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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.

Before we begin proceedings today, I would like to welcome to the public gallery members of the Gospel Folk seniors' choir.

Welcome to the House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we have members' statements from the Member for the District of Exploits; the Member for the District of Harbour Main; the Member for the District of Conception Bay South; the Member for the District of Grand Falls-Windsor – Green Bay South; the Member for the District of Burgeo – La Poile; and the Member for the District of St. John's North.

The hon. the Member for the District of Exploits.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: Mr. Speaker, we are all aware of the commitment of volunteer firefighters. They give their time unselfishly to their community; however, to serve for forty years is certainly an amazing act of passion and dedication as a volunteer firefighter.

At the annual banquet of the Bishop's Falls Volunteer Fire Department two of their members reached this milestone: Hedley Harnum and Onnie Balsom. Mr. Speaker, these two firefighters were always prepared to answer the call twenty-four hours a day, always ready to respond to emergency situations, volunteering for community events, and helping those in need.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Onnie Balsom and Hedley Harnum for their forty years of dedicated service to the Bishop's Falls Volunteer Fire Department.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Harbour Main.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HEDDERSON: Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure I rise in this hon. House to congratulate Petty Officer 2nd Class Jason Sparkes, from my hometown of Georgetown, on receiving the Star of Courage on December 5, 2013 from the Governor General of Canada.

The Star of Courage recognizes acts of conspicuous courage in circumstances of great peril. On November 6, 2010 volunteer firefighter, Jason Sparkes, of the Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Services, who was a Master Seaman at the time, rescued a police officer from a possible drowning in Peggy's Cove, Nova Scotia.

The officer was responding to a call about a man who had been pushed off the rocks by a huge wave. As he searched, the officer was also pulled onto the rocks where he lay unconscious in the turbulent waters. Master Seaman Sparkes jumped in to the surf and threw himself on the injured officer, securing him against rocks to keep him from being pulled out to sea. Despite the severe weather conditions and the constant pounding of the waves, two other firefighters were able to pull both men to safety.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House to join me in recognizing Petty Officer 2nd Class Jason Sparkes for a courageous act of heroism.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HILLIER: Mr. Speaker, at this time of year many individuals and groups go out of their way to ensure that no one is left out during the Christmas season. Today, I stand in this House to recognize the Leo Club of Conception Bay South as one representative group that is doing great work in our communities.

The Conception Bay South Leos, a group of young people sponsored by the Lions Club, recently held a wake-athon to raise money for local charities. After a period of collecting pledges and a sleepless night, these young people were able to donate \$500 to the Long Pond Salvation Army Corps to replace toys that were stolen earlier in the fall.

In addition, they donated \$300 to Ronald MacDonald House to assist in providing a home away from home for families with children at the Janeway.

I would like to congratulate Leo President, Emily Howe, Vice-President, Ashley Mills, and Secretary, Tara Thistle on their successful endeavour.

Please join me in thanking all the Leos who took part in this project, as well as their adult advisors and all those who volunteer to ensure that everyone gets to enjoy the Christmas season.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Grand Falls-Windsor – Green Bay South.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HUNTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize a long-time resident of Triton. Sidney Roland Winsor – Uncle Rol – was born in 1921, and was raised and still resides in Triton. On November 11 he celebrated his ninety-third birthday.

In 1941, at the age of nineteen, Roland was one of thirteen young men from Triton who enlisted in the services to fight for their country. Roland enlisted in the Royal Navy where he served as a seaman. After the war, Roland married Marie Wiseman, and together they raised their family in Triton.

Roland is very proud of his experiences as a Royal Navy Seaman, and he likes to tell of his

adventures while in service – such as crossing the equator in February of 1942.

Mr. Winsor is now the sole survivor of the thirteen young men who left Triton seventy-three years ago to fight for their country. He believes that his long life is due to hard work and dedication to his family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this hon. House to join with me in recognizing Mr. Winsor's contribution to his country and to wish him well in his ninety-third year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Todd Strickland of Port aux Basques, who received the Chair's Commendation award in recognition of his exemplary leadership and commitment to ensuring advanced first aid training to volunteer ambulance services in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. This award was presented to him at the St. John Ambulance first aid symposium in Corner Brook.

Todd has been involved with St. John Ambulance for approximately seventeen years. He is a member of the Port aux Basques Volunteer Fire Brigade; a trained volunteer HazMat technician; Deputy Mayor of the Town of Channel-Port aux Basques; a committee member with the Port aux Basques and Area Chamber of Commerce; Port aux Basques Historical Society; St. James Anglican Men's Christmas choir; the Marine Atlantic and Disaster Committee; a Heart and Stroke CPR and AED instructor; chair of the Recreation Committee; wellness rep. at LeGrow Health Centre; and coach of the boys high school softball team; and, Mr. Speaker, I would add that he is thirty-five years old.

Todd and his wife Sherry reside in Channel-Port aux Basques with their two daughters, Robin and Rebecca. He is employed as an LPN at the Dr. Charles L. LeGrow Health Centre.

I ask all members of this House to join with me in paying tribute to Todd Strickland upon receipt of this prestigious award.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a group of role models for seniors' active living and healthy aging who are making a difference in our community.

The Gospel Folk Seniors Choir is a multi-denominational choir for seniors who love to sing gospel music. It was founded by my constituent Mrs. Daphne Benson in October 2013 and in a short time the choir has grown to thirty-five permanent members ranging in age from fifty-two to eighty-eight years of age.

The Gospel Folk Seniors Choir emphasizes fun and fellowship. They provide their participants and audiences with opportunities for social interaction and a lively way to improve both memory and mobility. They prioritize performances and concerts at senior's residences, church services, and community events.

The choir has added an additional dimension to their performances by including teenage musicians who accompany them from time to time. This inter-generational interaction has enabled participants and audiences from both age groups to enjoy, understand, and respect their many differences and similarities. It has also seen seniors and youth joining together in the harmony of music and fellowship to bring happiness to our community.

I ask all hon. members to join me in recognizing the harmonious contributions of all of the members of the Gospel Folk Seniors Choir.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am certainly pleased to rise today to congratulate SubC Imaging on its graduation from Memorial University's Genesis Centre.

The Genesis Centre is a vital resource for entrepreneurs, offering mentoring and guidance in many forms, as new ventures work through the vital first stages of growth.

On December 4, I was honoured to attend the centre's graduation ceremony for SubC Imaging, a local company that develops underwater imaging systems.

Mr. Speaker, SubC is a true success story. Its founder, Chad Collett, a graduate of the College of the North Atlantic Electrical Engineering Technology program, had experience working with remotely operated vehicles as a pilot and a technician, when he started the company in his basement in February 2010. He believed in a better way of doing things, and set his sights on realizing his vision.

SubC was accepted into the Genesis Centre in September of 2010. From a basement to a 5,000 square-foot facility, SubC has prospered under the guidance of the Genesis Centre and currently employs eleven staff members. Chad's success is not only a result of his drive and work ethic, but I would add that it is a testament to the quality of the College of the North Atlantic's technology programs.

Mr. Speaker, this company is truly world class. Serving various sectors, including offshore oil and gas, ocean observatories, aerospace and defence, deep sea mining, hydrographic surveying and ROV manufacturing, SubC works with clients around the world. The company has been successful in establishing contacts and generating sales with clients in Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Singapore, and Italy.

I am proud to say, Mr. Speaker, our government has supported SubC from the beginning. When staff in my department talk about SubC, they do so with excitement and enthusiasm – indeed, they are all so proud of what this company has accomplished in such a short time. SubC has travelled to Province-led trade shows with the former Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development in the Ocean Technology sector and have been successful an every single venue.

The underwater cameras this company creates are in-demand tools for the Ocean Technology sector, and are changing the way multiple industries do business.

Mr. Speaker, I would like this hon. House to join me in congratulating SubC Imaging and the entire team on their most recent success.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. On behalf of our caucus, we also congratulate Chad Collett and the SubC Imaging team on their graduation, their success, and their growth.

On more than one occasion, it was suggested that SubC's base be built up in St. John's, not Clarenville; however, they opposed this and their base is firmly in Clarenville. The company just hired its eleventh employee.

One of the greatest comments from Adam Rowe, one of the three co-managers, was that, "We're just getting started. This is just the beginning and we plan on continuing and growing and the sky is the limit really." We commend them for their dedication to the Province.

With respect to the Genesis Centre, entrance to this at MUN is a competitive process but accepted start-up businesses are provided

everything from office space and networking events to advisory boards and technical resources at Memorial University. In all, thirty-six companies have graduated from the Genesis Centre since 2000, including Celsius Game Studios, Verafin, and Virtual Marine Technology. So, they are joining a real elite team of locally grown success that we have here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

With the caucus, we certainly join government in congratulating them and wish that they have lots of success in the future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like to thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement here today. Congrats to SubC for all the work that they do.

A little known fact about SubC, Mr. Speaker, when I received the statement, SubC also participated in a search for the wreckage of the flight of Amelia Earhart. They went down and used their camera technology to do some work off Kiribati, which is in the Southern Pacific.

I would also like to thank the MUN Genesis Centre, which I guess you could say has mothered a lot of businesses, particularly in the technology businesses. One interesting fact not only about the Genesis Centre, but about Memorial University in general, whatever it is that we do over there at Memorial University, whether it is in medical or whether it is in the technology fields, we exceed.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MURPHY: Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the provincial government's ongoing commitment to athletic excellence in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our elite athletes continue to achieve success on regional, provincial, national, and international levels, Mr. Speaker, and we want to ensure them that our government is committed to supporting their dedication and passion for sport.

Last year, we announced the Athletic Excellence Fund, which is a streamlined program that encompasses funding support under the Premier's Athletic Awards, Team Gushue Awards, Elite Athlete Assistance Program, and Sport NL Scholarships. We want all of our current and future athletes to have the best opportunity to access the support they need as they strive to accomplish their athletic goals.

Since their inception, these programs have provided about \$835,000 to support athletic excellence in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, we are seeing the benefits of this continued support through the recent accomplishments of some of the Province's top athletes, such as cross-country runner Jillian Forsey, who most recently won the right to compete for Canada in the World Cross Country Championship in China next March. Then there is Paralympic swimmer Katarina Roxon, who just last week broke three new national swimming records. Many of us are following the career of rugby player Ciaran Hearn, who continues to be a key member of Canada's men's senior national team. These are just to name a few of the exceptional athletes who have received support through the Atlantic Excellence Fund.

We continue to encourage more active, healthy lifestyles among our citizens, as outlined in the Province's recreation and sport strategy, *Active, Healthy Newfoundland and Labrador*. In fact, Mr. Speaker, our investment in sport in our Province in 2014-2015 Budget year will be just over \$5.2 million. Since the launch of the strategy, approximately \$192 million has been committed to recreational and sport infrastructure, programming, and athlete development throughout the Province.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of this House to join me in congratulating Jill Forsey, Katarina Roxon, Ciaran Hearn and the many, many other athletes and emerging stars who are pursuing athletic excellence and setting an example for future generations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HILLIER: I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. The Official Opposition joins with government in congratulating Jill Forsey, Katarina Roxon, and Ciaran Hearn on their remarkable achievements. Such accomplishments come only with support, hard work, and endless dedication. I might say that Ciaran is a resident of the beautiful Town of Conception Bay South.

Newfoundland and Labrador has seen many athletes who have met with tremendous success. Athletic success does not just happen, it begins with programs that allow individuals to develop at an early age. With this in mind, I urge government to grow programs that allow new coaches easier and cheaper access to coach training.

Mr. Speaker, instead of being hidden somewhere in the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, I urge government to give amateur sport the profile it deserves on a daily basis, and not just during the Olympics or when we are looking for medals at the Canada Games.

We encourage government to support active and healthy lifestyles for all citizens, ages young and senior alike.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. How wonderful to celebrate the excellence of Jillian Forsey, Katarina Roxon, and Ciaran Hearn, and all our athletes both amateur and professional who make us so very proud. Having programs that support excellence in sport and that ensure all citizens are able to participate to the best of their ability is a sign of a healthy and a prosperous community.

It is the duty of all of us in this House to make sure we distribute our resources in such a way that supports and allows all of our people of Newfoundland and Labrador to be the best they can.

Bravo Jillian, Katarina, and Ciaran, and to all those athletes who work so hard with dedication and passion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CORNETT: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in this hon. House to recognize the launch of the Project Red Ribbon campaign. Project Red Ribbon is Mothers Against Drunk Driving's longest running and most well-known public awareness campaign. This morning I had the honour and privilege of attending the launch with the Premier.

For the past twenty-seven years, the red ribbon has been a prominent, two-fold symbol. When you "tie one on", it is a symbol of your commitment to stay sober when driving. This is especially important to remember when commuting during the busy holiday season. The red ribbon also serves as a highly visible tribute to those killed and injured due to impaired driving crashes.

Mr. Speaker, the greatest tragedy of all is the fact that these impaired driving crashes are preventable. Each year, almost 1,500 Canadians are killed and more than 63,000 are injured in impairment related crashes.

I commend Mothers Against Drunk Driving in their continued efforts to make our roads and highways safe and sober, and to help create a culture of safe driving. When you take the wheel, you take responsibility – not just for your own life, but the lives of those on the road with you.

