialysis machine close by so they could get the service.

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

**MR. FORSEY:** We have gone from seven to sixteen units, sites, in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. I do not think that is a waste of money. That is important; that is a good investment.

I was listening to a talk show, Mr. Speaker, the other day, where the host of the talk show does not understand –

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

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

**MR. FORSEY:** He does not understand where the dialysis units are. He does not know what investments we have had. He was talking to one of these people and he said, yeah, we need to reduce our trips; three- and four-hour trips one way to get to a dialysis machine.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Burgeo – La Poile said this was great. Now they did not have to travel three hours for a dialysis machine, which they probably would have had to go to Corner Brook somewhere and now they are going to Port aux Basques. It is a great investment for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, and to be able to keep them in their own areas.

That is why we are putting them in Harbour Breton on the South Coast. That is why we are putting them down on the Bonavista Peninsula, so people will not have to travel the three, four, and five hours to get there. They are sick enough as it is. I know how sick they can be. I have lived it, and it is not easy. It is hard.

I am telling you when we invest the money into this equipment and good investments, the people of this Province know why we do it. We need to get that out there. We do not take credit enough for what we do. We do not do right in getting the information out there. Even the Opposition do not understand it because they think it is a waste of money, but when they get up they want money for something else.

I will stick with the Member for Burgeo – La Poile, Mr. Speaker. I have some information here somewhere. This year was a tight year for the Budget, we know that. We have done well in numbers of years, and we have spent well in numbers of years. We have invested in infrastructure and we did not have to borrow to do it either. This year was a little bit tighter.

The Member for Burgeo – La Poile, Mr. Speaker, gets up and says one of his communities did not get any MCW this year. They did not get any municipal capital works – terrible, shame. What he did not say was that since 2009 to 2014 he got almost \$8 million in Burgeo – La Poile for MCWs – almost \$8 million for MCWs.

I will just talk about the Opposition seats, Mr. Speaker. The Straits – White Bay North, 2009 to 2014, almost \$17 million. I wonder, is that neglect? That must be neglect. That must be poor spending, because I am sure the Member for The Straits – White Bay North does not want \$17 million over three or four years for municipal infrastructure. It must be a waste. St. Barbe, \$9.5 million in municipal infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I will not talk about Exploits. We have done very well as well, but we have also shared. That is what this government does is share. However, I will tell you one more for the Opposition across the way: Torngat Mountains. Now the other members I just mentioned, his friends, his colleagues, they are going to be upset because they only received \$8 million and

\$16 million. That is all they received; \$9.5 million St. Barbe got, but Torngat Mountains in 2009 to 2014 in municipal capital works, Mr. Speaker, \$24 million.

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

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, if he wants to speak from the numbers, ask him to table it so we all can see the numbers that he is presenting here today. Lay them on the table.

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

The hon. the Member for Exploits, his speaking time has expired.

**MR. FORSEY:** I know I will get another opportunity to speak.

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

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

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

**MR. HILLIER:** Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I have a prepared text that is going to take me almost into my twenty minutes, and I cannot get involved in this diatribe that we have heard in the last little while.

Mr. Speaker, it is my humble honour to stand before you and my colleagues today on both sides of the Legislature as the newly elected member of the District of Conception Bay South. Today I will speak to you under three broad headings: my background, the District of Conception Bay South, and something that I call our place in history.

I grew up, attended school, and raised a family in the district that I now represent; however, I was born in a tiny community called Bay du Nord. If it still existed, it would be in the current District of Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune; however, under the government's resettlement program of the 1960s, we packed our bags, left

our home, and moved to what is now the Town of Conception Bay South.

We all remember experiences that we had as a child, but like those others who had resettled at the time, I can draw a line through January 1964 knowing that what I remember prior to that line occurred in Bay du Nord in one of the most isolated regions of the Province. Whereas what I remember after January 1964 occurred in Conception Bay South, a suburban environment and one of the Province's most progressive towns.

Mr. Speaker, some of my colleagues, those representing our more rural districts, see me as a townie; whereas some of my St. John's colleagues see me as a bayman. I like to keep them guessing, but I feel that I do have a personal perspective on both rural and urban Newfoundland and Labrador.

I grew up in a traditional home with my dad out to work and my mother a stay-at-home mom. There were five children, four boys and a girl. Dad was at sea for long stretches of time, so I understand the social impact today of parents commuting out west.

My wife is the former Dianne Bussey of Placentia. We have been married for thirty-six years. She is the one who keeps me grounded and keeps me from becoming star struck when I tell her about the famous people I meet: MHAs, Cabinet ministers, and, of course, the Premier. She tells me, do not let my head swell just because I know the Premier.

Our son, John, is an audiologist with Eastern Health. He has played a big part in getting me to this hon. House. John is an athlete and understands and enjoys the gamesmanship of politics. When he was a child, I would take him to the gym where I would be playing ball. In the extra tense timeouts he would look up at me and say: Dad, that big vein is puffed out on the side of your head. Several weeks ago, right after we won the by-election and I was speaking to my supporters, he bent down and said: Dad, that big vein is puffed out on the side of your head.

My mom passed away in 1991; her name was Hannah. My dad's name was John. He is still healthy and hardy. He is proud of all of his

children. He does not say so very much, but I am pretty sure he is. He and his buddies put my signs together during the by-election. It became a real social occasion, which slowed us down significantly in getting the signs out.

As a youngster, I spent my time chasing, throwing, shooting, kicking, and hitting balls. If a ball moved in Conception Bay South, I knew about it. In fact, that was not only as a youngster, but also as a teenager and adult. Having reached the national level in my chosen sport, some would say that I was not a half bad athlete; but today, Mr. Speaker, as you may understand, I feel the resulting aches and pains.

It was this love of sport and fitness that led me to my chosen career. I completed my bachelor's degrees in Physical Education and Education from Memorial University in 1977. I accepted the teaching position at Booth Memorial High School in St. John's and stayed there for thirty-one years, advancing eventually to the position of principal. In the interim, I completed a master's degree in Education, with a focus on leadership, also from Memorial University.

I thoroughly enjoyed my career. I enjoyed my work, I enjoyed my colleagues and, most important of all, I enjoyed my students – of which I figure there are about 4,000 spread around this city and around the world. I laughed every day. Some days I cried, but I laughed on those days as well. In 2008, I left Booth Memorial to take a management position in leadership and instruction with the Eastern School District. I retired in 2011.

Mr. Speaker, I have been involved in community activities most of my life, either as a coach, in community organizations, my church, or municipal politics. I served as councillor for Ward 1 and Deputy Mayor of Conception Bay South from 1990 to 1993. In 2010, I went back on council where our current Premier had been keeping my seat warm for some nine years. Yes, Ward 1 in Conception Bay South is a great training ground for provincial politicians.

When I talk about Conception Bay South, Mr. Speaker, I sometimes refer to the town and the district interchangeably. The hon. Members for Harbour Main and Topsail understand that as they also represent sections of the town. The

District of Conception Bay South encompasses the majority of the population of the growing Town of Conception Bay South. The town is home to over 26,000 residents, making it the largest town and second largest municipality in the Province. It is one of Newfoundland and Labrador's newest towns, but made up of some of its oldest settlements.

Incorporated in 1973, the Town of Conception Bay South consists of nine communities: Topsail, Chamberlains, Manuels, Long Pond, Foxtrap, Kelligrews, Upper Gullies, Lawrence Pond, and Seal Cove, most of which follow the sixteen kilometres of coastline along Conception Bay. This varied coastline offers spectacular views of Kelly's Island, Little Bell Island, and Bell Island.

The Town of Conception Bay South has one of the warmest climates in Canada and combined with many modern amenities, residents enjoy a lifestyle second to none in the Province. The combination of urban and rural living is like no other place and it is something our residents take great pride in. From farms that have been worked for generations to a modern-day port to a full array of business and community services, Conception Bay South serves a dynamic population and strives to ensure that our residents have access to the modern conveniences they desire.

The town has two high schools, two junior high schools, four primary-elementary schools. The College of the North Atlantic Seal Cove Campus is the college's petroleum training centre, offering entry-level and continuing education programs for the companies involved in the Province's offshore petroleum industry. The town also has private institutions offering opportunities for post-secondary education.