Mr. Speaker, it is up to each and every one of us to play an active role in reducing these statistics. Never drive impaired, or with an impaired driver. If you plan on drinking, arrange for a designated driver or call a cab and if you suspect someone is driving impaired, call 911 or your local police detachment and report it to the police. These are important messages which we cannot repeat too often.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to remind all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that it is not just alcohol that impairs. Illegal drugs, prescription or over-the-counter medication, and even fatigue can impact one's ability to safely operate a motorized vehicle.

Project Red Ribbon will continue until January 4 and I ask all members in this hon. House to join me in promoting Project Red Ribbon.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Mr. Speaker, myself and a number of my colleagues, the Official Opposition, we had the opportunity to attend this morning's launch of the red ribbon campaign as well. We certainly want to commend Mothers Against Drunk Driving for the great work they are doing in terms of bringing awareness to such a serious issue in our communities as it relates to people operating vehicles while impaired.

We, too, want to encourage our citizens, certainly not just around the Christmas season but throughout the year, to please practice good judgement and not get behind the wheel if you

are going to be drinking. There are options, as the minister has already outlined, such as taking a cab or having a designated driver. We certainly encourage people to do that and to be safe, to create a safe environment for people who are operating on our roadways.

We support that wholeheartedly, and again, we thank MADD for all their great work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like to thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement here today.

Congratulations to Mothers Against Drunk Driving for all the work they are doing and, in particular, thanks to all the emergency services for having to answer the call. Sometimes it is not a pretty scene when the guys and girls of our security forces and ambulance services happen upon a scene of an impaired driver. It is completely avoidable, Mr. Speaker.

In spite of the statistics, impaired driving seems almost epidemic. The education program has to continue, whether it is public education, PR campaigns, the news story, it still happens. It is going to be a constant fight to stop the problem. People have to remember, Mr. Speaker, if in doubt about their impairment levels, they should not be getting behind the wheel of a vehicle.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When the provincial government announced the CETA fisheries fund on October 29, 2013, they claimed the federal government would provide

\$280 million. Now over a year later, the federal government will only say that their contribution will be up to \$280 million.

I ask the Premier: Why did you claim the amount to our Province would be exactly \$280 million when the federal government has suggested that it would be something less?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A year ago there was an announcement that an agreement had been reached – an agreement in principle with the federal government for a \$400 million Fisheries Innovation Fund. Mr. Speaker, that Fisheries Innovation Fund is the result of our support for CETA, and also in the discussion of minimum processing requirements and our agreement to remove minimum processing requirements as part of the CETA agreement.

Mr. Speaker, since that time, we have been having discussions with the federal government on how we administer that fund. Myself and the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, in particular, and other ministers, have been having discussions with counterparts in Ottawa. We continue to have those discussions, but I will be clear, Mr. Speaker, the Fisheries Innovation Fund is directly related to our discussion and our support for CETA. I can tell you that the minimum processing requirements are important to the Province, and we are doing everything to protect the best interests of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Since you are doing everything you can to protect the best interests of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, why did you say it would be \$280 million when we know now that it is going to be something less? Why did you say that, and what is that amount going to be?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our agreement is clear. Our agreement is a 70-30 split fund up to \$400 million, \$280 million by the federal government and \$120 million by our government.

Mr. Speaker, that fund is about the future of the fishery. It is about maintaining a fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador in rural parts of our Province that is going to be beneficial to the people of our Province for decades to come.

It is about marketing, Mr. Speaker. It is about marketing opportunities and marketing great products that come from our Province. It is about fishery science. It is about research and development. It is about infrastructure. It is also about workplace adjustments. Those are the five pillars around this deal. That is what it is about and it is directly attached to our support for CETA.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Interestingly enough, back at the time of the announcement this government was not talking about job losses in the fishery. Just over two weeks ago the Premier spoke to the Prime Minister on the CETA fisheries fund and told the House that they had a very good discussion. Now we hear that the federal government wants to split the \$280 million with other Atlantic Provinces.

I ask the Premier: During your good discussion with the Prime Minister, did he then say that the fund would be split with other Atlantic Provinces?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, what the member opposite has in his preamble today is certainly not reflective of discussions I

have had with the Prime Minister or Minister Moore, who I had the pleasure of meeting with this morning and had a discussion about the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement, and also about the \$400 million fund. We worked very hard with the federal government to reach an agreement on that. We are working through the process now of crossing the t's and dotting the i's of the administration of the fund.

Despite what the member opposite may have heard, I can tell you very clearly that for me as the Premier, for us on this side of the House, we are committed to this fund in the best interests of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We are working towards a conclusion of the fund. Mr. Speaker, it is about the pillars and it is about the future of the fishery. That is what is most important to us right now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to assure the members opposite, we are committed as well. What we want to know, however, will we be getting \$280 million for the fisheries fund or not? Is it \$280 million or will it be something less?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our involvement in those negotiations was quite clear. There were \$280 million committed to by the federal government. With our \$120 million we would leverage that \$280 million. That was a fund that was committed of \$400 million in totality. We have not moved off that.

What we agreed to in terms of what we thought was important under CETA in regard to the fund and other things that we wanted to see in that comprehensive trade agreement, we still stand by those. There is no change in that for us. We are looking forward to administering the fund as

we move forward through ACOA and through DFA, but certainly it positions us in what we negotiated has not changed and will not change.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I ask the minister: Are you saying now that the federal government is committed and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador will receive \$280 million from the federal government? Is that what we are hearing?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when this announcement occurred, obviously, we were quite pleased in terms of what was achieved in the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement. Certainly, industry and what we heard is they wanted to have immediate access to that large European market and what it meant for our seafood. In addition, as the Premier has indicated, we were able to negotiate the \$400 million fund to help grow the fishery into the future in terms of research and technology, marketing, all of those components that make us more competitive in the world and can grow our industry in Newfoundland and Labrador, in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our commitment, as I said again, we would invest \$120 million. We expect the federal government to invest \$280 million. That is the \$400 million fund. That is what we agreed to in the negotiations and that is what we expect them to honour.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just for the record, and to be clear for people who are following this today, we know what your commitment was. We know what you announced over a year ago. Are you saying now that the federal government has not moved off the \$280 million and they are still committed to paying that to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Speaker, we reached an agreement in good faith. As I have outlined and I will say again, we will invest \$120 million. The federal government committed to invest \$280 million in the Fishery Investment Fund. To date, I have no reason to believe they are moving off that \$280 million. All I can say, if he needs to speak to the federal government he can speak to them and see where they stand on it.

From our perspective, we negotiated a \$400 million fund. We are going to administer that \$400 million fund for the benefit of Newfoundland and Labrador and for the fishery. That is what we negotiated. That is where we are today, and that is what we expect in the future, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today oil is trading at around \$67 per barrel, \$38 lower than this government forecasted in last year's Budget. Eleven days ago, the minister said government would update the people of the Province in a week or ten days on what this means, what the impact is to Newfoundland and Labrador.

I ask the Premier: When will the people of Newfoundland and Labrador see the mid-year fiscal update?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As members opposite and all members of the House are quite aware is that when OPEC met recently, we were all looking forward to listening to the decision and the course of action they would take or not take. We saw the results of that. We also anticipated that over the coming weeks there would be volatility in the oil prices. We know that we have seen that in a way never seen before, in the prices going up and down day after day.

Mr. Speaker, it is very hard to nail down where that price is expected to level out for the long term –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER DAVIS: – or even in the short term, in the next several months.

The minister and I are continuing to monitor – I know the minister and his staff are continuing to monitor oil prices. They are looking at the trends as oil prices move around. We are looking forward to them settling down so we can have a clearer picture for the future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I take it from that the Premier does not know and there are no plans for this year's mid-year update. We did not get the answer. I thought it would be simple. When we hear a minister say that it would happen in ten days or so, we would expect to honour that commitment.

Last week, the minister said that the Small Claims Court is a very inclusive process and very simple to follow. However, he did not answer my question if government would cover legal costs for the companies that now have to go to court to collect the money that they are

owed for work that they have done because of the cancelled Humber Valley contract.

I ask the Premier: Will you cover the costs, these legal costs? A simple question: Will you cover the costs, just yes or no?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I outlined last week, this is an inclusive process within the court system. We hold the mechanics' lien in trust, Mr. Speaker. We have the ability, after the courts have accessed who they feel is indeed entitled to remuneration from their claims, to release the money to the courts. That is how the process works. The courts have the ability to decide if there are any other additional costs that can be added to that claim itself, Mr. Speaker.

That is the process; I have outlined it, how it works in the legal system. We have the money in trust to ensure that those who have a legitimate claim against Humber Valley Paving and 1-12 contract will indeed be rectified, Sir.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question for the minister was around a legal cost for those small companies. Really, they do not want to be in Small Claims Court.

If government did not cancel the contract and release the bonds, there would be no cost for these companies to collect their money. It would be normal business. Any claims over \$25,000 need to go to the Supreme Court, which can be very costly.

So I ask the Premier: What, if any, process do you have in place to help these companies

collect their money, not Small Claims Court, but indeed the Supreme Court?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have a responsibility to protect all subcontractors, and we do that with a mechanics' lien. We hold that in place with the hundreds of contracts that we have put in place every year. What we have done in this case is to maintain that mechanics' lien and hold that in trust. The court system is what it is, Mr. Speaker. It is open so that people can make claims, can justify exactly why they feel they are entitled to certain monies from the contractor. Then, once that has been determined, we will release the monies to the court so that those subcontractors can be paid.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, maybe the minister can explain to people in this House and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians: What people were you protecting when you cancelled that contract?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, the mechanics' lien is in place to protect the people, particularly the subcontractors. What we did in this case was hold the money. We have opened it up for individuals, and we have explained to go through the court system to put a claim. What we will do then is release the money once the courts have determined that there are subcontractors entitled to that money, Mr. Speaker. That money is held in trust until we are satisfied that the subcontractors have

been taken care of, or the courts make a ruling so that we can release the money.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, the functional plan outlining services to be provided at the new hospital in Corner Brook has been in the hands of government for some time now. People are concerned because they hear services like obstetrics and ultrasounds are being reduced.

I ask the minister: Will you now table this report publicly so the people of the West Coast can be assured of the services to be provided in this new regional hospital?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, as I have said in the House previously, the functional plan for the new West Coast hospital is still being finalized. I can assure members in this House and the people of the West Coast of the Province that when that functional plan is finalized, it will be released and there will be plenty of communication, plenty of discussion. We want to ensure that members of the public are engaged in the process and that they are well aware of our plans for the state-of-the-art hospital that we plan to build in Corner Brook.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, Minister, you announced last week in this House that obstetrics is cut from eleven to six beds – you announced it in this House. The plan has to be completed in order for you to make those announcements. So we are doing this in piecemeal, bit by bit, service by service?

Mr. Speaker, the people in Corner Brook are asking: When will this functional plan be released to the people of Western Newfoundland? Will you honour the commitment, as the former minister made, that when the functional plan is ready it will be released to the people of Corner Brook, not bit by bit as you did last week, Mr. Minister?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, last week members of the Opposition posed a question about the draft functional plan and I answered the question. I provided all of the data we presently have available on that draft functional plan. I will continue to answer whatever questions I am asked related to the new West Coast hospital.

The functional plan, as I said in my last answer, will be released when it is fully completed. There will be opportunity for the public to ask questions and to address any concerns they may have. We want to ensure everybody on the West Coast of the Province has a good understanding of what this new facility is going to do to move health care forward in that region of the Province.

The new hospital campus will consist of 323 beds. That is a major increase from what presently exists, and it is going to lead to a major improvement and expansion of services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: What they expect, Mr. Minister, is a bit of respect instead of having piecemeal of a functional plan, which you are saying in this House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the Province's 272 towns are waiting anxiously to hear from this government regarding a new fiscal framework agreement, a framework that MNL has been working on for over three years. Government has committed

that it would be dealt with as a part of the 2015-2016 Budget.

I ask the minister: Can the minister provide the assurances that the fiscal framework will be addressed in the next provincial Budget?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In 2013, in the Speech from the Throne on the Budget Speech, we recognized we had to come together collectively, municipalities and communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, and look at a new fiscal arrangement. We committed to it at that time. Since that time, there have been over 500 consultations with municipalities, municipal leaders, business groups, and all the stakeholders in terms of Newfoundland and Labrador and looking forward.

With that information, we have received a report from MNL. I was happy to be at their annual get-together in the fall and had discussions with municipal leaders there, as well as the executive. We are certainly looking forward to next year's Budget to see what we can do in terms of moving out those initiatives, those good recommendations that have been made by MNL. We look forward to working with them as we move forward.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. REID: Mr. Speaker, Memorial University recently released a report on the conditions of rural drinking water systems in our Province. The report made eighteen recommendations calling for improvements that would reduce health risks.

With 150 boil orders in this Province, I ask the Minister of Environment: How will he address the issues raised in this report?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question. We worked actually with that group to develop that study. We provided all the information. Other departments worked with them as well. We assisted them through that. The information out of that study is not new to us. What we need to understand and get the facts on the table of where we are now and where we were back in 2001.

Mr. Speaker, back in 2001, the national watchdog Ecojustice graded us as a D when it came to quality of our water supplies. In 2012, they graded us at a B. We have come a long way after inheriting a problem that has existed for a long, long time.

Mr. Speaker, we are listening to what the stakeholders out there are saying about the situation. We are certainly taking it under advisement. We are reviewing that report as we speak.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I remind the minister that there are currently 150 boil orders in place.

Is he prepared to implement mandatory certification of water system operators as the authors of the report recommend?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, again, I like talking to the facts. There are no boil order water advisories out in the Province today. There are boil water advisories, not boil order. There is a vast difference between the two. That

is a cautionary advisory to let the people know there might be some issue with your water supply.