Conception Bay South prides itself on its open spaces. Starting in the east end with Topsail Beach Rotary Park, these numerous parklands follow the coastline to the west end of the town. The newest facility is Chamberlains Park which will be fully accessible to all mobility-challenged individuals. Worsley Park overlooking Manuels River and Conception Bay is home to our seniors club. The new Manuels River Hibernia Interpretation Centre has become a destination for people who want to add natural

history and a science theme to their visit to my district. In Kelligrews, a group of residents have taken it upon themselves to become champions for the environment under the acronym KEEP, Kelligrews Ecological Enhancement Program.

Finally, further west in the Harbour Main district, we have a little park on the Seal Cove River called The Still. These outdoor spaces are now in the process of being connected by an eighteen-kilometre, non-motorized walking and cycling corridor, following the route of the former rail bed through the town.

Mr. Speaker, most of these outdoor spaces are drained by one or more rivers or brooks. While we have a large number of waterways flowing through Conception Bay South, there are concerns that none of their head waters are in the town or the district. This means that the town and the environmental groups in the district must be aware of developments in other jurisdictions that potentially could affect water quality in Conception Bay South.

Aside from the outdoor spaces, Conception Bay South boasts a variety of recreation and sports facilities, softball fields, baseball fields, a rugby field, a dog park, numerous playgrounds, and two arenas, one of which is under construction and will be open in September of 2015.

The town also boasts a swimming pool complex with squash courts and a lighted artificial turf soccer facility. With these facilities in place and further upgrades in the works, the town is looking forward to hosting the Newfoundland and Labrador Summer Games in 2016.

Mr. Speaker, while the Town of Conception Bay South is a growing, thriving municipality, it does have a major fiscal concern. That is the limited amount of large businesses in the town and, hence, the limited amount of business tax revenue. In response to this concern, the town has identified four economic development priorities, all of which are in the District of Conception Bay South.

The first of these priorities is a forty-hectare business development on Legion Road, which has been branded as the gateway. The immediate vision for this area is a retail mix of big box, mid box, and pad retail outlets. The

long-term vision for the area is to acquire additional lands to the south for future business development opportunities. This land will have to be purchased from the Crown at market value, thus creating another fiscal challenge.

The second part of the town's economic development plan is the designation of the commercial section of Route 60 from Manuels Bridge to Terminal Road as part of the main street improvement plan. I would like to congratulate the town on having recently won the Torngat Award for Economic Development from Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador for this project. I look forward to working with the municipality on moving this business attraction and retention strategy forward.

A third area that will increase economic growth in the District of Conception Bay South is the development of an industrial park on Fowler's Road. This project has been undertaken by a private enterprise and is an indication of the business community's trust that our town is about to take its rightful place as an economic destination on the Northeast Avalon. This development is over twenty-nine hectares in size and is already well on its way to filling up.

The most prominent industrial area of Conception Bay South is the port of Long Pond, which the federal government has recently divested of to a board of directors comprised of town representatives and port users. The port houses facilities for the storage and transfer of materials. Several businesses providing marine services are located adjacent to the site.

The port has a history of handling bulk commodities, for instance, feed grain, crushed rock, lumber, and road salt. Its water depth and wharf space is adequate to accommodate multiple vessels and local usage. The wharf structure is rated for heavy load capacity and has a 220 ton crane available for the loading and unloading of cargo.

Long Pond is also home, Mr. Speaker, to the Royal Newfoundland Yacht Club. It is recognized as a world-class facility, and with over 350 memberships and 120 large yachts. It is a prominent tourist attraction and point of interest.

Mr. Speaker, it is my intention as a Member of the House of Assembly for Conception Bay South to work in co-operation with the town and help facilitate economic growth in our district. The combination of these four commercial priorities will go a long way in the development of our town as an economic leader in our Province.

Mr. Speaker, up to this point I have spoken specifically to issues in my district; however, many issues affect not only Conception Bay South but the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in general. As I knocked on doors during my recent by-election campaign, I picked up common threads from a provincial perspective that concern many of my constituents. These included concerns for seniors, concern over lack of openness in government, concerns regarding health care, and concerns regarding the appointment of an unelected person to Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, all of these issues have been put forward by my colleagues during this session of the House. My colleague from Virginia Waters asked a question about beds not being used in the new seniors' facility in St. John's. The Leader of the Opposition showed us first-hand the degree of redacting we experienced when we requested environmental information from government regarding the Come By Chance refinery.

The Member for Burgeo – La Poile asked government what it is doing to increase screening for diabetes in the Province, and as we know, the fact that we have an unelected Minister of Justice has been referenced by several Opposition members. Mr. Speaker, as the Queen's Loyal Opposition, we are prepared to continue asking tough questions which concern our citizens, and we will continue to hold government accountable for the state of our Province.

Mr. Speaker, I heard a clergyman preach once about the fact that we use the term awful in the wrong context. His premise was that if it is awful or full of awe, then it must be something special. Mr. Speaker, I find myself full of awe. I am awed by the electoral process that brought me here. I am awed by my forty-seven colleagues who put themselves forward as

leaders in this Province. I am awed by the procedures of this hon. House where decisions are made daily which will affect the future of the people of this Province. I am awed by this physical space, which was built to facilitate the operation of our government in the best interest of our citizens, but, Mr. Speaker, the piece that awes me the most is the historical piece.

We are members of the forty-seventh General Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador. I signed my name to the scroll last month. The names of my forty-seven colleagues were already there. As we walk through the corridor outside the House we pass the members' roll showing the names from the previous General Assemblies. It is a walk through the historical record of this Province, this dominion, and this colony.

The first General Assembly was in 1832. This was the first time in the colony's history that the local people could vote for someone to represent them in government. Granted, only the men could vote, but I expect it would have been a very high voter turnout.

The ninth General Assembly, 1865-1869, made a decision that would affect our history for the next eighty-four years and maybe to this day. They decided not to be part of the new country that in 1867 officially became Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the twenty-third General Assembly, 1913-1919, dealt with the impact of the losses from the *SS Newfoundland* disaster and the loss of the *Southern Cross* in the spring of 1914. That summer they raised an army for the British Empire and sent them overseas in October. This is the same General Assembly that would have received news from Beaumont Hamel in July of 1916.

The twenty-sixth General Assembly, 1924-1928, passed legislation in 1925 which gave women the vote and right to seek public office. I am sure that had they lived during that era, my colleagues from Virginia Waters and Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair would have stepped right up to put their names on the ballot.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on with this history lesson because our Province does have such a rich past when it comes to government and

politics in general; however, I believe I have made my point that the work we do here, the forty-eight of us on a daily basis, will become part of the historic mosaic of this Province. We still have to respond to disasters at sea. We still lose our youngest and brightest in theatres of war on foreign soil. We still make decisions on social issues that impact large portions of our population.

Mr. Speaker, let the historical record show that members of the forty-seventh General Assembly, we, the forty-eight of us, made decisions that were well thought out, focused, and, most importantly, in the best interests of the people who we have the great honour of representing.

Thank you very much.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Placentia – St. Mary's.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to be able to rise and offer a few comments with respect to the Address in Reply. Before I do, there are a few people I would like to pay tribute to.

First of all, the new Speaker, the Member for Lewisporte, who was duly elected to that Chair, that position at the starting of this Assembly. The fact that he was unanimously elected to the Chair indicates the comfort level and the confidence this House has in that member to carry out that role. So my congratulations to him, and best wishes to him as he tries to keep order in this House.

He is a former teacher, and there are a number of former teachers in this House. We all know what it is like sometimes to have unruly classes, so I am sure he has the experience necessary to do the job. My wife makes the comment that he looks like a Speaker. I do not know what kind of criteria a Speaker has to have in terms of looks, but she says he looks like a Speaker. Obviously, that must help him for the job as well.

I would also like to welcome the two new members, the members for Stephenville East and CBS, and to say to them, contrary to what we hear a lot in the public and in the media, politicians are honourable people and politics is an honourable profession. We may not get that impression sometimes when we listen to the sort of feedback we get from the public, especially through the media, but all the politicians I know on this side of the House and on the other side of the House are here for a purpose.