Mr. Speaker, we have gone from 300 back in 2001 to around 200 now today. There are various reasons why those boil water advisories are out there.

Yes, we are committed to training the operators of water supplies in this Province. We have actually had 140 on-site training sessions in the last year alone. We do a conference every year and 300 people attend that.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS DEMPSTER: Mr. Speaker, the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities has been operating on a shoestring budget of \$34,000 per year since they lost a \$55,000 grant from the federal government three years ago. When the coalition's counterparts were cut across the country, NL was one of only three provinces not to step up and fund that shortfall.

I ask the minister: Given that you have underspent the budget for the Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, will you utilize some of that funding to fill the gap for the coalition?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I think we had a wonderful week in the Province last week in recognizing the ongoing work that is happening around persons with disabilities. I think as a Province we have moved in leaps and bounds. One of the things the Disability Policy Office wanted was the development of an action plan, and through consultations, Mr. Speaker, I can say that plan will likely be ready very soon into the new year. We have had wonderful input from that and, as a result, Newfoundland and Labrador is a better place for it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS DEMPSTER: Six and a half million dollars, Mr. Speaker, in 2012, and just over a million spent.

Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible said just last week that the disability community is an untapped labour pool. Outlook 2020 said two-thirds of new job openings will require some form of education. I draw your attention to Jennifer on the cover of *The Telegram* today –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask the member not to use props.

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Jennifer is a Memorial University graduate who is deaf. She is currently under-employed.

I ask the minister: Why are you underspending your inclusion budget when disability organizations are struggling to survive, when persons with disabilities remain under represented in the workforce?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is only about a month or so ago I met with members of the disability community, and one of the things they recognized and they pointed out is that untapped ability that many disabled people have. That was part of what this conference was that we supported last week. The message from that, Mr. Speaker, and key to that was tapping into the employers out there. That was their first conference of this nature. We supported it. We will continue to support it because we do truly believe in an untapped labour source in the disability community.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: Mr. Speaker, after asking many questions on this issue and a great deal of lobbying from interest groups that represent the disability community, a partnership with CODNL was announced three months ago to promote education awareness of blue zone parking.

I ask the minister: Can you provide an update on the status of this initiative?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CORNETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the hon. member for his question. Mr. Speaker, education is an important aspect to ensure compliance of blue zone parking. Yes, and that is why we entered into a partnership with the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, they are working on educational materials and will make presentations to public groups and promote awareness. This education material will include the correct installation of signage. The coalition will also be making presentations to municipal organizations and other public groups. They are working under the guidance of the Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board, which reports to the Minister of Service NL.

So, Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member that they are doing good work.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: Mr. Speaker, according to advocates in the disability community, education results in a higher level of blue zone compliance. While this partnership is targeting businesses, municipalities, and the general public, many provincial government buildings are still not blue zone compliant.

I ask the minister: Why are you not showing leadership by ensuring timely blue zone compliance in all provincial government buildings?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The report that was released recently shows that most, if not all, government buildings are compliant. We do have some challenges around some schools and some medical buildings itself, but we are working very closely with those associations and those entities to ensure the blue zone regulations are being followed.

We take this very seriously, we work very closely with the industry to make sure this is done, and our officials are making sure we are compliant and we are getting the message out to people.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace, time for a quick question.

MR. SLADE: Mr. Speaker, over a year ago the government announced it intended to update its obsolete aquaculture strategy.

I ask the minister: Where is the long-overdue aquaculture strategy that your government promised over a year ago?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I can say to the House and say to the hon. member that we have been working diligently over the last number of months, over the last year, to produce a new aquaculture strategy. The first aquaculture strategy was developed in 2000.

We had over 100 consultations last year with people in the industry. I can say to the hon. member that the aquaculture strategy will be ready and released very, very soon. The aquaculture industry to this government is a very valuable resource. We have grown the industry from where it was just a few years ago to a \$197 million industry. That is where we stand on the aquaculture industry.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

The mines of Wabush have provided the people of the Province with fifty years of wealth. We are told that Cliffs will soon be turning off the power to the mine they have leased from MFC, the actual owner and potential future operator.

I ask the Premier: What has this government been doing to try to stop the closure of this mine?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is an obviously very difficult situation in Wabush, difficult for the people of Wabush, and obviously with the commodity prices of iron ore, it is having a significant impact within the entire region.

We became aware of it some time ago, as did the public, that Cliffs resources not only idled the mine but a few months later made a decision to close the mine. Since that time, we have been involved working with the town, working with the union. We have significant discussions with Cliffs resources as well as with a private company, MFC, who have expressed some interest.

We continue to have those discussions, but there has been no deal in terms of re-operating the mine. Subsequent to that, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills, as well as the Department of Municipal Affairs,

have been working with the town and with employees of the mine to certainly help alleviate the circumstances in which they find themselves in.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

The fate of hundreds of families is in the minister's hands. So, could he outline for us what he has been doing to try to get these two companies back to the table?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, we have been fully engaged with the companies and with the people of Wabush, the leadership of Wabush. I commend them; they are doing a good job in, obviously, very difficult times and high anxiety for sure.

Mr. Speaker, we have spoken directly to Cliffs resources about what their plans are and their obligations under the Mining Act, and their financial obligations are protected with respect to the closure and rehabilitation of mines so that we can protect the environmental side, as would be expected by the people of Wabush.

We spoke to MFC, as well as Cliffs, about the potential for them to come together to an agreement that we will help and facilitate and support if they were to come forward; but, at this point, Mr. Speaker, we have no business plan, no production plan, no development plan, no rehab closure plan, no assurances that anybody would be rehired in the mine, not even assurances that the mine would open.

Mr. Speaker, we do not have a lot to work with, other than what is happening out on the ground versus what we need in our hands as a government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, last year the Province's electronic recycling project overcharged people, making \$886,000 profit in about five months. Fees have been lowered a little since, but I ask the minister: It is the Christmas shopping season; can the minister guarantee people will not be overcharged on electronic recycling fees again?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, we all realize that there is a cost to make sure we take care of our hard waste, our solid waste. The electronic environmental fees that are put in place to handle that solid waste from electronics is an important piece to our transition into moving solid waste away from our dumpsites.

This system that we have in place is a not-for-profit organization that is running this system. They have vast experience in other jurisdictions on what the costs are associated with handling that waste and how to deal with that waste. Understanding that there is waste out there that was purchased many years ago and, over time, has accumulated in people's basements, then there is a cost associated with that when you start up a program like this.

Mr. Speaker, we make sure –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What is the minister's plan for people in rural Newfoundland and Labrador who are forced to pay these fees, but they have no real hope of being able to actually recycle the product in their communities?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Mr. Speaker, last year we removed or redirected over 1,000 tons of electronic waste from our landfills, and we are very proud of that. So, the system is working.

We have forty-four permanent drop-off sites in the Province, almost double what it was this time last year. We had twenty-six mobile collection events last year alone, Mr. Speaker. We are looking to set up more permanent sites. We are looking to do more annual events.

We realize that access to recycle electronic waste is a challenge in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, but we are committed to this process. This is the right thing to do, Mr. Speaker. It is good for the environment and it is good for the people who are coming behind us.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The time for Question Period has expired.

I would like to bring to all members' attention that on three different occasions now in this session, members have attempted to use props when they are speaking. Each time, the Speaker has reminded members that it is against the rules in the House.

To be fair to all members, I want to let you all know that if any member attempts to do it again, the Speaker will remind them, but I will stand and whatever time is left on the clock for that member I will not recognize him to continue.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

MR. WISEMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act to Amend The Pensions Funding Act And The Public Service Pension Act, 1991, Bill 39.

Mr. Speaker, I also give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Modify Eligibility For Other Post-Employment Benefits, Bill 40.

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Member for Port de Grave.

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will move the following private member's resolution:

WHEREAS the provincial government announced in the 2014 Budget, and in greater detail on November 4, 2014, that it will invest in two venture capital funds, Venture Newfoundland and Labrador and Build Ventures;

BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House supports the provincial government's decision to help further diversify our economy, and further strengthen the business climate of our Province by investing in venture capital funds.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and that will be the notice given on Wednesday.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice that the motion just brought forward by the Member for Port de Grave will be the private member's motion debated by government in the House on this coming Wednesday, Private Members' Day.

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

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Social Workers Act, Bill 38.

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 rise today to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Western Newfoundland and Labrador.

We wish to raise concerns regarding the recent delay on the construction of the new hospital in Corner Brook.

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

Mr. Speaker, I was amazed today. When I stood in this hon. House today to ask questions about the functional plan for the hospital and the health care committee – I spoke to them earlier today – and when the minister stood up in this House and said it is not completed, yet he stood in this House last week and announced that the obstetric beds will be cut from eleven to six. Is the plan complete, and is that a guarantee the cut will be made to that area? I was amazed, absolutely amazed, and you wonder why the people of Corner Brook are starting to feel despair about this hospital, why they have no confidence in this government.

I know the Member for Humber West, Mr. Speaker, for the minister to stand up and make a commitment, and the former minister made a commitment before, that the functional plan will be released once it is reviewed. Yet they are making cuts, confirming cuts to the hospital because of the functional plan, but stand in this hon. House and say the plan is not complete. Mr. Speaker, one of it cannot be correct. Either

the functional plan is complete and it is not being released, or the minister has the plan and just will not release it. One of it cannot be correct. I was astonished today, Mr. Speaker.

The Member for Humber West, Mr. Speaker, I know when the Premier was there he was standing up trying to get answers. It is time for the Member for Humber West – because the people in Western Newfoundland are going to have cherry picked what is cut, what is not cut? Mr. Speaker, I will stand in this House at every possible opportunity to say, now are ultrasounds cut? Tell us. We have to go step by step to find out what the functional plan is for the hospital. It is disgraceful. Today it was absolutely disgraceful to stand in this hon. House and say the functional plan is not complete, but we can tell you to keep asking questions. We can tell you what is done in it. Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely disgraceful.

I urge the government, Mr. Speaker, to treat the people of Western Newfoundland and Labrador with respect. At least have the honesty and the courtesy to say here is the functional plan, here is what we are doing, and here are the services you are going to have. I urge the government to do that. Today I was astonished to say the functional plan was – go out to the *Western Star* and say it is being cut.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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 Route 430, the Viking Trail, is the primary highway on the Great Northern Peninsula; and

WHEREAS the current road condition of approximately sixty kilometres between Plum

Point and Eddies Cove East have sections that are in dire need of resurfacing and/or repaving; and

WHEREAS it is government's obligation to provide basic infrastructure to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians; and

WHEREAS an improved road network on this primary highway is needed to enhance road safety and help with local commerce, as well as deal with increasing passenger traffic levels in this section of the highway;

We, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge the government to allocate funds under the Provincial Roads Program to pave this section of Route 430.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, when you are travelling the Great Northern Peninsula highway going north from Deer Lake to Gros Morne National Park, which sees about 180,000 tourists in season, you get all the way up to L'Anse aux Meadows there. There is another UNESCO heritage site that sees 30,000 visitors. Then you have the Town of St. Anthony at the very tip there as well that has the Grenfell legacy. It is also the place of international containerized shipping. The second largest actually in Newfoundland and Labrador occurs in St. Anthony.

There is lots of transportation of goods and services, whether it is from the forestry, or fishery, or commercial goods, or industrial goods taking place with the Muskrat Falls development, the subsea crossing, as well as transferring goods to Labrador. The ferry system from the Strait of Belle Isle going to Labrador connecting to the Island crosses this section of highway in St. Barbe, my colleague's district, the Member for St. Barbe.

We present this petition acknowledging that a major main highway that brings significant economic benefits to the people of the Province does need some attention from the Minister of Transportation and Works, therefore I present this petition on behalf of my constituents.

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 there is no cellphone service in the Town of Trout River which is an enclave community in Gros Morne National Park; and

WHEREAS visitors to Gros Morne National Park, more than 100,000 annually, expect to communicate by cellphone when they visit the park; and

WHEREAS cellphone service has become a very important aspect of everyday living for residents; and

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

WHEREAS cellphone service is essential for business development;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to partner with the private sector to extend cellphone coverage throughout Gros Morne National Park and the enclave community of Trout River.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is yet another petition from the Town of Trout River. In fact, I recognize virtually all of the names on the petition starting with the town clerk, continuing on with a former mayor, and the person who is the maintenance person for the town.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of locations where it looks like – at least geographically – it would be very feasible to do a cellphone tower. In fact, if government were to partner with the private sector and look at locations where a cellphone tower might go, the private sector entity might well conclude that a mountain on the other side of Trout River toward the ocean

projects enough out to sea that it would likely provide cellphone coverage northward and many communities that receive very poor service would in fact receive better service.

In addition to the Town of Trout River and Trout River Gulch receiving cellphone service, which would be a safety benefit particularly in the wintertime with snowfall and travel going back and forth through the gulch, it would also improve the service in other communities, particularly to the north. These communities are Rocky Harbour, right on down through Cow Head.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a request even for funds at this point, but it is a request that government would partner with a private sector entity and try to determine if it is possible to have cellphone coverage. Mr. Speaker, it needs to start somewhere, and really it needs to start with government showing some initiative, taking some action that would extend cellphone coverage into the Town of Trout River and throughout a greater part of Gros Morne National Park.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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 bush 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 have risen a number of times on this particular petition. I still ask government every time I am up on my feet, on behalf of the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, to cease and desist the use of chemicals that are covered under the cosmetic pesticide ban. There is a reason why we have the cosmetic pesticide ban in place, and those reasons are many.

One of the more extreme reasons that I can think of, not only the simple fact that it is cancer causing now, it is cancer causing in the future as well. These are chemicals that are known to be harmful to people. Why we keep adding to our environmental liabilities, Mr. Speaker, every time we talk about the use of chemicals in this Province, I will never know. It is of deep concern to the signatories on this petition. They come from Mount Pearl, St. John's, areas of the Northeast Avalon. I am looking at Torbay, Paradise, and back again through St. John's.

Mr. Speaker, this is important for a lot of people here. I ask government to consider this, not only as a step to making our environment a little bit healthier but, at the same time, to keep other people at work by using mechanical means of brush clearing. We can save an awful lot on chemicals. We can do a little bit more brush clearing at the same time. It gives a chance for ground personnel, for example, to look at what condition our roadsides are in, and to see if any maintenance is needed on our highways.

Besides the dangers of using these chemicals and the savings, I guess you could call it, Mr. Speaker, down the road to our health care costs,

we ask government to look at this simply for the “mechanical reasons” of being able to look at our roadsides and make sure our highways are going to be in good condition.

Mr. Speaker, I ask them to consider that. Not only do we have other methods besides mechanical, but we can have others such as a combination, if you will, of competitive growing methods as well for them to consider.

I thank you very much for the time, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SLADE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. SLADE: WHEREAS a non-consumption advisory was issued for number three well (drinking water) in the Town of Freshwater on June 20, 2006 due to exceeded levels of arsenic; and

WHEREAS this well services forty-four residents in the Town of Freshwater and remains their only source of drinking water; and

WHEREAS any consumption of water from the well will pose a significant health hazard to the consumer;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to provide the necessary resources to the Town of Freshwater in order to provide for clean and safe drinking water to the residents affected by the well.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I am just going to give you some facts on this. To date, there are 150 towns and communities on boil orders in Newfoundland and Labrador. A number are on a do-not-consume order; this is the case in Freshwater. Arsenic levels in this well are four times the allowable Canadian limit. We discovered this week that people are still using this well because they did not know it was still a non-consumption order.

The study by Memorial University just released on rural drinking water systems go to the heart of the problem. We are going to make people sick if we do not soon so something, Mr. Speaker. In Freshwater, at well number three, the problem is arsenic. It can be fixed for under \$60,000 and we need to provide these forty-four residents with clean drinking water in that community.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to tell you something, if it is one thing that we should do as MHAs in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, we should make sure that there is good, clean, safe drinking water for our residents. That is one thing that we should do.

I listened to the Minister of Environment over there today and it does not seem like it is a big concern here. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, it is a concern for the residents of Freshwater and it is my concern as the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a petition today on health care in Heatherton to Highlands area. It reads: To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned humbly sheweth:

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this situation has gone on for over a year now, without a doctor in Jeffrey's, and people are having to travel long distances. They are not able to get the services they need of a doctor in the area. There is no nurse practitioner there in Jeffery's as well, so people are left without being able to get prescriptions filled and things like that. They have to travel to Stephenville to the outpatients there to get medical care, and that is blocking up the doctor's offices at the hospital in Stephenville causing people to wait long times there as well.

The situation is getting worse in the area. I think it is a crisis situation that is developing there, as the doctor in St. George's is about to leave as well, the fifteenth of this month. Very soon, St. George's will not have a doctor as well unless something happens soon. That will add to the waiting line at the hospital in Stephenville.

This is a serious situation and I am calling on the government to act on this petition that I am presenting today.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that affects many people in this House and the constituents in which we represent, and it is quite unfortunate the turn that this process has taken. We are here asking questions in the House about the services and we keep getting told about a functional plan, that it was out there and it is gone back for reference; it keeps coming and going. The problem is that the minister announces cuts to the hospital in Corner Brook and at the same time they are not allowing for us to see the entire plan.

Just last week, upon our questioning, we hear that they are cutting obstetrics beds. The minister used a stat from that day saying only two were full. Well, I can go back to two weeks before where eleven beds were full. All eleven of the obstetrics beds were full. What are we going to do in a situation when we are cut down to six and we have those days? I guess what we have here, number one, is an admission of failure of the Population Growth Strategy of this government, because if they are building a facility that they are expecting to serve us for years down the road, they obviously do not expect us to need these obstetric beds.

We are already hearing word that the ultrasound units are going to be cut. I think it is fair that the people of the West Coast of this Province have full access to the entire functional report that this

government is quoting from to make the cuts. They are saying there is going to be discussion. Well, I doubt that very much. I have been to the Premier's summits. I can guarantee you there is certainly no room for discussion right there. All you get the chance to do is to click on a button.

We deserve full opportunity, and I am talking about everywhere on the West Coast. We are all relying on this service. I can get to the fact you have to travel three hours to have a baby if you live on the Southwest Coast of this Province. They are announcing these changes here. Let's see the entire plan and let's have some public meetings on the West Coast so the people who have been hearing these promises for years now can have full access to what is going to go on here, because this hospital has to serve us for decades to come. Let's make sure it is the hospital that we need, not the hospital they want to give us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS mental health programs and services are crucial to the health of individuals, families, and communities; and

WHEREAS despite mental health services being delivered by government, community-based organizations, and informally by families and friends, there are still large gaps in services and programs in the Province; and

WHEREAS despite these efforts, stigma remains a significant barrier for people needing to access mental health services and participate in society; and

WHEREAS new directions and priorities are needed for mental health programs and service

delivery, especially for unique groups such as youth, Aboriginal peoples, immigrants, and refugees; and

WHEREAS recent budget cuts have placed a great strain on organizations delivering mental health services in the Province;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to immediately strike an all-party committee on mental health which, through extensive public consultation, will review the current state of provincial mental health services, receive expert testimony on best practices in mental health care delivery, and report their findings with the intent to provide guidance and oversight in redesigning mental health programs and services to better serve the needs of all the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure I will continue to get more and more signed petitions coming to my office because people of the Province know that our mental health services are in a state of crisis. It is undeniable. We have that anecdotal information from people suffering from mental illness, or their loved ones calling on their behalf. We also hear from mental health service providers who are saying the system is not working, the system is broken.

It was interesting in the House last Thursday, Mr. Speaker, to hear everybody on all sides of the House from all parties scrambling to speak about the issue of mental health. We know it is important. We know it affects every single person in this Province. It is crucial that we attend to this problem with immediacy and in a thorough, comprehensive way.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is calling for an all-party committee, a select committee. It is a valid tool that is available to us through this House of Assembly. The Minister of Health on Thursday said that he is listening. He is willing to listen to the Community Coalition 4 Mental Health. The Community Coalition 4 Mental Health clearly stated what they want, and that is

a select committee, all-party committee on mental health.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, on Thursday I had the privilege of standing in this House to talk about the wonderful District of St. John's Centre, which I say is smack dab in the heart of the City of St. John's, our wonderful city, and is surrounded by other wonderful districts as well. I did have the opportunity to speak for a few minutes before the House was closed.

What I did was I talked about St. John's Centre, really what are the characteristics of St. John's Centre. I talked about some of the services and organizations that are in St. John's Centre, and the people in the centre and what kinds of work they do. We have a lot of people in the arts.

That is an interesting group of people, Mr. Speaker, because people in the arts in Newfoundland and Labrador – in 2010, the median income of people in the arts in Newfoundland and Labrador, the annual median income for people in the arts, people in the arts who sing, who write songs, who make films, who do visual art, who write books, who write plays, who perform plays, who are actors, who are musicians, who are writers. People who reflect back to us our values in who we are as a community. I know everybody in this House benefits from the work of artists. All of us do.

The median income actually for people in the arts in 2011 in Newfoundland and Labrador was \$10,200. That was the median income in 2011.

The annual median income in Canada for people in the arts is \$25,000. That is over twice what artists in Newfoundland and Labrador bring in. You cannot survive on \$10,000 a month. It simply is not possible.

The median income in Newfoundland and Labrador for artists is \$10,000. Annually, for other people it is \$25,000. For other people in Newfoundland and Labrador the median income is \$25,000. These are the numbers, Mr. Speaker. I am making a bit of a correction there.

In Canada, across the country, the median income for people in the arts is \$19,600. The median income for people in all categories across the country is \$29,878. Newfoundland is considerably behind half of what artists across the country make.

Mr. Speaker, I am not so sure this is what we want as a community. The concept of the poor, starving artist is a fallacy. Living below the poverty line does not enable you to make better art. It simply means you are precariously housed, you cannot feed your children, and you cannot afford the basics in life.

When we look at some of our great artists, whether it is Great Big Sea or Allan Hawco, a lot of these people started off there, but very few move beyond that. Particularly people who are making art that is really cutting edge. That is just a little sidebar that I wanted to speak about.

One of the things I really wanted to speak about, Mr. Speaker, in terms of St. John's Centre is the number of young working families we have. Working families, people trying to raise children, people trying to help out with the Population Growth Strategy here in Newfoundland and Labrador. We know that it is very difficult.

The poverty line in Newfoundland and Labrador is around \$22,000. Do you know that in Newfoundland and Labrador 69,000 people live below the poverty line? We would like to see that we are a have province, we are no longer a have-not province, and we would like to claim

that we are in a time of great prosperity. We may have a few bumps right now in terms of the price of oil, but basically I remember the former Premier talked about that we were in our golden era. Well, 69,000 people living below the poverty line does not look like a golden era to me.

What can we do about that? I think there are a few things that we have to look at. One of the things that have been very interesting is that we see there is a growing inequality in our Province, that those in the lowest income are actually losing more ground while those in the highest income are gaining. We had a very prosperous resource extraction business here in the Province and many people have benefitted, and that is great; but the resources that are extracted from our oceans, from our grounds, they are resources that belong to all the people.

So how do we make sure we do not have a scenario where those in the lowest income are actually losing ground where 69,000 of our people, people in Newfoundland and Labrador, are living below the poverty line? It is certainly not something that we are proud of. That is over 10 per cent of our population.

So what do we do about that? We know that housing and mental illness are two of the strongest social determinants that can push someone into poverty. I am seeing that a lot in St. John's Centre, the issue of affordable housing. Many of the residents in St. John's Centre are struggling with the high cost of housing, whether it is a single person making minimum wage, which is still among the lowest in the country now. We had made great gains a few years ago, but we stagnated. That is the problem. Government comes up with these promises and with these initiatives and then things stagnate. We have so many people living on minimum wage and they cannot afford the housing that they need, just basic shelter. So they become the working poor.

Mr. Speaker, I was in Stephenville during the spring working on one of the by-elections and within two days, three different young moms, not related to each other at all, told me they just had to quit work because the price of child care was too high. They could not afford to work. That was in two days; three young moms.

How sad is that? That is not a sign of prosperity. That is not a sign of a fully engaged community, nor is it a sign of a fully engaged government making sure those kinds of things do not happen. Because they do not have to happen; there are ways we can take care of these issues. When I look at the people in St. John's Centre, how many young moms have said to me that I cannot afford child care?

I was at a Christmas dinner this afternoon. It was put on by my little brother; his name is Richard. Every Christmas season, he puts on a Christmas dinner for 200 people. It is at the Knights of Columbus. The Knights of Columbus donate their hall and they also volunteer. Also, the two head chiefs and all of their kitchen staff from the Sheraton Hotel come and volunteer and they cook a Christmas dinner. The workers from Labatt's, who were on strike last year, they volunteered last year and they volunteered this year. There are presents for all the kids. Santa Claus comes. There are a lot of seniors, a lot of people who are having a really hard time making ends meet.

I keep thinking this is so wonderful that this can happen and we can all celebrate together, but I keep asking why, Mr. Speaker. Why are there so many seniors at this dinner? Why are there so many young families with young children at this dinner who talk about not being able to afford proper food, who have to go to food banks?

We know the use of food banks in Newfoundland and Labrador has grown. The population who uses food banks that have grown the most, in terms of the proportion of people using food banks, are seniors. I looked around that room today because there are over 200 people that come and they enjoy a fantastic turkey dinner, I looked around and I kept thinking that it does not have to be this way. It really does not have to be this way. That is the hard part.

What can we do? Well, I think government has to get in there and do something about the housing crisis that we have. Building the odd unit is not enough. We are still waiting from the report from the OrgCode on housing and homelessness in Newfoundland and Labrador; that is almost two years overdue, and the review

of that landlord and tenancy act is two years overdue. I bet you within those two reports there are very, very clearly identified problems with potential solutions to some of these issues.

I want to look again at the issue of young working families, because I know that we had a Population Growth Strategy. Well, the only way to deal with a low population is to make sure that we have a growth in population. That is either through immigration or through birth of children – but how many young people are telling us that they cannot afford to have children? Imagine in 2014, in a Province of prosperity, when people cannot afford to have children, and they cannot afford to have children because of the high cost of housing and because of the absolute prohibitive cost of child care.

We know from evidence in other jurisdictions, and also from evidence within our own Province, that it does not have to be there. We can enact a fully public administered and delivered child care program so that it is possible for our young working families to be able to have children. It would be possible, then, for our young moms to be able to be in the workplace where they want to be, where they want to be fully participating in the commerce and in the well-being of our Province.