They are here to do what they can for their districts, to represent their districts, represent the constituents in their districts, the groups and municipalities, and they work hard at it. They work hard at it, and on both sides of the House. That is what we are all about. If you listen to what we hear on the media and the Open Lines, you would think we are all here to fill our pockets, but the politicians I know here are very serious, hardworking people. It is an honourable profession, and I welcome the two honourable members to it.

I will recall a little story. I recall I was elected two months, my first election, and I went into a friend's house, and the matriarch of the family was there. It was her birthday. As a matter of fact, she was eighty-five years old, and she had supported me in the election – or at least I think she did. When I went in she gave me a hug and whatnot and welcomed me in the house. She said: I suppose you are not there long enough yet to have your pockets full. I said: Well, give me a couple of months anyway.

There is a general perception out there that we are not held in the highest of esteem sometimes and I want to confirm to the hon. members that all the politicians I know and the experience I have had in this House show the opposite.

A special word to the Member for CBS. He is married into a very august Placentia family, so that makes him well grounded. Anybody of my vintage will be well acquainted with the Bussey family in Placentia and anybody who played ball or sports in any event was certainly acquainted with that family. His mother-in-law who is one of my dearest friends, incidentally – and I will have to have a chat with her because I hope her loyalties stay in the right direction. Again, welcome to the House of Assembly, both of you.

Very rarely have I had the opportunity in this House to talk about my district. Generally, any time I have had to speak it is about the Province in general, and today I wanted to talk a little bit about my district and some of the things that have happened there in the last year or so.

My district is one of the largest districts in the Province. It has forty communities. It has 540 kilometres of road. It stretches from Peter's River at the head of St. Mary's Bay all the way around to Branch and the Cape Shore and the other side, down Placentia Bay to Long Harbour, Mount Arlington Heights, Whitbourne, and all of Salmonier Line communities in between. It is a big district and it does not have much of a central focus in that it has many different geographic components.

St. Mary's Bay is an entity to itself, a community to itself. The Cape Shore is a community to itself. The Placentia-Long Harbour region is in itself a separate entity. Whitbourne, which is new into the district, came in 2007, is always related down the Trinity Shore, so it is new to the District of Placentia – St. Mary's.

It is difficult to get a central focus in my district. There is no main highway, for example, that goes right through the district. There are roads like spokes of the wheel. For that reason, to try to have a presence in all areas of the district is quite challenging.

You could pour millions of dollars into one of those geographic components in the district, but it means nothing to the other area of the district. You could put a million dollars into a road in St. Mary's Bay, but it means nothing to the people in Whitbourne. You could put money into Long Harbour, but it means nothing to the people on the Cape Shore. This diverse geographic region is a challenge to represent, but I am honoured and privileged to represent it and I did want to talk about it briefly today for a few moments.

Every year – and the Member for Exploits talked about the monies that have been spent in the district, so I am going to talk today about some of the money that has been spent in my district. I do that for a reason, too. I think it portrays and it reflects the sort of work that members do on behalf of their constituents.



I send out a newsletter every year. Last year I sent one out sometime in the fall and I am getting another one ready to go in the next couple of days. In that newsletter, you reflect the things that have happened in the district over the past year. I was surprised to add up the amount of money that is spent in the district in the course of a year, not including the money that is spent in the operating costs of government agencies that exist in the regular operational costs – that exist in government agencies and departments in the district – but new monies that are invested into the district for various projects and initiatives. Some of that money is as small as a \$100 grant for Volunteer Week to millions of dollars spent on roads.

I want to talk about some of the things that have been done. I am going to start off with transportation. As I said, I have 540 kilometres of road in my district. It is pretty hard to keep up to date on keeping those roads up to date and keeping them up to a level standard of repair.

This year, for example, we have committed \$6.6 million to do the road from Placentia to Colinet. There was a very good reason for that. A lot of people asked me: Where does that road go and where does it end? What is the purpose of doing that road?

The road from Placentia to Colinet was part of the old Salmonier Line that went from Placentia to St. John's. That was the thoroughfare from Placentia to St. John's until 1968 when they opened up the Argentia Access Road. At that point in time, it was abandoned because all the access from Placentia area to St. John's came in through the Argentia Access Road.

Now, with all the development going on in the Argentia-Long Harbour area and the need for people from St. Mary's Bay to go out there for jobs and go to work, this road now becomes very important. From a perspective of culture, heritage, and tourism it becomes very important because it completes the loop from Placentia all around to the Cape Shore, the Cape St. Mary's Ecological Reserve, and back to Placentia again. It opens up Placentia Bay to St. Mary's Bay and it will bring traffic into St. Mary's Bay.

For economic strategic importance this road was necessary to be done. It is a three-year project

and hopefully at the end of three years that road will be done. I think it will pay great dividends both for the Placentia and the St. Mary's Bay regions.

The roads are always a challenge, as anybody who works in a rural district knows. When you have 540 kilometres of it, you have more challenges than usual, but it is always a challenge to try to keep roads up and maintained, and as the Member for St. George's – Stephenville East mentioned earlier, the need for ongoing road maintenance. This year has certainly been a challenge in a lot of districts, including mine, trying to keep that many roads up to standard.

There is not enough money minted, Mr. Speaker, to do all the roads. It just cannot be done. We have to make a special effort to maintain them, as best we can, but it has been a problem in my district this year because we have so many of them. Hats off to the people who work in the depots and the maintenance workers; they work hard and do the best they can and they are doing a good job at it.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to municipal capital works, the municipalities in my district have benefited greatly from the Municipal Capital Works Programs and expenditures and investments of this government. Just this year alone, in my district, we have committed \$4.6 million for municipal capital works money this year. That is work to be done. There is over \$3 million in three-year water improvements and wave wall repair in Placentia. There is \$425 million for water improvements in Riverhead. There are water improvements, almost \$500,000, in St. Bride's. There is water improvement of \$328,000 in Whitbourne. There are local road improvements in Colinet for \$260,000. You try to have a presence in all the different components of that district.

Placentia, incidentally, has the bulk of this money. Placentia, this past year, celebrated twenty years of amalgamation, where, in 1994, the Towns of Dunville, Jersey'side, Freshwater and Placentia came together and amalgamated into the Town of Placentia. That created a significant amount of infrastructure needs and they are trying to meet them as the time goes on. Twenty years later, we had the celebration this

year in Placentia, in which I was proud to attend. It was a great event. It is just amazing that twenty years have gone by since that has occurred. It lends itself to a number of municipal capital needs and they have been dealing with that very well.

Placentia, as we all know, is in the centre of an industrial development area over the last ten year. With developments in Long Harbour and developments in Argentia, the Vale project in Long Harbour and the Husky project in Argentia have created an industrial buzz in that area, and the area is doing very well. As a matter of fact, at present there are about 500 employees working in Argentia in the various initiatives that are going on down there. That will rise of course, because we anticipate very soon the awarding of the tender for the gravity base, the platform for Husky. That is going to do wonders for Placentia, and another reason for the development and the connection between Placentia Bay and St. Mary's Bay because of the gravitation of employees towards that area.

These are important investments. They are the result of initiatives and proposals put forth by the various municipalities and groups in the area for assistance. I am very pleased that the government is able to come through. As a matter of fact, in the district alone I would say over the last five to six years, we are probably talking over \$20 million in municipal capital works. When you talk about communities like Placentia, Long Harbour has had a couple or \$3 million worth of municipal capital works; Whitbourne, we have invested heavily in Whitbourne.

Whitbourne, incidentally, is one of the fastest growing municipalities in the Province because of its strategic location. I like to say that Whitbourne is a half an hour from everywhere. It is half an hour from St. John's, half an hour from Carbonear, half an hour from Bull Arm, half an hour from Long Harbour. It is strategically located to grow even further, and it has developed a number of residential areas there, subdivisions. Most of us know Whitbourne only from what we see on the Trans-Canada going through. That is all I knew about Whitbourne until I came into my district, to stop for a cup of coffee or gas. When you go into Whitbourne and see the developments that

have occurred there over the last five years, then you will see what I am talking about.

You have the Whitbourne-Long Harbour-Placentia triangle of development, which is the core in the center of my district, and an area that is doing very well. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in Long Harbour, government just invested \$818,000. Part of a \$1.6 billion project in Long Harbour, to establish an industrial park in Long Harbour. That industrial park has a built-in client, and they will provide services and deliver services and support to the Vale hydromet plant.

That plant is going to need a number of services and supports. So with the industrial park almost on site, this will provide for post-construction employment, as far as the Vale project is concerned. Right now, there is somewhere between 5,000 and 6,000 employees who have worked on that Vale project. When the project is done and the construction is finished and they all move away, you have 400 to 500 people who will work at that plant. This industrial park will give fallout or a carryover for other employment to service the industrial park as a post-development initiative to supply employment after the construction job is done.

That is a considered investment that the minister and I attended down in Long Harbour, along with Senator Doyle from the federal government, to announce a \$1.6 billion project for Long Harbour a few months ago.

I should mention, too, not very long ago the Minister of Natural Resources, the Premier, and I attended the first nickel production in Long Harbour. It was a very significant event, and that is production from nickel matte. They will be processing nickel from Voisey's Bay hopefully within a year. It was encouraging to see that come to fruition.

Mr. Speaker, I want to mention a couple of other things with respect to my district. When you think about Placentia – St. Mary's, you do not think agriculture. When you think agriculture, you think Central Newfoundland and the West Coast. This agriculture and agrifoods industry is one of the fastest growing in the Province and it is continuously developing and diversifying. The value of production has gone up now to

approximately \$500 million a year and employs about 6,500 people.

The provincial government continues to support the agriculture and agrifoods industry through the \$37 million Growing Forward program. There is a \$7.73 million Agriculture and Agrifoods Development Fund, and there is \$2.25 million Provincial Agrifoods Assistance Program.

Mr. Speaker, in my district this year in terms of agriculture, we gave out \$222,416 worth of grants to a number of different farming institutions: Harricott farms in St. Mary's Bay, a dairy farm; Green Hill Farms on the Cape Shore; Cape Shore Cattle Association; Hickey's Greenhouse in Dunville; the Evergreen sod producers in St. Mary's Bay; the Cape Shore Sheep Breeders, and the Riverside Fur Farms. Agriculture is alive and well in the District of Placentia – St. Mary's, and something we did not think about four or five years ago.

There are so many different areas we could speak about in terms of work going on in the district. The one I want to bring attention to – I reference this for a particular reason, and I speak to the two hon. members who were just elected because it shows the type of work and activity that an MHA has to do and regularly does in the course of his service in his constituency.

For example, it is not a big amount of money, but roughly \$50,000 went out in my district this year for things like recreation grants, cultural and special events, health and wellness grants, and so on. These went to groups like youth groups, theatre groups, museums, historical societies, branch recreation, chambers of commerce, historical associations, sports and recreation, and the various cultural events that went on. These are all things – anything from \$100 to \$1,000 to \$5,000.

In order to get them, the different groups make the proposals and the MHAs have to chase them down. We spend our time going to ministers and supporting these initiatives. I have a list here a mile long that involves my office every day looking for these grants for groups. That is the sort of work MHAs do that is probably not noticed and you do not know about.

In the few seconds I have left, as I said I have \$18 million that went in the district in the past year. I do not have time to get to it, but I want to make a point to put something in perspective.

**MR. JOYCE:** How long are you going to be, Minister?

**MR. F. COLLINS:** I want to make a point. The Member for Bay of Islands should stay quiet for a minute and let me do it.

The speculation is that this government will have a considerable deficit on our hands this year because of oil prices and whatnot. I cannot speculate what it might be. Hopefully it will not be what people think it is, but the possibility exists.

Let me say this, just put it in perspective. This government in the last five years has reduced total personal income tax rates that have put \$2 billion back in the pockets of taxpayers.

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

I remind the member his time has expired.

**MR. F. COLLINS:** I know we cannot use that and say we are not going to have a deficit, but just put it in perspective. That is what we have done, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. F. COLLINS:** It sort of says something for what the government has done.

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

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

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

**MR. SLADE:** I am very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to stand here in my place today to bring out some issues about my district.

Mr. Speaker, in the last session of the House of Assembly, the Department of Transportation sent out a memo for the members on both sides of the House to put in names of three roads in

their district they figured needed work done on them. We all put in our preferences to see the roadwork done. Of course, it was based on the need. If the road was in bad shape or not, we based it on need.

We sent it along to the Department of Transportation at that time. I will say one of those roads was 200 metres. That is what it was. I do thank the last Minister of the Department of Transportation for looking after that. It was their road. It really needed to be done, so I do thank the Minister of Transportation at that time.

Mr. Speaker, the rest of the roads in the district did not get done. I am just going to go through a couple of them with you because as I am coming through you will see what I am speaking about.

Mr. Speaker, I am after standing in this House many, many times to talk about Bristol's Hope and Freshwater Beaches. It is a concern for the residents. If a fire ever takes place in that area and residents are trapped inside, I am going to tell you, somebody is going to have to answer for those residents. It has been brought up here. It is a concern.

It was always done by the Department of Transportation and the roads were maintained in both of those areas. For whatever reason they stopped doing it. I will never understand it. About three or four years ago it was dropped. Those roads have not been maintained since. Of course those towns cannot afford to do it. It is the Department of Transportation's responsibility anyway, Mr. Speaker.

I am going to bring those two and I am going to continue to bring petitions here until something happens in both of those communities. Mr. Speaker, I am just flabbergasted to understand why it was stopped. Is there anybody on the other side – the Department of Transportation? Can they tell me why they were given up on? These people do not deserve it, I can tell you that. Those people deserve the same respect as every other community in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, in the community of Freshwater now – and this is something that is after coming to light – on June 12, this year, the Department of Environment and Conservation carried out a

preliminary testing of the drinking water quality. The arsenic level that was found in well number three in Freshwater is four times the acceptable level. One would say there should be a boil order on it.

Just let me say from what I can understand by putting a boil order on it, you compound the arsenic to a higher level which is worse. When you get it into a liquid form it is absolutely worse. Something needs to be done for those people down there, Mr. Speaker.

My understanding of it was the well in the beginning was simply dug too deep. The rest of the wells down there are only down sixty feet and the water is fine. This well here is down 160 feet and the arsenic levels are very high in it. People are still on that well, Mr. Speaker, and they are drinking that water.

Living in Newfoundland and Labrador today, one would think that one of the commodities we should always be respecting with regard to people would be clean, decent drinking water. One would only think.

Mr. Speaker, in 2011, 2012, and 2013 the town of Bryant's Cove put in to have Point Road done. Point Road is a very busy area. It is a very busy road. There are several roads coming off that road up there. It is probably one of the highest used roads in the town of Bryant's Cove. Each time they put in for capital works, yet to no avail. If I am not mistaken, I think they put in for it in 2014, too, and never got it. They simply never got it.

Here is the problem with it, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, from what I can understand – or Friday I was told this by the mayor of Bryant's Cove – the Department of Transportation plows this road. The road is in such poor shape over there now, I was told by the mayor that the Department of Transportation offered them up a pallet of cold patch to go out and try to do something with it.

Mr. Speaker, the town of Bryant's Cove will gladly accept that pallet of stuff. I do not know where they are going to put it over there because there is not enough road left there to put anything on. The Department of Transportation's equipment is even finding it

bad going out there to try and do anything with regard to plowing the roads or anything else.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the biggest problem with it. The biggest problem is the bus drivers who go out there and pick up the kids from Bryant's Cove to bring them to school. They say if there is not something done with the road in the very near future – and I guess it is not going to get done this year, it is absolutely not going to get done now. If something is not done with the road out there, they are going to refuse to go out there and pick up the kids on the bus; damage to the busses and that.

I have a bigger concern than that, Mr. Speaker. What about those kids aboard the buses? The road is that bad and that rough the kids are getting shaken to pieces on this bus. It is a concern for the children in Bryant's Cove who use this bus system.

Mr. Speaker, we can all say how much we get for our districts, but there are concerns out in the districts that we need to attend to and we need to address each and every day. It is just simply not good enough.

The town of Bryant's Cove got their share to put into it. It is a matter we say of the Department of Municipal Affairs saying to them let's get this road straightened up. Let's do it in the best interests of the residents there and in the best interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. We all deserve it. We all deserve our fair share. There are forty-eight districts in Newfoundland and Labrador and we all should be treated equal. We are all the people of this Province, this great Province of ours.