Mr. Speaker, there is no reason for this not happen. Government has dragged its heels, and I believe they can do better. I believe together we can all do better so that people are housed in a safe, secure manner, and that we have a child care program that enables young working families to have the children that they need, because that is what we need. We need that as a Province, and the solutions are so clear. All it takes is a political will and absolute clear planning and a commitment by government to put all these pieces in place so that our people can flourish.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Littlejohn): The hon. the Member for Bonavista North.

MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is always nice to hear that: the hon. the Member for Bonavista North. I have to think

when I stand here that I am always appreciative of the great historical District of Bonavista North that I am representing the people there, and I appreciate that trust they have placed in me. I also appreciate, I guess, the devotion my family has given me to enable me to carry out a life-long dream for however long one may wish to do this.

Before I get into my comments today, there is one other person in Bonavista North I really need to speak to, and this person is celebrating today, Mr. Speaker. It is the aunt of the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. Mrs. Neta Woodland, in Greenspond, is celebrating ninety-six years of enjoyment on this planet today, Mr. Speaker. So, I send out a very, very happy birthday to Aunt Neta.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: In my comments today, Mr. Speaker, I want to start talking about things that are happening around the district and in the district, some of the visits, some of the conversations I have been having with people in the last few months. The conversations we are having are at events that are showing the dedication of the type of people from Bonavista North. Two or three of these events I have to speak to for a moment.

A couple of weeks ago I attended the Musgrave Harbour Fire Department annual banquet. They do not have a dance or a ball with their banquet, Mr. Speaker. The Musgrave Harbour Fire Department is a little different. They are a little more unique. They start their annual celebration at a church service. The community that do not go to the banquet – the banquet is sponsored by the town, but the church is full of people out in support of the fire department. The spirit there is very, very rich.

The devotion these people have for the fire department, the firettes who back them up, is very, very important in that community, in all of our communities. I would just like to recognize, this year at that banquet Keith Guy and Curtis Hicks, two longstanding members of the fire department, celebrated thirty-five years of devoted service to the group.

The other thing that is sort of unique in that community, Mr. Speaker, is – what I call after visiting now for four firemen’s events – at the end of the evening the parade of cheques from the community. Most of the groups in the community, most of the businesses, most of the other social and service groups in the community, at the end, the fire chief says, okay now, I heard someone wanted to make a presentation. Then the Lions people, the town and businesses.

The one I mentioned last year, Mr. Speaker, Elaine’s Grocery, they run a 50-50 for the fire department. They presented a cheque at the end of the night this year for \$22,000 to the fire department for monies made at a 50-50 draw that the community all takes part in through the whole year. It is a very, very phenomenal event. It was touching and very heartwarming to be there.

I also recently, Mr. Speaker, attended – and I spoke a little on a member’s statement about this one – the fortieth anniversary of the Centreville-Wareham-Trinity and Indian Bay recreation commission. That one committee has been together – and when I say one committee, I do not say it is a committee and the members have changed and changed and changed and there is no continuity.

This committee, Mr. Speaker, has four people who have been with the committee since it started forty years ago. In fact, before it started Roland Button was a member of the Wareham recreation committee. Wilfred Wiseman was a member of the Trinity recreation committee. The other two gentlemen, Winston Button and Gordon Hunt in Wareham and in Centreville – three to four years before they amalgamated in their committee to form the one commission, long before the towns of Centreville, Wareham, and Trinity joined together, these gentlemen got together to bring a regional service to recreation. They committed quite a bit, Mr. Speaker, in all these years to that community.

They have a little arena in Centreville, right in the middle, the Central Arena. I just have to mention one little thing about that one today too, and it is sort of timely. They had an old Zamboni off one of the old rinks in Newfoundland and Labrador. They had it for

several years. The Zamboni rusted out and they did not have much success with it.

What did they do? They sort of pooled their resources in the community. They got a hold of a gentleman in St. John’s, believe it or not, Don Johnson. He was here with the recreation in St. John’s and has done a lot of coaching over the years. Through a meeting – this is a gentleman who Roland Button and a couple of these other gentlemen came to St. John’s and met with Mr. Johnson.

They found out about the NHL retired players association and they wrote a letter to Le Gros Bill, Jean Béliveau. He was in there at the time, Mr. Speaker, as part of that organization. He came through for them to the tune of about \$35,000 towards their new Zamboni about fifteen years ago.

Mr. Speaker, they have a picture of Jean Béliveau in the arena. The fact that statesmen of hockey will be laid to rest tomorrow, it is sort of timely that we mention him here today too, and his commitment not only to les Canadiens but to hockey throughout the entire country.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CROSS: We recognize his passing, Mr. Speaker, here in talking about Indian Bay recreation and Centreville-Wareham.

I also attended a Lions Club fortieth charter night at Indian Bay Lions Club last weekend. They had a complete ceremony there in honour of their founding president, forty years ago, Mr. Fred Green, and the vision he had and how he saw the need in his community. The volunteerism from that is very, very strong. They honoured King Lion Fred Green, their founder. Every time we attend Lions events in Centreville, we see how much service they do to the community, the cadets and their worldwide vision. They are a part of that worldwide organization of 1.35 million people due to a vision forty years ago of Mr. Fred Green in their town.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to kick into a couple of other things about Bonavista North for

members here and for people on the airways, shall we say, about things that are happening in our district that are really worthy of making notice and being a part of. I heard the member who spoke last talking about child care strategies and her vision. We all have a vision, Mr. Speaker. We all have a different vision of how we can help with our children, our young working families in our region.

The Cape Freels Development Association, everybody thought they were down and out with all the changes in AES and EIS in the last couple of years but they have mustered forward, Mr. Speaker. When they latched onto the child care strategy the government expounded and passed out, then they applied at the early levels. They got through the first introductory stage of child care. Their proposal went in, it was reviewed, it was accepted.

The second stage, Mr. Speaker, they have gone through now where they have been accepted in their main proposal towards their vision of a child care strategy as a not-for-profit group in our region. They have been approved to the point that now they are expanding on a small building they took over in the community. In two or three months the building will be ready for access for up to thirty spaces for child care. Potentially seven to nine part-time, full-time jobs in the community for people in child care.

That is a vision from that small group that used the strategy and the supports from this government, Mr. Speaker, took that idea forward, and now they are ready to step forward again, a big step, into assisting young families with smaller children be able to avail of child care for their children – very, very humanitarian, if not great activity from this group.

There is also tourism in Bonavista North. We talk about tourism in lots of ways. There are some people across our great Province and in other parts of the world who do not really understand the wealth of what we have to offer. We have the natural beauty, Mr. Speaker, on both ends of the district. We have the Indian Bay waters with all of the fishing and all of the hiking you can do, with the trails and the skidooring trails and ATV access. The whole wild country of the Indian Bay region – very famous worldwide – is in our district. It is still

vitaly untapped in lots of ways, but there are groups who are interested in doing just that, and developing and promoting it. There is some vibrancy in that area of the industry this year, Mr. Speaker.

Also on the other end of the district, some 160 kilometres away by road, you come to the Gander Bay riverboat country, I call it. It is a very, very scenic, rugged, great sport fishing and hunting area of the Province. Again, there are people there who are wishing to develop that area.

In the middle of the district there is what was the picturesque component of the tourism strategy from two years ago when you saw all of the dory buff houses on the cover of the tourism brochures and in the tourism booklets and the ads you see the colour of the Barbour Living Heritage Village in Newtown. It is still a very, very big gem. The Venice of North America, it is referred to – the seventeen islands and how they connect – and what is to offer there in that little picturesque village, Mr. Speaker.

Well, in the last year or so they have developed part of it now to the point – they had an endowment from this lady, Mrs. Rita Love, and they converted \$20,000 that she left behind to create something in the community to stay and to remember. So what has happened is they have turned that into with some leverage from our Department of Industry, Business, and Rural Development – the name has changed now, but when the first grant came out it was the IBRD component of that – as well as some ACOA funding, and they have really created this picturesque restaurant as part of the scene. It is sort of the hidden link to help a tourism facility be able to make it on its own, shall we say, in its existence and to be able to stay active.

In that little restaurant, in that little room now, it can seat about ninety people. You walk in one place and you look – they brought in a local artist, a girl, Kathy Stratton. She was originally from Brookfield. Kathy now lives in Lumsden. Her married name now eludes me, but I always refer to her as Kathy Stratton. As you sit there, she painted on the wall the entire panoramic view – outside of Newtown – of Pinchard's Island. So when you sit in the restaurant, you can imagine the walls do not even exist.

There are a couple of windows there where you see how the wall connects, but it takes you there – the other side of the restaurant is a big mural of the entire side of the Barbour's Tickle. So you can look up the tickle and see the historic way the community looked. So, these two big murals are there. They brought together the whole attraction of bringing people in for good food at a good event. A good place to come to see about our history and our culture, yet you sit in a very, very remarkable atmosphere.

Now, on top of that, Mr. Speaker, inside the centre of that restaurant, they have a kitchen. It is like a house planked in the middle of the restaurant and you can look in through windows and view two or three ladies, all summer long, even into the fall now and up to the Christmas season, making pastries, making jams. People can actually come there and buy the experience of putting on an apron and getting in the kitchen and getting their hands into the pastry and into the jams. It is an experience that you just cannot get anywhere. It really attracts people to come in.

Now, what we need to do to add on to that, Mr. Speaker, as another component of all of this in the district, is for accommodations and other attractions to connect together, to stay together, with all of that.

Accompanying that site last summer, we had one other very successful event happening. There was a void in the site with theatre. So last summer, a youth theatre was created with a local play. The students from Grade 4 to Grade 12, some of them are back home now writing a play for a production over Christmas, but it is building bridges again, connecting our youth to our past. It is part of what is going to make that a very strong tourism draw in the near future.

The play that was written last summer, the leadership was by Flo Cross – she just happens to be my sister, but she took her talent in retirement and she used the students to write the play. It sort of encapsulated what the past story was of this region.

Mr. Speaker, they did nine productions, I think, last summer of the play and eight of them were sellouts, so much so they had to add on extra shows at the end of the year. The buzz around

the community now is the youth and the theatre, and what they are going to be and how vibrant it is going to be for next year.

We all hear them in this House, Mr. Speaker, all want a way to attract the youth in our Province, to get them involved, to get them to want to be a part, but if you give them a chance, we trust them, and we pass things on to them – that is what we should be doing anyway in getting ready – then what happens is that we do know that our Province can be in successful hands with our youth. We just have to give them the best that we can and hope that sometimes not only from our skills and our strengths but, in spite of us sometimes, they succeed and they do things in spite of what we do for them and the way we like to hold them. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to recognize that, that our future is great as long as that point goes.

I had two or three other things – I wanted to talk to about the infrastructure and other things happening the district, but I talk about that with the town council so I will get into that idea when I get back to council chambers and some of the meetings that we will be having there.

I do want to mention a couple of what I consider mentionable moments that are Province-wide that have happened recently that I just want to allude to. One was when our former Premier and Minister of Finance met and announced that they had succeeded in reaching an agreement in the pension plan reform. That was a big watershed moment this year for an accomplishment when people believed it could not happen or did not have the vision or the plan to make it happen, in some cases, but were in awe when it did.

For us to have a sustainable pension plan now to allow for a reasonable retirement for our public employees and protection for future financial pensions in this Province, Mr. Speaker, is phenomenal. On that day when we met for the announcement, it was a big day and there will be bigger days coming in that area, I say, just wait.

The other big memorable moment that I would like to refer to happened a couple of weeks ago when the hon. Member for The Isles of Notre Dame, as Minister of Natural Resources, joined with the hon. Andrew Younger from Nova

Scotia and they broke ground on the connection between the link on this side for that link for energy that we can send from our Province.

Also, it is a big day for us, Mr. Speaker, because after this we are no longer not connected to other parts of the world for our power. We are no longer that Island isolated plan, Mr. Speaker. That is a big, significant event, the groundbreaking on that, and the fact we are now moving forward with that project the way it should be and the connection that it brings for everything else.

My final comment is last Wednesday night I attended the health care meeting in Mount Pearl, and a great place, Mount Pearl. I must say the meetings that were taking place there, if they are an indication of what the attendance is all around the rest of the Province – what I found about it, it is not just a clique, as the hon. member from the other side said today, but it seemed everyone had an equal chance to have a voice. One or two or three people did not get up to a microphone and take over the whole afternoon.

In winding up, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that it is a big process, a commitment was made, and we are trying to gather the information for the health care summit that is coming up later on which will be very important for health delivery in our Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time today. I had much more but I can go on, and I will leave.

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 we adjourn debate on Address in Reply.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that we adjourn debate 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 would like to call from the Order Paper, Motion 3, and ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act Respecting Missing Persons, Bill 36. So moved by me as House Leader, seconded by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, that the bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce a bill, An Act Respecting Missing Persons, Bill 36, and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the said bill be read the first time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Government House Leader to introduce a bill, "An Act Respecting Missing Persons", carried. (Bill 36)

CLERK: A bill, An Act Respecting Missing Persons. (Bill 36)

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

When shall the bill be read a second time?

MR. KING: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 36 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

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

I now call from the Order Paper, Motion 4. I move, seconded by the Minister Responsible for Service NL to ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No. 2, Bill 37, and the said bill be now read the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the hon. Government House Leader shall have to introduce a bill, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No. 2, Bill 37, and that the said bill be now read the first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the minister shall have leave to introduce Bill 37 and that the said bill be now read the first time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Service NL to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No. 2", carried. (Bill 37)

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No. 2. (Bill 37)

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

When shall the said bill be read the second time?