Mr. Speaker, three years ago there was some roadwork done in Riverhead, Harbour Grace. There was a bit of pavement done there. For whatever reason the drain is on the high side of the road, the elevation of the road is down this way, and now we have several houses there. Every time it rains we have several houses down there that are flooding out.

I was down there not too long ago to a resident's house and this gentleman, Mr. Speaker – the water actually was running in through the man's front door. That is not good enough. The

Department of Transportation has been contacted. They have been told about it. They have been asked to go down and look at it. They go down and look at it and still nothing. It is just simply not good enough. The residents deserve to be treated better in that area and it is something that I will bring petition in after petition after petition to deal with that issue.

Mr. Speaker, I always believe that when we identify danger we should address it. Any time there is a dangerous situation, or anything that could risk our people, I think we should do it. I worked the whole year at first trying to get the lines put on the road – I e-mailed different departments and that – there by the TC Square in Carbonear. Mr. Speaker, after a while I have to say they did come and put the lines on and it was a good thing, but they still did not go back to put the arrows where the arrows are supposed to be on the road. It is still not done to this day.

For me, Mr. Speaker, I can drive through Carbonear, I can go around that mall, and I can probably navigate in which lane I am supposed to be in, if I am turning off or whatever. A lot of people who come through there come from the District of Bay de Verde, or Port de Grave, or wherever, and they do not know the area there. The line is not being placed on that. Why would the Department of Transportation not put the arrow markings on it? It is still not done.

It is considered one of the highest risk areas in my district. If anybody would like to pick up the phone and call the RCMP to identify how many accidents that is in that area, I will tell you, they will be very, very surprised. I was speaking to the RCMP last night. They told me the arrows are not there, people do not know where to be going, and that is the reason why there are high accident incidents there.

I appeal to the Department of Transportation to take the time to go down and put those lines on the road. It is a matter of life and death. I do not want to be sitting in this chair if somebody loses their life there because of neglect. That is what it is, Mr. Speaker. It is neglect.

Mr. Speaker, on the top part of Freshwater, which was one of the roads that we put in this year when the minister asked to identify three roads – the top portion of Freshwater Road was

one kilometre of road that is in a deplorable state. Really, I do not know what the Department of Transportation is going to have to go back to now because it is not there. The road is all humps, bumps, hollows, and potholes. There is not enough pavement left on it, we will say, for nothing.

We need to identify what is really bad. I agreed with the minister on that; we need to identify it and then we need to resolve it. Whatever the cost of that is, we need to resolve the one kilometre of pavement. It is the same thing on the Tilton highway, Mr. Speaker. For whatever reason they came so far down the road on that area, they stopped and from, say, Harbour Grace or going up there to Tilton area from the main road there up, it is in a deplorable condition. I am sure the member across the way can attest to it also, the Member for Port de Grave district. I am sure he can attest to what I am talking about here today. Those are just a few items.

Mr. Speaker, Lady Lake Road in Harbour Grace, they have been waiting for roadwork for twenty years. There is nothing done. It is still not done and not going to get done. Those residents up there have been approaching me. They approached the member before me and were promised that it was going to get straightened away, in his tenure. It is still not straightened away. The residents up there are saying: What is wrong with us? The Town of Harbour Grace keeps applying for it but for whatever reason – again, it just simply does not get done.

While I hear the members across the way talk about all they have done – and I am not going to get into a shouting match with them over all they have done, but I will say to the members across the way there is a lot that you have not done. There is a lot that you have not done and it still needs to be done. We are going to turn around and certainly keep your feet to the fire, and I am going to stand here every day.

That might not mean a lot to some of you guys over there. I am going to stand here every day with petition after petition. If that is what is needed, that is what I am going to do. It is just plain and simple.

Victoria: There has been a nice bit of roadwork done in Victoria, but when you are dealing with

highways it is always an issue with regard to repairing roads. Victoria is one of those communities – it is a growing community. It has been doing really, really super in regard of new housing starts and it is a great place to live and rear up kids. Of course, we need to pay attention. We definitely need to pay attention.

Mr. Speaker, coming along by Harbour Grace on the Veteran's Memorial Highway, just as you go to turn down into Harbour Grace off the highway, there is a place there called Jamie's Way. It is a four-way intersection. This lady who contacted me, she had a major accident there because of the high speed. It is 100 kilometres, so you can whiz through there and four ways – the speed limit is just not acceptable there. Once you go past it, I guess you can pick up to 100 kilometres again, but I am just wondering: Do I need to bring a petition in here or is that something the Minister of Transportation will have a look at, to reduce the speed there to at least seventy? Because it is a four-way intersection and there is a lot of traffic going by there and they are just whizzing by. So if you happen to just dart out there, you are definitely going to get it; there is no doubt about that. It is an issue that I promised this lady that I would bring up here.

Mr. Speaker, I sat here the other day and I was kind of very interested in what the minister across the way had to say here about the fishery. I was glad to hear some of the things he was saying. If we are to get a grasp on our fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador, we have to pay attention to it. It is a \$1.1 billion fishing industry. The funny part about it is in 1992 the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador at that point in time was a \$1 billion fishery. Mr. Speaker, some twenty-two years later and no growth?

I think if attention is paid to the fishery, which it needs to be, I think we can turn that into probably a \$2 billion fishery. We need to go everywhere we can possibly go to do some marketing and other things to increase the value of that industry. That industry is important to 18,000 fish harvesters and plant workers in Newfoundland and Labrador – very important indeed.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I can go on and on here for the rest of the night, but I figure I will finish up here now.

Thank you very much for allowing me to speak.

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

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

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

Just like my colleagues before me, Placentia – St. Mary's and for Exploits, I, too, want to congratulate the Speaker on his position. It is certainly good to see him going from Deputy Speaker to Speaker, and I certainly wanted to pass those congratulations on.

I also want to recognize and congratulate the Conception Bay South and St. Georges – Stephenville East, those two members, the new members in the House, and congratulate them on their maiden speech that they made today. It was very interesting and I listened intently to what they had to say.

I also want to congratulate the Premier on his new position here in the House and throughout the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and I am sure that he is going to do a tremendous job. Already in my district, I have had some good comments about our Premier. That is good to know. When you go around to different functions throughout the district and you hear people talking about the Premier and the good things they think about him, it certainly is good to know. I think there are some good things that we are going to see from here on into the future.

I want to talk a bit about my district because the district that I represent, the Newfoundland and Labrador economy in that district cannot be any better than what it is. The Bellevue district is striving with growth in the area because of the different megaprojects that are there, but if you listen to the news and read the papers and you listen to different people saying, oh, poor management. I think a while ago on *Issues and Answers* I was listening to the Leader of the Opposition, and he was saying it is

mismanagement of our funds and we need to manage our funds properly and manage our revenues properly.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on some of the things. I want to touch on Bull Arm, Mr. Speaker. Today in the House of Assembly when the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair stood up and mentioned about Bull Arm, I was astonished, Mr. Speaker. I was astonished. I do not know what she means by that. I certainly would like for her to get up and clarify the comment she made. I would like her to clarify what she meant by Bull Arm, because it could mean a lot of things.

Mr. Speaker, Bull Arm did not just happen. Bull Arm came into operation because of the good management of our government, because of the good management of our natural resources, and the professional people we have in natural resources. I want to reference back to when Kathy Dunderdale was the minister and the negotiations that took place with Bull Arm and the other megaprojects.

People of the Province have to realize that when these negotiations went on, it was then that skilled trades for women came into our Province. It was negotiated into those megaprojects. Today we have many women who are out there in the skilled trades. We have many women working in Bull Arm. We have many women working in Long Harbour. We have many women working in Come By Chance area, and we also have many people who are working also in skilled trades in our fishing industry.

Mr. Speaker, I was out to Bull Arm just a short time ago and I looked at the operations that are going on out there, and to see the numbers of people who are working there from all over the Province. You hear some areas say in some of the campaigns that went on during the by-elections we want to get some of the shared revenue. We want to get some of the shared things that are happening through the megaprojects.