MR. KING: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 37 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper now Order 1, Address in Reply.

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

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am going to stand for a few minutes to have a few words on Address in Reply. I say to the hon. member, yes, it was a great night, Mr. Speaker, breaking the ground for Emera. Nova Scotia is going to get cheap power at cost while we are here paying right through our nose on the power. It is going to be a great night for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. That is a great night. I cannot wait.

You must have relatives in Nova Scotia who are up there celebrating the big power they are going to get, Mr. Speaker. I hear people already in talking about – already in their seats. They had their opportunity to speak. You had your opportunity. Everybody has their opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak to a few things that happened in the last year or so concerning a lot of the Bay of Islands and concerning other things that affect the district and in government itself. I have to bring up, back in 2002 – and I always try to live by this policy in government – was when Clyde Wells was the Premier and I was working for Clyde Wells. People know that I was his executive assistant and I stepped aside for Clyde Wells at the time.

There were budget cuts coming up in 1992 for the election in 1993. Everybody around the Liberal Party were all upset and concerned that we are going to get people upset. I remember speaking to Clyde Wells going to Gillams and all about the cuts. He looked at me and said: Eddie, I would rather lose with honesty than win with dishonesty. That is what Clyde Wells said to me. He announced it then. He said it then. He stood up in front of the people and he was honest with the people. Here is what we have to do and here are the reasons why. Mr. Speaker, that is something this government should learn.

I heard the member over there from Baie Verte – Springdale last week going on talking about all the money. The Member for Exploits was also talking about how people should vote for him.

How condescending. You are doing your job. You are up there and we do not know why people do not appreciate – I say to the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale, the people from Little Bay Islands are looking for you. They have been trying to get hold of you for the last year about resettlement. They are looking for you. Why don't you go down and have a meeting with the people down in that area? They are looking for you. I have another e-mail saying they cannot get hold of you. All you are saying, I do not know what government is doing. I do not know.

Instead of harping on me, why don't you go down and meet with the people who elected you? Go down and meet with them. That is what you should do. For God's sake, here he is harping on me when people are looking for him for a meeting. Mr. Speaker, that is the difference. That is where you lose respect for people, when you stand up in this hon. House and you go on about why people will not vote for you.

Mr. Speaker, I will go on to capital works out in Lark Harbour. I will go on to amalgamation and the Member for St. John's West who was the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and the Member for Mount Pearl North who is the Minister of Health now.

The Town of Lark Harbour-York Harbour went through amalgamation. It went through the whole amalgamation process, paid for by government for regionalization of services in those two communities. They do most of it anyway already. They wanted to do it formally. They met with the minister on May 9 in Corner Brook. The study was done and completed. The town put in a request. On May 9 they said in two or three months we will get back to you. The town up to then, three or four months later, wrote the former minister, the Minister of Health. The Member for Mount Pearl North could not get a response. I could not get a response, Mr. Speaker.

Then the Minister of Environment, now the Member for St. John's West, he came over as minister. He committed to go to a meeting. He never showed up.

AN HON. MEMBER: What?

MR. JOYCE: He never showed up.

I walked out in his respect, and I said the minister is coming out. It was when they had a fire truck, they fought a fire, the fire truck broke down. I said to the minister, I called him. I will give him credit, he called me back. He said: Eddie, I will try to speed up the truck but I cannot guarantee it, but we will be out Thursday. He never even showed up. That is the kind of respect, Mr. Speaker.

I wrote the minister three times, the Member for St. John's West three times. I could produce the documentation here, not one response. The town wrote him, not one response, Mr. Speaker. Then you wonder why you lose the respect of the people in this Province.

I have to give the current Minister of Municipal Affairs respect and give him credit, Mr. Speaker. When I contacted him out in Corner Brook during the MNL convention, he met with the two towns. He met with the two towns. He said here is what I will do. To this date, Mr. Speaker, he said I know the part on the fire truck, there was nothing done to it up to this date. He said I will see what I can do. There was a truck announced for York Harbour-Lark Harbour. Mr. Speaker, there was a truck –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

MR. CRUMMELL: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

I spoke to the hon. gentleman a couple of times, three times over that time period. The first time I spoke to him there was a fire truck delivered two days later to replace the one that was there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

The hon. the Member for Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, how that member could stand up and say he spoke to me about a new fire truck after the time – Mr. Speaker, here is the chance, call the people from York

Harbour-Lark Harbour. Call them and ask them how many times they spoke to the minister. Go ahead, Minister, go ahead, call them. Easy for him to stand up here – I spoke to the minister. Yes, but you never showed up to the public meeting because you did not have the intestinal fortitude, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon. Member for Bay of Islands, I ask the hon. member to withdraw a previous remark. I think he used a –

MR. JOYCE: Intestinal fortitude?

MR. SPEAKER: I thought you used the “F” word, Sir.

MR. JOYCE: No, intestinal fortitude, I used.

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry, okay. I apologize.

MR. JOYCE: Intestinal fortitude is someone with guts; that is what it is, Mr. Speaker.

So that is why people in this Province feel they are being left out by this government, the reason why they are being condescending. So if the Minister of Environment – St. John’s West – wants to stand up here and say that he did, it is absolutely not true – not true. I challenge anybody here, ask the people in York Harbour how many times they wrote that minister – he never even had the courtesy of a response. Not even a response, Mr. Speaker.

This is very upsetting. I can produce the three copies of the letters that I wrote the minister – not a response, Mr. Speaker. So I can go on, and the Member for Mount Pearl North when we talk about municipal capital works – I think the Bay of Islands got \$245,000. One hundred thousand or eighty thousand, I am not sure, but in that high range, was work that was already completed, was cost overrun – the work was done. I remember the minister said, you are going to get \$1.2 million for the water and sewer in Lark Harbour. I said: Oh, well that is fair enough. So I was being fair, Mr. Speaker. He never even contacted the town after – never even contacted.

So, all the commitments that are being made by this government, I can tell you I do not believe it. I honestly do not. There are some ministers,

I have to say, who treat a lot of people with respect, and I give that credit and I always have. I know the minister for Lab West, Mr. Speaker – and I know the Humber Valley is one thing – but when I contacted him about Route 40 over in the Bay of Islands, which was a hazard, guess what? He said: Eddie, I will see what I can do. Guess what? It is a safer place today because the minister took the time and energy to go out and look at that spot, Mr. Speaker, and say it is a hazard.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are times I do recognize it. I know I just recognized the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the current one. I think he is treating people with respect. You may not get what you want, you should not get what you want because there is no way we can solve every problem in every district, but people need respect.

When I speak to the minister for Mount Pearl North and say: Yes, there is 1.2 on the table for amalgamation; yes, it is coming and not even meet with the people – it is very disrespectful.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about another little issue that was brought up, it is 911, this dispatch 911, the so-called big system that Judy Manning is out pushing.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. JOYCE: Not allowed to say her name? She is not elected in this House, Mr. Speaker. Judy Manning is out supporting this. I can tell you this here, I heard the Minister of Education say: Have respect. I will tell you what respect Judy Manning had out with the firefighters out there; I will tell you what respect they had. There were three or four firefighters there, one person in particular, Colin Tucker, fire chief and medals – Mr. Speaker, she did not even know this man. This man, Colin Tucker, is so advanced in firefighting he actually trains volunteer firefighters for the division that she represents. He actually puts off clinics and trains volunteer firefighters.

For her to look down at Colin Tucker and say: You do not know the difference between dispatch and call forwarding. Mr. Speaker, I shook my head. I said she just does not know who this guy is. Look at these firefighters here

that were at that meeting, about sixty or seventy of them, and say you do not know the difference. Do you want to know why people think you are losing respect for the people in the Province, Mr. Speaker? I can tell you, and I know the minister will stand up, the minister who brought it in, when this 911 was brought in it was for dispatch.

Mr. Speaker, if you look on page 32 of the report it goes through where the 911 is at on the dispatch and you look at Corner Brook. I look at Corner Brook, for example – I will go through the Province. What they were using was the RNC, the Constab in Corner Brook in 2012 when the report came out and the report did state in order to have dispatch what the services that RNC will need.

If you look at up in Lab West, it was the same thing, Mr. Speaker. In St. John's, it was St. John's Regional Fire Department; it was full dispatch. There is no one can tell me any different. Now, Mr. Speaker, here is what we have. I just want to let people out there know here is what we have with this 911. In the twelve communities out on the West Coast it is a downgrade. They did have dispatch from the RNC. No doubt, it was a system that was supplied by the RNC back years ago with the money funded from the Department of Justice, Mr. Speaker, absolutely no doubt about it.

Mr. Speaker, I stood up and asked the question: Why did Justice allow it? Do you know what Ms Judy Manning said? Oh, I am not privy to that. She is the Minister of Justice. So somewhere along the line you are going to say yes, we allowed them to do it. Whatever you want to do, Mr. Speaker, but guess what? Because of the uproar, because of the public meeting, because of the by-election in Humber East, the twelve communities got full dispatch by the RNC which we are told, as of January, they could not do it any more because they did not have the room, but they are doing it now. For some reason, they found all of the necessary room. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, it is a downgrade.

Here is what is going to happen to a lot of communities, Mr. Speaker. A lot of communities will have a better service in some ways, but I will explain it to you. How it

happens in Corner Brook right now is through the RNC. You call into the RNC now and they pick up the phone. They say: What is your emergency? We have a fire emergency. They would stay on the phone. They would page – I use Colin Tucker, Meadows – we have a fire at 40 Meadows. They will keep that person on the line until Colin Tucker pages back and says yes, we have the call and we are on our way. That is the way it is done. If he does not respond in twenty seconds, they will contact him again. Then if he does not respond the second time, they would go to the nearest department. They will keep that person on the line, Mr. Speaker, until someone responds and there is help on the way.

The way it happens now, Mr. Speaker, I call into 911, the dispatcher picks up the phone: What is your emergency? I have a fire at 40 Main Street. One second now; they transfer you to the beeper system in Meadows and hang up the phone. You have fifteen seconds – they cannot upgrade their pagers; it is costly to the fire department. You have fifteen seconds, as of today, to say what your emergency is.

Now, if you do not speak clear, if you happen to mumble forty instead of zero or four, you are in trouble because there is no call back; there is no way to respond if it is coming. So, Mr. Speaker, that is what we are giving here today. That is what is happening in this 911 service today.

I know the minister who is sitting there, who brought this in, never intended for that, I can guarantee you. Because when I stood up in this House and I supported that, Mr. Speaker, it was a dispatch. At least stay on the line to say there is help on the way.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the second thing on this 911 system, if you call in now and you want an ambulance – I will use Cox's Cove, for example, out in the Bay of Islands. If they say we want an ambulance, Mr. Speaker, and I know a lot of members opposite do not even realize this, I am sure of it. If you want an ambulance, they will put you through to the ambulance, click, and hang up. At the ambulance you will have a live operator. I have someone who had a heart attack in Cox's Cove down by Joe Byrne's store.

For that ambulance to get from Corner Brook to Cox's Cove it is about forty-five minutes. Guess what, Mr. Speaker? With this new system, it is up to that ambulance operator to have on his side the list of fire departments so he can contact the fire department as first responders to go and give him CPR before we get there. That is the way it is now. That is this new system. That is the way it is.

If this ambulance operator does not have the number for the fire department in Cox's Cove, Mr. Speaker, this person has to wait forty-five minutes for an ambulance. Do you know how many lives they save? Do you know how many calls the volunteer firefighters get in this Province now?

I hear every member standing up and congratulating the volunteer fire departments, and we all do. We all think they are doing great. Mr. Speaker, 80 per cent of all their calls right now are medical. Do you know what we are doing? We are actually putting lives in danger, Mr. Speaker. We are tying their hands, because if that call goes into an ambulance, they do not get the call unless the ambulance driver calls them. I am sure people do not realize it. I am honestly sure.

In some places things are not going to change, Mr. Speaker. Some may want to have an advanced system now to stay on the line until they can go to the police, ambulance, fire department, and that is fine.

Mr. Speaker, I take people like in Deer Lake. This may not affect Deer Lake one way or the other because they are going to use the power plant in Deer Lake. Carbonear uses the hospital. Out in Port aux Basques and that area, they use Marine Atlantic. Everybody is not going to use this 911 system, Mr. Speaker. There are a lot that have their own now. It may just go through that live voice anyway.

Mr. Speaker, I asked Judy Manning – she stood up out there with seventy people and said, well, it cost too much to give dispatch to 270. I said, well, how much does it cost? I asked her publicly. I do not know. I said, well, how can you make that statement? If you do not know, how can you make the statement?

Guess what, Mr. Speaker? She could not answer because she never did an analysis on it. I said, well, will you check? No. She said, you write me and I will ask. I am not going to ask my colleagues for that. Guess what, Mr. Speaker? I was waiting until I had a chance to speak in this House. I will be writing Judy Manning to ask her what it cost for the 270 fire departments for dispatch for firefighting. I will be asking that, Mr. Speaker.

A lot of towns will not even use it. I cannot see Deer Lake, if they do not want to change. Carbonear, for example – that is some. Here in St. John's – Corner Brook is not going to change. There are a lot that are not going to change.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at 270 fire departments, that is just the absolute worst-case scenario because you do not have the facts in front of you. You do not have the facts in front of you.

AN HON. MEMBER: They got paid, though.