Mr. Speaker, if you were only to see and talk to the numbers of people who are working in Bull Arm, or should I say Bull Arm, there are a lot of people from around this Province of

Newfoundland and Labrador. There are people from down on the Northern Peninsula, there are people from Central, there are people from Western, there are people from St. John's. Just drive out over the road at 5:30 or 6:00 o'clock, on my way home in the evenings when I leave here, I travel out over, and to see the double-lane traffic that is coming in from Long Harbour and Bull Arm, a lot of people.

Just come from the west on a given day at 5:30 and 6:00 o'clock and see the double-lane traffic that is going west from Bull Arm, the refinery, and also from Long Harbour.

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

**MR. PEACH:** Mr. Speaker, the numbers are great.

Long Harbour, Mr. Speaker, did not just happen. I remember back in probably 2001 or 2002, when I was Chair of the Joint Town Council in the Isthmus area. I remember the conversations we had with the mayor in Long Harbour and with the development corporation in Long Harbour, and the problems they were having at that time with the Opposition Party that is in power today, that are over there today. They could not get the environmental assessments done. They really did not want the project to go ahead. They tried a project before that under Waste Management. They were looking at sending waste products out of the Province, and they could not get that to work.

All of that was under the Liberal Administration, but in 2003 when this government got elected, by November, Mr. Speaker, Long Harbour was starting to go because the environmental assessment got done and that moved it ahead.

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

**MR. PEACH:** In Long Harbour, we have many numbers of people there now.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Up to 4,000.

**MR. PEACH:** We have had up to 4,000, but not right now. There have been some laid off, but there are some full-time jobs in there right now.

Just a couple of weeks ago, we saw the Premier and the Minister of Natural Resources and others out there when they put through first nickel. They are telling me once they get to the peak numbers, they will have pretty close to 600 or 625 working in that plant. That is great numbers for the district and great numbers for the people around the areas. Quite a few people in my district have benefitted from it, some have not. If you do not have the skilled trades to get the job, well then you are just not going to be able to walk into Long Harbour and say, I want work here. There are a good many numbers who have the skilled trades and there are some who do not.

There are a lot of people who have moved into my area. There are a lot of people who have moved into Blaketown. Blaketown has grown tremendously. I would say that Blaketown, even though it is a local service district, it is pretty much equivalent now to Whitbourne. There are five new subdivisions gone into Blaketown. That is growing in the area.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about that, we can also talk about rentals and the high rent costs that are in the area. Then it comes into affordable housing. The numbers of people who are renting there are renting at about \$1,200 to \$1,500 a month. That is costly for somebody who rented those houses before for at least \$500 or probably even less.

Argentia is on the doorstep of my district as well. The Member for Placentia – St. Mary's mentioned earlier about all the work that is going on in Argentia area and over 500 people. Some of these people are coming from my district and all over the Province. Let me say that all these projects I am talking about here now are people working from all over the Province. Not just from the local area; they are from all over the Province.

The housing in my district, in every community from Goobies to New Harbour, has grown. Arnold's Cove has a new subdivision built there. Come By Chance does not have any more land left now to build houses. All the land that they had is used up. Sunnyside is still building new housing.

The Norman's Cove-Long Cove area, there is potential there now. Right now there was a



resort that was supposed to be started. It did not get underway, but now they have it turned into residential housing. There is upwards of something like, I think it is around 100 houses to be built there. That is a potential growth for Long Cove.

Chapel Arm has run out of property to be able to build homes. That is a lot of growth in that area. People are moving in from other places, buying homes, and building homes. The young people are coming back, Mr. Speaker. Young people are coming back from Upper Canada. There are a lot of young people who have come back.

On the other side of that, a lot of young people are staying. At one time we would train somebody in Newfoundland, and then they would have to go out of the Province to get their training and come back, but not anymore, Mr. Speaker. We see numbers now coming out of the skilled trades – and the member over on the other side today mentioned all the apprentices that were in Bull Arm. She referenced the ones who were there trying to get their hours or their forms or whatever it was they had to have.

I would think that maybe quite a few of them are from Labrador, too, Mr. Speaker. We have to include Labrador in this because we do see a lot of people from Labrador coming back to work on these megaprojects. That shows that the apprentices coming out of school are working on these large megaprojects. That is good to see.

Just a couple of weeks ago the deal was signed on the Come By Chance oil refinery. That is a big thing for this Province and a big thing for my district. Probably last year or even up to a couple of months ago there was so much uncertainty that I was getting calls from young people who were working in the Come By Chance oil refinery. They were wondering if we heard anything with regard to Come By Chance because they wanted to build homes in Arnold's Cove, and they wanted to build homes in Come By Chance and Sunnyside. They did not know what to be doing because there was a big question mark around them.

Come By Chance signed a deal just a few weeks ago. I think it was last week I had a call from a person in Come By Chance saying the deal was

signed. I was only too glad to be the MHA for that district –

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

**MR. PEACH:** – and be part of some of the discussions that took place with the oil refinery.

I want to thank the Minister of Natural Resources for the great job they have been doing in working with the company, in working with the towns, and in working with the union. We have had several discussions with the union. We have had several discussions with the towns. Although it is a private company, we had a lot of discussions with the refinery. We are very pleased to see that company now has signed up with SilverRange and they are moving ahead. The future looks a lot brighter now for Come By Chance.

Back on November 8, I think it was, I took a group from AES, ACOA, CBDC, and the managers from the towns in the surrounding area, and we visited Newfoundland Transshipment Limited. Newfoundland Transshipment Limited is in Arnold's Cove. We did a tour of the facility, Mr. Speaker.

Very little do we hear of Newfoundland Transshipment Limited. The crude oil that transships the terminal at Whiffen Head, Placentia Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador – the transshipment is in two stages, Mr. Speaker. Stage one is from the offshore oil production platform, to shuttle tankers, to the Newfoundland Transshipment terminal. Stage two is from the transshipment terminal, to the conventional tanker, to the world market.

The facility has exceptional, world-class infrastructure; a designed receiving rate of 80,000 barrels an hour; and a designed loading rate of 50,000 barrels an hour. Berth one in that transshipment area can accommodate 35,999 to 159,000 deadweight tankers, Mr. Speaker, and there is room for one more berth expansion. In talking to the management there, they are optimistic that when Hebron comes on stream, they may be able to negotiate extensions to their facilities there as well to be able to modify the terminal to accommodate the transshipment of crude oil from the Hebron offshore development.

Mr. Speaker, my time is running down, but I want to talk on the fishery. I do agree with the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace. The fishery is coming back. The traditional fishery is coming back. You heard our minister, I think it was last Thursday, say that the fishery is coming back. We have to be ready for it. There is knowledge over on this side, and we have done a lot to help out the fishery as it is now.

Icewater Seafoods peaks at about 180 workers per year, Mr. Speaker. If it were not for Icewater Seafoods, I do not know what the fishermen would do when handling the groundfish, the cod fishery. The inshore fishery this year has done, I would say, really well in some areas and in some areas not so well. In most areas they have because of the grading program that Icewater had on the go this past summer. The grading program that they had on the go paid, I think it was, eighty cents a pound for grade A, it was forty cents I think for grade B, and twenty cents for grade C. In most cases when I talked to the Icewater management about the inshore fish that was landed this year, quite a bit of it was grade A and the fishermen got eighty cents a pound.

The lobster fishery in Placentia Bay has not been all that great. It has not been that great for the last few years. Our government has put money into programs through the FFAW, and through Memorial University to study what is happening to our lobster fishery and also the crab fishery, Mr. Speaker. The crab fishery did really good again this year from all areas of the Province.

I will also mention the seal fishery. I am trying to get through this so that my time will not run out. Mr. Speaker, Carino in my district employs on a yearly basis about forty-five to sixty people depending on the season. The seal fishery is doing really well. Most people now this time of the year will soon be gearing up to go back at the seal fishery again this year.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak a little bit on the seniors in my district while I have a few minutes left. There are very important accomplishments that we have had on the seniors. I am extremely proud of what our Administration has accomplished. I feel strongly that our efforts and initiatives have

positively impacted the lives of many of our residents.

Mr. Speaker, the new department that has been put in place by our Premier, Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, is doing really well. I must commend the minister for the great work he is doing.

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

**MR. PEACH:** I was listening to the minister this morning on Open Line. I was listening to him again on Thursday on Open Line – I think it was Thursday – and several times last week. I must say that for the first time since I have been an MHA, finally our seniors are getting some recognition to what they should be getting.

The Provincial Home Repair Program; I just want to say when somebody from my district calls me up, when a senior or a low-income family person calls me up and talks to me about the PHRP program, I do not talk to them on the phone, Mr. Speaker. I make an appointment to go to the house and talk to them at their homes. I have been up on the roof of thirty houses since I have been an MHA. There are not many MHAs in the history of this Province who can say that.

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

**MR. PEACH:** When you go into a senior's home and you ask them do they have anybody there who can take pictures of the roof or take pictures of their attic so they can get a PHRP program and they say everybody is away working and I do not have anybody there, then I do not mind taking a ladder and getting up on the roof.

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

**MR. PEACH:** Mr. Speaker, the seniors in our Province, they need our attention; they need our funding. The PHRP program, the Home Modification Program, and the disability program are programs those people use quite frequently.

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

I remind the hon. member his time is expired.

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

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

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak in the Address in Reply.

The member there opposite, I can certainly attest myself that I have been on rooftops, and I have been with the member-elect for Trinity – Bay de Verde and he has been there as well.

It is a real pleasure to be back in the House. I welcome my new colleagues, the Members for St. George's – Stephenville East and Conception Bay South, and soon the Members for Trinity – Bay de Verde and Humber East.

I certainly think that one of the important things when we talk about our districts and we talk about the Province as a whole, we need to be cognizant that co-operation and collaboration is really key to achieving results. One of the things I have always said since I have been here is that maintaining and the importance of advancing telecommunication and transportation networks is really key to any economy.

I have seen, Mr. Speaker, some investments in port infrastructure in my district recently this summer, which has been very important and vital. Working with Small Craft Harbours, the federal entity, we have been able to see the Conche port expanded by twenty-five feet. That \$700,000 investment is partnered with an operating plant that has seen employment where you have hundreds of trucks going over that road of 17.4 kilometres, really building a stronger economy.

People from Englee, from Roddickton, Bide Arm, from Croque, from the community of Conche, from the West Coast and other areas come to this community for employment. The only downside is that they have a 17.4 kilometre gravel road. Something needs to be done to address that, some form of multi-year plan to commit to making sure that road infrastructure gets paved, because they have a very strong

tourism economy and they have a strong regional economy in fishing.

The federal government sees this and this government did spend upwards of \$6 million to see that road realigned. We need to see that final commitment there.

We also saw – and I was able to be in the District of CBS at Long Pond with the federal wharf transfer, myself with the Main Brook Research and Development Corporation. This entity in Main Brook, a very small town, is able to see the divestiture of a federal wharf of \$675,000. This investment will create new opportunities for this community. This community has an operating fish plant whereas before it was a forestry town primarily.

It still has an operating sawmill, Coates sawmill, which does quite a number of board feet. When we look at where it is going into the research and development piece – and I commend the former Minister of Fisheries for announcing some FTNOP funding to see the first amount of half-shell scallops that are going to be actually be shipped out of the Province that are done right in Main Brook. That is where we are going, niche products, valued added. It is creating local jobs in the economy. That is so important.

The Main Brook Research and Development Corporation are working with all entities and partners to try to accelerate growth and development. Main Brook has seen housing development starts. They have been able to capitalize on municipal capital works.

I know the Member for Exploits said that my district over the last five years has seen \$17.5 million in municipal capital works. The communities are grateful and very thankful for the investments. There are significant needs still outstanding when it comes to all of our municipalities. We have likely well over \$1 billion in infrastructure deficits throughout this Province when it comes to municipalities.

We have also seen that there has been investment at the port of St. Anthony when we look at paving our port and looking at the amount of cruise ship visits that come to the Town of St. Anthony and also at L'Anse aux

Meadows. We have really been building a tourism economy there as well where you have thousands of people. These are internationals that come and spend quite a bit into the local economy with the UNESCO site and the Grenfell legacy and so much to add.

We have seen where ACOA has been partnering with St. Anthony Basin Resources Incorporated, the towns and outlying areas, to really develop Vinland, just like New World Island in the Twillingate area has really developed and broadened its tourism economy. This is happening on the Great Northern Peninsula in Vinland. These are the types of diversification that is needed in terms of helping create further employment and further investment.

The St. Anthony Airport: One of the first letters I have written as an MHA was to the federal department of transportation, Transport Canada, talking about the St. Anthony Airport and how important that piece of infrastructure is, and how we needed investment. Right now, that airport is one of the busiest airports for the population that it services all in Atlantic Canada and across the country. It is seeing a lot of passenger traffic, and it received a \$3.2 million investment from the federal government to see security enhanced, to see the terminal broadened. Those types of investments are so important. We have seen Provincial Airlines, which the former owner was from St. Anthony – that entity was sold for over \$200 million to a Winnipeg investment exchange.

So, these are the types of things, this type of innovation around ice surveillance and everything that is happening. There is a lot of innovation that is happening right here in Newfoundland and Labrador, but we are not doing the best job in terms of capitalizing on all the opportunities that we could have. I think that is something that we need to see from the government, is that we need to see greater partnership and greater collaboration.

I have been working with a number of entities, and I have to thank the Town of Bay Roberts – that fire department saw that there was a need in St. Lunenburg-Griquet. They had additional bunker suits and they donated two bunker suits and a third jacket to the Town of St. Lunenburg-Griquet. That shows the compassion and also the care

and how the fire departments are willing to protect and help others who are in need. Since then as well there was a firefighter in Quirpon that was able to donate another bunker suit that they owned to help the cause as well.

So there are a lot of things that are undertaking, and there is a lot of heart in our small communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. I have been very fortunate that we have seen the benefit of regionalization in terms of fire services. The Straits Fire Department has thirteen communities that have come together under the NorPen model of a regional service board. Every household pays \$110 for their fire department, servicing thirteen communities; whereas before, it was impossible to have a fire department in every little community of 150 or 200 or 300 people.

Now you have two fire stations with a contingent of about thirty volunteer firefighters, and you have three fire trucks and you have great equipment that is there. There is a lot of collaboration going forward. The former Minister of Municipal Affairs was up and announced the third fire truck recently and other equipment going to various fire departments – and there are still outstanding needs, and there will always be outstanding needs.

I have worked quite closely with the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, the Member for Gander, and we are seeing in the Town of Conche where that fire department is being expanded through programming through that department. So sometimes you have to work and you have to find different means and different initiatives to match up skill sets and train people. We have seen some real beneficial employment created in the Town of Englee through the Department of Advanced Education and Skills, as well as we have seen a \$350,000 investment with community partners in Main Brook where we have seen a community centre go up.

These types of things are showing that our small communities are alive and thriving and doing well. These are the types of things we need to be talking about. We need to be talking about our successes and how we can also cut down on some of the red tape. Because one of the big issues I see when we talk about Crown land and

we talk about building in our rural communities, and I am sure other members do as well, is that there is such a delay in the process of surveying and trying to get that build that it can be a real deterrent to business or to residential builds. It is hurting and stunting growth in the rural economy especially.

The urban economy has more infrastructure in place when it comes to the ownership of land and developers, but I think we are really missing out where we need to put more focus on that and maybe the moving of Crown lands into Municipal Affairs will help that process. I am hoping to see some success because we do need to see population growth in our rural areas as well. We will not have success if just one region or just pockets are doing well in the Province.

I have been speaking about broadband Internet quite a bit. I am very pleased to see that the switch is going on, I guess, tomorrow and Pines Cove will see high-speed Internet in my community, and probably a little bit later when it comes to Eddies Cove East. There are still a number of other communities in my district and across the Province that need broadband. We should be able to provide broadband to all communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. I think there are a number of communities – I encourage people to go see the listing because they will find that there are communities listed on that broadband listing on the Department of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development where only some of them have broadband Internet, not all of them.

The statistics are a little bit misconstrued there. That is something we need to adequately reflect where broadband Internet is and where it is not. That is why we need the geospatial mapping to show it, not just a listing. I think when we talk about open government and we talk about the Open Government Initiative, these are the types of things that we need to be seeing: useable, useful data, not just lists that are thrown together that people cannot really make a whole lot of sense, that cannot be put to use.