MR. JOYCE: They had to pay in Corner Brook, yes, Mr. Speaker. Here is the funny part, here is where – I have to give the mayor of Massey Drive. I stood up and made a few statements. I corrected Minister Manning.

First of all, Minister Manning said the fire department in Corner Brook is going to be offering its service. That is not true. It is going to be the 911 operators, Mr. Speaker. The second thing she said, well, when they offer the services that is an extra cost to the City of Corner Brook. For the people in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, people on the West Coast and out this way, just to let you know, the operators who are going to either call forward or dispatch are the same ones who are being paid by 911.

Mr. Speaker, here is how it is going to work. They are going to be hiring on, and I will use Corner Brook for an example. The two people who are going to be hired on are sitting in the office. A call comes in. If you had to pay the \$2,500, they would take their hat, put on a dispatch hat, oh yes, we will dispatch. They will stay on the line until someone answers the phone. If you did not pay it, the exact same

person paid by the taxpayers of this Province will say oh, you never paid, too bad, we will just call forward. There is absolutely no expense to anybody else, Mr. Speaker, absolutely none.

When we all talk about 911, I urge the government backbenchers, look at what is being offered and let's make improvements to it. When you get people like Colin Tucker, and you get the firefighters and the fire chiefs out in Western Newfoundland saying this service is not up to standard – because we were told by Judy Manning, she said they are like Nova Scotia. We called Nova Scotia and guess what? They have full dispatch. They stay on the line until someone answers the phone to guarantee.

I urge all government members to look at this 911 system, Mr. Speaker, because it is not up to scratch as a lot of firefighters think it is.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HEDDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think I should say thank you. At least we have a bit of silence for a while. I might even call for a moment of silence after that diatribe. It is unbelievable from the Member for Bay of Islands. I have tried to follow through as he went, and trying to check off some of the facts, but I guess some of the facts would get in the way of a good story.

I say to the member, Mr. Speaker, respect is a very crucial thing in our business, there is no doubt about that. Trying to get up here now and respond to what I just heard is very difficult, I must say, Mr. Speaker, because I feel like going back like a dog. I have been in this House too long to be sucked in by such a rambling of a member.

Just to look at that member's history, he has been probably around this place the longest. What I cannot understand is that if he was around here the longest – because I was there in

2003 coming out of Opposition, and I know what investments were made in the West Coast. I can go right down through the whole list of them.

My question to the member is that if you were in so long in the 1990s, why the heck do we, as a government, have to go to the West Coast and straighten things out? You were sitting over here in government. What about Herdman? We have a former principal here in this House and he can –

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

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

MR. JOYCE: Just to let the member know, Mr. Speaker, the money for the newly developed school was put aside in 2003 before this government lost. So he should not have given his facts.

MR. SPEAKER: There is no point order.

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

MR. HEDDERSON: I will continue, Mr. Speaker. I shall continue.

I think I hit a nerve, because we know. I do not know how many promises they made to do Herdman. Because when I was the Minister of Education and went in, I am sure there were at least three or four, and in the dying days of 2003 government: Oh, we are going to do Herdman.

What about the courthouse? How come that was not done when the member was over here sitting in government? Why wasn't it done?

To be quite honest with you, do you know the biggest investment that was ever made in his district? Yes, you are right, the former member. I tell you, he saw what was needed to be done. He spoke well, and he represented the district well, and he got it done. Not only that, but the member obviously had defeated the current member and when he came in he was flabbergasted saying: Where do I start? Right up until his last days – as a matter of fact, when that member came in, there was still work on the books. He could go back and brag – it was

about \$2.5 million worth of roadwork that was left on the books and he walked right into it.

I say to the member, and you know – myself and the member go back a long while and I could not let you stand in this House and go on with what you went on with, because I know that it is more theatrics than fact. I am just hoping that the people of the Province can realize that you are not the only one with a conscience in here or supposed conscience, that some of the people –

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

MR. HEDDERSON: Yes, indeed, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we all have consciences and we all are here for one reason, and that is to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Yes, I can say in my sixteen years there has been really down moments here for me because in my sixteen years I have received more nos when I am asked for things than yeses. Guess what? I did not let that bury me like some people are letting it bury them.

I can get on my feet and honestly say that I tried as best I could to represent my district and when I was in the minister's chair to represent the people of this Province, but I can tell you one thing, respect – and also to bring up people's names in this House who are not here, and I know there is a good reason why that person is not here, but again that does not show good respect –

MR. JOYCE: What am I supposed to do?

MR. HEDDERSON: No, because like I said when I go after someone, I make sure they are my company. I do not go behind people's backs or use the House to get at anyone; I would go directly to the person. Whether they are here or in Timbuktu, I do not go behind someone's back.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that I am very proud to be standing here today and if I could – I sort of got sidetracked and I think I am going to put that aside now. I think I will put that aside because it is important that when you get up on your feet in this House that you do remember who put us here, and that is the people of our district.

As well, I think it a courtesy – this is really the first time I have gotten up and spoken, and I would like to welcome four new members to this House. I know in my sixteen years I have seen many people come and many people go. I guess the only advice I can give each one of those who have come in is, first of all, expect the unexpected because it is going to happen. When you think you have it all figured out, guess what? You do not.

The other thing –

MR. OSBORNE: (Inaudible).

MR. HEDDERSON: I hear a former colleague of mine say something. I did not hear – if he could repeat it.

MR. OSBORNE: (Inaudible) figure it out.

MR. HEDDERSON: I say to the Member for St. John's South, we have had some battles together. Some we have lost and some we have won, but thank God, after your twenty years and my sixteen, we still can jest back and forth across this House. That is where it is all at; there is no doubt.

When these newbies came in, I say to the member, we have a responsibility to try to make sure they also recognize the importance of this House. Because we are here in this House, that we do have to respect one another; there is no doubt about that. I just wish – and I am sure the new members coming in will appreciate. I came here in 1999 and I thought I was going to be here for a brief moment. Sixteen years later, I am still here. So who knows?

To get back to it, in 1999 – and I do not like going back but, I tell you, those years in Opposition taught me very valuable lessons. That is why, when we came in in 2003, we all knew, as a government, we had to do what we needed to do to get this Province going. We succeeded.

It was rough times over the last little while, but the same principle applies: no more giveaways. We want to make sure the only people who benefit mostly from whatever we do are going to be the people of this Province. As well, we show whatever respect we can and to listen to

the people of this Province and to try to make sure – now we cannot listen to everyone. Like the member who just got up previous to me, I would suggest, do not listen to him. You have to be very selective of who you listen to because you can get sucked in in doing things you should not be doing.

I would think people who leave this Chamber go on back to the real world, but again, Mr. Speaker, I would say that if I need a touchstone, I always go back to my district. I have spent a fair bit of time going around my district over the last few months. I am telling you, the difference in my district since 1999 is absolutely unbelievable. It is not about politics, by the way – it is not about politics. It is about getting the opportunity to do what they want to do.

I remember back in 1999 I had people phoning me looking for work. There were more people phoning me looking for work than any other request. Tom, is there a job around? Tom, I need a couple of weeks work. What really surprised me was that some of these people were highly skilled workers who had to phone up the MHA to try to get some work.

As well, our school population had plummeted. Schools were lots of space and no students. The state of the schools is another story, but to get back to my train of thought, people were in a hard way. Sixteen years later – and I do not want to ever think that it was because of me, so I am not going there – circumstances now have allowed a lot more young people to stay in the Province, and not only stay in the Province but stay in my district.

I went up to breakfast with Santa Claus in Colliers on Sunday. Sixteen years ago, I would be lucky to see a dozen children. I went up on Sunday because I could not make it on Saturday. They have two sittings, about 168 each sitting. I sat not right close to Santa Claus, but a little bit to the side and the line-up of kids going up for Santa Claus was unbelievable. It took about two hours.

What I am saying is that this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador finds itself in a good spot, Mr. Speaker. Having said that – I have to qualify it because I will be accused of saying I have rose-coloured glass on – we still

have some tremendous challenges. We do have people in this Province who are struggling like you would not believe, but we are, I hope, in a better place today to try to deal with that than we were five years ago or ten years ago.

Mr. Speaker, it is a wonderful thing to be able to get the best out of life, but circumstances sometimes do not allow that. Again, I go back to the infrastructure, not only the bricks and mortar but the programming that we put in place as a government over the last little while will stand the test of time, no matter what happens.

People will look back on these years as years when the programming matched up with the needs of the people, but, of course, the only problem is making sure that we can sustain that. The diversity of that and we as a government have sought is taking a little bit of a hit now because we are not where we want to be and the oil prices are certainly dictating, to some degree, how much money we are going to have in order to deal with some of the great needs that this Province would have.

I am confident that where we are gives us a fighting chance to stay ahead. As a matter of fact, when we compare ourselves to other jurisdictions in this country we, as a Province, are well advanced, as we are often compared to Alberta in our ability to create employment, or our ability to deal with the challenges, social challenges, our education challenges, justice, as we go right down through the gamut.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to you that we as a government will continue to stick to our principles of making the tough decisions, the hard decisions, and there are some extremely hard decisions that need to be made in order for us to go forward.

As well, we will be bold in making sure we do listen to the people, but again, making sure we listen, that we do the balancing we need to do. We cannot please everyone. That is something that, I guess, is true right from our family lives right up through. We have to make decisions that sometimes will not benefit some, but hopefully it will be for the greater good.

So, Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to kind of finish up talking about one of the social

programs or programming that I think we have hit it spot on. I am looking down at the new creation, dealing with making sure that we have sort of an umbrella in order to take care of the seniors of our Province in a proper manner. A new minister has been put in place. I tell you, the involvement – over the next couple of days or next two weeks, I probably have at least three or four dinners with seniors.

These are clubs that have been formed lately over the last number of years who basically depend upon government, through certain grants, to carry out activities. It is about healthy living, it is about good eating, and it is about socialization. Mr. Speaker, I think it is one of the best programs that we ever could involve ourselves in. Our seniors – and of course, we all know that the population is certainly shifting, and shifting that the percentage of seniors is going to increase as the years go by. We must be prepared as best we can to ensure we continue to support our seniors in a way that will give them a good quality of life.

On the other extreme, with early childhood development – I have been very fortunate to now become involved back with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. It is a fabulous mix that has been a long time coming, applauded by most everyone. Again, on both ends of that lifelong journey it is so, so important that we make sure we are doing what we can to ensure our children get the best care possible.

As usual, getting to where we want to go is going to take time. Of course, our strategy with regard to early childhood development, we have targeted 2022 because we know there is no way that overnight you can just get to where you want to go. You go to 2022 and you work your way backwards. There are all sorts of milestones that have been established with that strategy. I am looking forward to working with the officials in the department as we get from stage to stage to stage.

Mr. Speaker, my time is running down and you get to the last minute. The season will soon be upon us and we should all look forward to our Christmas, in the hope that the circumstances regarding this Province will turn out in the best interests of the people of the Province.

I certainly look forward to the new year, as the new year brings great promise. We as a government will continue to do what we need to do to govern, and to work in the best interests of the people of this Province. As well, to the people of my district, I am looking forward to home for the holidays. I wish nothing but peace and joy for all of my constituents and indeed all of the people of the Province.

With that very positive note, I started off a little bit on the other side of it, but at least, Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the time.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is indeed an honour to get to stand in this House today and talk about a number of things relevant to my background in getting into politics, the great work that is being done in this Province, the work of my colleagues, and acknowledging the role of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker; also, more importantly, acknowledging the citizens of this Province, the good work they do in guiding where we go, the great work they do as volunteers and as people who are driving the economy here.

It is an anniversary of sorts. It is four years ago today that I had the opportunity to sit, not in this House, but in the gallery after just winning a by-election on the passing of my friend, the late Dianne Whalen. I remember sitting here watching everybody here and unfortunately, on the other side, only my colleague, the Member for St. John's South, was there at the time, and when I look over at all the new faces – so things change in only four years, Mr. Speaker.

It is amazing in politics how a day can change things. In four years, how faces have changed in this House, how policies have changed. How the economy has grown. It has had some challenges. We face some other challenges right now. How a lot of good things have been done.

How we have bantered back and forth, but in terms of what this House is all about, trying to better people's lives in this Province, and there is no doubt we all do that. I have the confidence of that. Even when there are days when there is some disdain among us or there are some challenges back and forth, I think it is a pure mutual respect. Particularly when we get closer to the Christmas season and get some better understanding that we are all here for the same purpose, to try to do the best we can for the people of this Province.

Mr. Speaker, I can remember coming in figuring I had a fair idea of what the needs of my district were and the unique make-ups. When you think of Paradise, a flourishing suburb and community that was starting to grow second to none, looking for the services and the amenities of a real town and a real community, and the challenges they had as their growth was getting out of hand.

You had Portugal Cove – St. Phillips, normally known as rural. It is just outside the skirts of the city, a community that was itself trying to get control over where it is they wanted to go, what kind of a community they wanted, how they could offer services to their citizens. You had Bell Island, a boom-and-bust community that had gone from the elite of the elite when it came to economic growth and employment to now coming to despair over the last number of years, but then wanting to find a way back.

The commonality here that I found in all three communities was its citizens, the leadership they took there, the municipal leaders, the volunteers, the workers in those communities, the families, the agencies, and the organizations there who came as a common goal, Mr. Speaker.