That is a big thing for me. Connectivity will always be important when it comes to cell coverage. When it comes to building that knowledge-based economy, I think we have to look at our pillars like the College of the North

Atlantic that we have in our communities and develop from those the best assets and get into more research.

In St. Anthony we have had some very successful research when it comes to colon cancer screening. The whole Province modelled it based off the St. Anthony with Dr. Fitzgerald who received the Order of Canada and nurse Janet Cox, the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. We should be promoting more of this and facilitating that research that can happen in our rural hospitals.

I am very encouraged to see the \$4.6 million investment in hospital renovations that has happened, just as the now Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, first when he became Minister of Health for a very brief period time. We are seeing some things happen when it comes to echocardiogram, when it makes sense to be creative when it comes to service delivery, how we can get better value for health care, something I have been raising in this House of Assembly for quite some time. It makes sense to have that program available and it is being offered. So that is certainly something I am very pleased to see and my constituents are pleased to be seeing.

We have a long way to go when it comes to long-term care, when it comes to dealing with that need across the Province. I have talked about pilot projects that could happen at the White Bay Central Health Centre, when we talk about how we can better utilize space that we currently have or whether we look at adding infrastructure. We need to be adding to our long-term care facilities that are currently at capacity, like the John M. Gray Centre where we have bed blockages happening, which is impacting surgeries, which is having an impact on our health care system and just driving up the overall cost.

We need to look at that strategic planning. With the oldest average population in my district, we are certainly seeing that growth accelerated a whole lot quicker. When it comes to seniors and when it comes to aging, I am seeing quite a bit of that from my office. I think we are seeing more 50 Plus Clubs, we are seeing a lot of things happen around health care, and we are having those conversations. Whether it is around

dialysis, whether it is around more satellite dialysis services, but how we manage that.

I think the member, my colleague for Burgeo – La Poile, when he talks about the diabetes registry and when he talks about the preventative care that needs to be done, we need to look at that front end rather than just the back end when it becomes the most expensive. We have to do more prevention. We have to see more healthy and wellness lifestyles, as well as these types of registries that can have better continuity of care and health outcomes.

I need to talk about the forestry sector because this government has been a complete failure when it comes to developing and managing forestry in the Province in an integrated plan and those jobs – in 2007, we had 400 forestry jobs on the Great Northern Peninsula. When the paper machine shut down at Corner Brook, we lost a significant amount. Government made investment into Roddickton-Bide Arm to develop the pellet industry as well as a kiln and expand the sawmill. That industry has not taken off. It has not created the jobs. It has stalled and it has been an utter failure for the towns of Roddickton-Bide Arm and those areas and the people who depend on that level of employment.

It is a renewable resource that can create long-term, sustainable jobs. If we got into pellets or if we got into things like biofuel and all of these types of research potentials with Corner Brook and the centre for forest excellence that they have there, we could be creating a whole lot more value from our forest industry. I think there is a lot of potential with Kruger as well when it comes to diversification.

I would like to see that vision from government so that we are creating long-term value jobs. What we have been doing in the Roddickton area that has been highly supportive of the current government – they are exporting the jobs, they are exporting the people, and they need to get back and create a real focus. That is something I would like to see the Minister of Natural Resources – and we have seen a lot of people make commitments and empty promises before to the people of Roddickton-Bide Arm and surrounding area. We want to see people really stand up and see that forest industry that is creating royalties and putting value back into the

Treasury here in Newfoundland and Labrador. Right now we are just seeing a real focus on non-renewables. We see where that is headed when it comes to the volatility of oil prices and as well with mining.

Our fishery: We have seen some real good investments when it comes to looking at the scallop industry. We have also seen some environmental concerns where Nalcor has invested \$2.9 million to help out fishers who are going to see their incomes impacted because of the Muskrat Falls cable laying. There have been benefits that have been put in place to help offset those costs.

We really do not have a strategy in place when it comes to marketing our fisheries products, and when it comes to dealing with a comeback for cod. We talk about it and this government talks about it, but you know the average age of our fishers – if you are not going to do something about it, then there is not going to be a real opportunity.

I think there are ideas out there where we could look at harvesting that in the most economical way, whether it be the fishers who have these individual quotas. They are able to pool that into a larger vessel. That larger vessel catches the fish and then a cheque gets written forever and a day to the people who have those quotas or to create that type of plan. It can be done better. The fishery can be operated in a way so those who are currently in the industry can get the benefit. We can also make sure we have a quality product, and I am just not seeing that from this government right now.

I think when it comes to seal we have seen a real lack of taking all of the product that needs to be done. There is a real potential when it comes to fully utilizing seal and seal product. We have seen development when it comes to the clothing and the apparel, but there are so many other products. I have seen a wine product that has been produced from seal. I have seen other products that have been put together.

We have some real concerns in my district when it comes to shrimp, as well as across the Province with crab and the overall sustainability. When it comes to 56 per cent of all the landings from Area 6 have been put in St. Anthony and

have been trucked to various parts of the Province and then shipped out through that large cold storage. It can be better utilized. There can be more opportunities created there from that. We have to look at and we have to really, really get back into the export potential and make sure small businesses are more export ready. This government has abandoned their export strategy. We have not seen any vision from that to get into making sure small businesses are more export ready.

When you look at venture capital, venture capital is not going to be the diversification opportunity. Businesses already have opportunity to get into venture capital, to get into that Atlantic fund and to invest into these businesses and get access to it. It will only provide a limited number of companies access to capital. We have to make sure that more business, small and medium enterprises have access to capital so they are more export ready and their technologies.

I think when it comes to aquaculture, we only scratched the surface there of where we could be going, as well as agriculture. We have seen a lot of things missing in the Speech from the Throne. I think that is where we are really seeing there is not a real focus from this government to truly get into economic diversification.

We have seen a lot of waste from this government, a lot of waste. If we look at the Minister of Education and we see the schools that are being heated in St. Anthony, St. Lunaire-Griquet, \$300,000 last year in operating those schools rather than looking at – and one slated to be demolished. It is absolutely atrocious, when that could be put into creating more economic value for the people of the Province.

I think we have a lot of potential. I talked about a lot of successes, a lot of great things that have been happening in the District of The Straits – White Bay North, a lot of things that have happened with partnerships, whether it is to the federal government, provincial government, municipal government, community collaboration. If we had more of that, all of our districts would be better off and we would have a stronger Newfoundland and Labrador.

I thank you for your time, and I look forward to making further commentary throughout this session of the House of Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, that we adjourn debate on Address in Reply.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved that we adjourn debate at this time on Address in Reply.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, debate adjourned.

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

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

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 4. I move, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, to ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Registered Nurses Act, 2008, Bill 32, and that the said bill be now read the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services shall have leave to introduce a bill, entitled, An Act To Amend The Registered Nurses Act, 2008, and that the said bill be read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 32, and that the said bill be now read the first time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

Carried.

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

Motion, the hon. Minister of Finance to introduce a bill, "An Act Respecting The Atlantic Provinces Harness Racing Commission", carried. (Bill 33)

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Registered Nurses Act, 2008", carried. (Bill 32)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act Respecting The Atlantic Provinces Harness Racing Commission. (Bill 33)

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Registered Nurses Act, 2008. (Bill 32)

**MR. SPEAKER:** This bill has been now read a first time, when shall the bill be read a second time?

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

**MR. KING:** Tomorrow.

When shall the bill be read a second time?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

**MR. KING:** Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 33 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tomorrow.

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

On motion, Bill 32 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

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

This time I call from the Order Paper, Order 2, third reading of a bill, An Act To Regulate Child Care Services, Bill 30. So moved by me, and seconded by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, that the said bill be now read a third time.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved that we move to Order 2.

I now call Motion 5. I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs to ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting The Atlantic Provinces Harness Racing Commission, Bill 33, and that the said bill be now read the first time.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Minister of Finance shall have leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting The Atlantic Provinces Harness Racing Commission, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 33, and that the bill be now read a first time?

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

All those in favour, 'aye'.

Carried.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Regulate Child Care Services. (Bill 30)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Regulate Child Care Services", read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 30)



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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, that the House do now adjourn.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved that the House do now adjourn.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Carried.

The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, at 1:30 p.m.