It was not very long when I realized there are going to be some challenges in politics. There are a lot of assets out there. There are a lot of allies who can be developed, and there are a lot of people who think the same way you do when it comes to wanting to better people's stake in life and improve their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I can remember giving an interview probably the second day I had gotten elected. The reporter asked me, well, when will you finish in politics? I guess in jest, but at the

time probably being naive said, well, the day that I am comfortable that people in Paradise have proper infrastructure around recreation and schools, because that had been a big thing I had heard during the by-election campaigning process. When that is done, I will feel people in Paradise have been taken care of.

In Portugal Cove – St. Phillips, when I feel the education system, that the kids no longer have to be bused into St. John's to have proper access to education, and that the town has a plan where they can develop that community into what the citizens want it to be. I said I would be comfortable there.

When it came to Bell Island, I thought, what is it Bell Island needs? It is an infrastructure. It is an older community, but it did have a fair bit of infrastructure already put in place because it was a fairly affluent community for a number of years, but we all knew what it was. It was about the ferry service, improving that. Improve that stake for the people of Bell Island and you improve their ability to be economically viable as part of that process.

Two weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, that same reporter talked to me in jest and said, I assume you are going to be resigning soon. I looked at him puzzled and I said, explain that one to me. He said, well, you have accomplished what you set out to do. I said how do you figure that? He said, I was doing a profile going back over statements that MHAs had said over the years when they were running for elections – I guess he is doing some kind of a profile story – and you talked about the three things you wanted to do in the various parts of the community, about improving education in the community, about improving infrastructure, about improving access to transportation, about improving recreation facilities. I said, yes, no doubt.

I could not even remember exactly what it was I had said four years ago. He said, but I will show you. No doubt, he passed it to me and sure enough. He said, haven't you accomplished this in Paradise? No doubt, in Paradise it is a little bit easier to get some things done because you have great colleagues there. Three of us represent that great community. Myself, the Minister of Health, and the Premier himself.

I said, no doubt we had a good team effort there and we had great councils to work with. We did accomplish things around recreation particularly, and around education. Two schools have been built and opened. Modular classrooms have been added to another two classrooms to take the overflow; but, particularly, an announcement only recently on a third school to be built. That is in the process. We have looked at the whole process about what we need for education, and we have addressed those.

We talked about recreation. I had the privilege last Friday of being with the Premier, the mayor, councillors, and hundreds of citizens of Paradise in opening the double-pad arena. It is not just an arena. This has a fitness centre second to none. It has a whole auditorium open setting that is second to none.

Last night I had the privilege of speaking to the tree lighting with 400 or 500 people there, in a big amphitheatre setting. It is a beautiful area where people can see what is going on. This is a pillar for that community. It is a drawing card. It is something the people can resonate around.

Yesterday morning myself and the Premier went to breakfast with Santa; 1,500 people in Paradise showed up. That is a testament of young families. Grandparents came with their grandchildren, and their sons and daughters. It is a testament to how that community is growing, how the partnerships we have developed as a government with the municipality, with the leaders, and with the organizations that are there to grow that community, to draw it as a community that is encompassing of young families who come in and have the services.

There is much more work to be done around transportation in those areas, and the infrastructure, but we have a great working relationship with the municipal leaders there to make things happen. I am very proud of this past weekend, seeing so many people up there.

Portugal Cove-St. Phillips, again, only in the next week or so we will unveil the design of the new five-to-nine high school or middle school that will be in Portugal Cove-St. Phillips. It is a great partnership with the town. We even partnered with the town to acquire the land. We

partnered with the town to make sure the services got to that site.

It is a great working relationship when everybody in the community buys into what is being done. It is very easy to buy into it because you have groups out there; you have citizens, no matter if they are not the original livyers or the people who moved in here, who have as their objective here to improve those communities. It makes it a lot easier if you are an elected politician to be able to make that happen, Mr. Speaker.

Also, we have looked at our infrastructure there. I had the privilege yesterday for two hours of walking through the road systems in Portugal Cove-St. Phillips with the Portugal Cove-St. Phillips road safety committee. It is a set of citizens who want to come together to look at how they improve safety on roads. It was not about criticizing what government does, it was not about criticizing the municipality, and it was not about criticizing drivers. It was about collectively working together to improve safety. How do we do it?

They understand there are certain restrictions in a rural area. They understand there is a certain piece of work that needs to be done, but they are very open about how we move that forward and very inclusive about making partnerships work. It was great to see that. For hours we stood around, everybody looking at – I am explaining certain things around policy, I am explaining around budget lines, and I am explaining about what is happening from a municipal point of view. They are very open to it. They had their suggestions. They are very confident individuals and very open-minded individuals. It was a great positive opportunity yesterday.

Then to see the Santa Claus parade come by, and the thousands of young children. I did not realize how big Portugal Cove-St. Phillips was when it came to population along the trek that the parade went by. You could see the faces there; you could see the new faces. I talked to a number of families who were from Bonavista, Englee, and from Labrador who had moved into the city area but found Portugal Cove-St. Phillips to be a great place to live.

They look forward to growing their family there. They look forward to the new school. They look forward to the money that has been invested in the recreation facilities, two state-of-the-art parks in that community that major cities would be envious of, Mr. Speaker, artificial turfs, lights, ball fields, outdoor amphitheatres, playgrounds for kids, everything that you would want. It is very encompassing; riding trails, all kinds of green spaces, dog parks, everything that you would want as a family to feel safe, to feel inclusive, and to feel engaged. That is what it is all about, Mr. Speaker.

Going to my hometown, which I am very proud to be from, Mr. Speaker, there are challenges, no doubt. I grew up in the 1960s and 1970s on Bell Island when the mines closed. It was destitute when you go from the second-largest community and the richest per capita income on a weekly basis to one of the poorest, because it was based on a one-town economy. They were the days when governments did not think about diversification; it was you move to the next location. That is all you did.

It was not about how do you sustain that community; what do you invest to be able to give people an opportunity to keep a leg up? Instead of putting a hand out, it was about giving supports. Those days did not exist. We were not that forward-thinking as we are in society now – and that is a positive. That is not a slight at anybody. It was a sign of the times; it is how things work. You went from one community – people from Bell Island were told, uproot and move to another area that may have a big, industrial-oriented stuff. Unfortunately, a lot of people from my community had to leave and go to the mainland.

Since then, Mr. Speaker, particularly in the last ten years, there is resurgence over there. There is an invigoration of people who want to take control of their own lives. The heritage society over there – Tourism Bell Island now creates forty jobs in the run of a summer. Our investments over there as a partnership – it is no handouts any more. It is developing partnerships. It is investing with the people because they have taken the lead on this. We are just the vessel to help them move things forward.

Our investments, Mr. Speaker, particularly around our transportation link – people see that as the key component, the key pillar for survival on Bell Island, and parts of the Northeast Avalon. Portugal Cove-St. Phillips and Bell Island have developed partnerships around tourism, around culture. These are all positive things that municipalities are starting to develop.

So we have had a great run over the last number of years, which is going to continue, Mr. Speaker. We have outlined strategic plans that we want to do as part of this whole process. The partnerships have been developed. We have opened the doors. We have started initiating a lot of things that will work around economic diversification, economic growth. We will engage more people. We have asked to develop partnerships, and we are starting to move those things forward.

I was asked by a colleague a couple of weeks ago, driving around my district, what was the greatest thing that I was the proudest of? Was it the ferry service, the schools, the nearly \$75 million in infrastructure? Was it about the recreational facilities, the arenas, the lifestyle centres, and all these things? I just, coincidentally enough, said come with me. So we were driving somewhere and I pointed at a house. He said: Why are you the proudest of that? It was just a fairly simple house. It was not a new home. It was seventy years. It was not elaborate by any stretch of the imagination. The only thing that really stood was there were brand new windows in that home.

He said: I do not understand. Why is that so significant? I said: Three months ago there was plywood up to those windows. The family living in there could not afford to replace windows that had gotten broken out, Mr. Speaker. I said: Under one of our programs, through Housing, we managed to give people a sense of pride again. The people are in there. We managed to get help in one of our programs to put insulation in that house. That family now lives in a sense of accomplishment, in a sense of pride. That house, you can notice the difference in a matter of a few months on how their pride has changed, how their garden is that much neater. How they are active in the community.

So, it is not always the big things we do. It is not the multi-million dollar projects, it is not the big visible things, it is the little things we do that have just as much an impact, and maybe more. That is going to sustain them in a healthy environment. That is more important than anything else, but it also gives them a sense of pride. It also looks good for the community, when you come down and see something that was there for years because there was no ability to deal with that, now coming back to that.

So we are about – the big things have to be done. You have to have major infrastructure to sustain any society. That is part of it, but there are little things, too, that drive that, that let people know government is thinking about them. People understand exactly what their needs are and understand this is about how we work together, how we support each other. We get that feedback, Mr. Speaker.

Most of the programs we deliver in government started from the grassroots. I would like to be able to say we are smart enough here, we are smarter than anybody else, that we can develop these great programs; far from it. At best, we put the rubber stamp on it because they have started out in the small communities. They have started with a meeting around a kitchen one day in reaction to something that was not being done properly.

We have been open-minded enough to say: Come in and tell us. Tell us what it is we need to do to make your lives better, to make all of our lives better, because we also benefit from whatever happens out there, Mr. Speaker. That is the important thing about how we open up to people in this Province and how this government is about that. It is about opening up, and we have been doing that. Former ministers have done it. The present ministers are doing it now about open government, engaging people. Tell us what it is we are doing right.

The former Premier said this: If we are doing right, please, tell us because sometimes politicians are not smart enough to keep going in the right direction. We will change from the sake of change. If we are doing something wrong, more importantly, tell us, because we are open-minded to change that. At the end of the day, everybody in this House wants to have

legacy that they did something that meant something for people. That had an impact. That was beneficial to the community.

We are all going to go back and live in those communities. We are all going to travel this Province. We are all going to get to meet people who we have worked with or had the privilege of being part of. So, Mr. Speaker, we want to be able to say, at the end of the day, what we did was the right thing. What we did, being the right thing, is because people told us this is what we needed to do. That is what we continue to do.

Mr. Speaker, I have come a long way in four years. I think from sitting over there intimidated around what was going to happen to sitting in the last row on that side – and no, I was not in Opposition, sorry. So many members on that side, getting a different perspective even over here when ministers and my colleagues would speak, and even talking to the Opposition of the day about what the issues were to now when you sit in and you become a minister, it is a whole different perspective. You get a different understanding sometimes the restrictions that you have on things that can be done, but you get a better understanding of why things are being done. That it is not as simple as someone coming in and saying we should change that. It is about legislation. It is about policy but, more importantly, it is about making sure what you are doing is done right. You are probably only going to get one kick at doing a lot of things, so you want to make sure they are done right.

When people get frustrated at us, and I get frustrated with my own department about how come things are not moving as quick, it is because you want to make sure it is done properly. You want to make sure the investment you are going to put into that is the best return on our dollar, and we do that.

Only recently in this House I was criticized, my department was criticized and this government, about a contract that we have put out there to purchase two new ferries. I will make it clear: it is not about the cheapest. I would never buy into that. It is about the best quality. In this case, that is what we have gotten. We did not get the cheapest, we did not get the most expensive, but I can guarantee you we got the

best quality for the people of this Province, and particularly those communities that are going to be serviced by those ferries.

We do that in all of our investments. It is not only around ferries. It is around the schools we build. It is around the hospitals. It is around the quality of health care. It is around when we invest in other programs and services. It is around post-secondary education. It is around primary education. It is all about getting the best return on our investment for the people, not on the bottom dollar. It is not about saving money. It is not about moving money around. It is about the return on the investment. That investment means that the people who deserve the services get the service they deserve, and that is what this is about.

It is a simple philosophy. The service gets provided at the level that the people expect that service to be. We have done a great job of that, Mr. Speaker. Is there a lot more to do? Of course there is. There will always be more to do, no matter what Administration is here. I can guarantee you in my tenure, in four years here, I have been very proud of what has been done on this side of the House. I am very proud of some of the hard decisions we have had to make. I am very proud of the fact that we were open-minded enough to go back and say in some cases, yes, we need to rethink that, we need to reflect on that, and we need to find another approach to it. Gone back in some other places and said this was not the right decision; we are going to go this way. Gone back humbling and saying yes, what people have said is right and we are going to step back.

I can guarantee you, we have always looked at what is in the best interests of the people of this Province, and we have delivered on that. Every day I talk to somebody who says it is great to hear that you are doing this and this program, great to hear that this has been added around certain programs and services.

It makes you feel that, yes, you are getting there. Do you also hear: But we need this – and I agree, there is no doubt. There is always a but, because we are not at the point of a utopia. We are at a point where we are identifying services. We are trying to implement those that are in the best interests of people. We are trying to find if

there are gaps in services, how do we address those? How do we make sure that citizens in this Province wake up every morning and they are as healthy as possible, that they are comfortable, that they are safe, that they know in the run of that day we can eliminate as much stress in their lives as possible? That is where we set out to be when we develop programs and services. When we open up dialogue, that is part of that process and, no doubt, we make strides.

There will be fifty people here who will get to a point where they are at that level in their life and there will be twenty-five more that we need to find ways to get them to that point in their life. That is what we continue to do. We continue that dialogue, and this House is a healthy way of doing that because there is no doubt that there is information on the other side or there are points of view on the other side that are very important that need to be shared in this House. There are issues here that we probably were not aware of in particular communities.

I talked, as the minister, to my colleagues over there about certain issues around infrastructure, around roads, around safety that I may not be aware of, that my officials may not be aware of, or may not have been a priority to us, but is a priority to the people in those communities. We try to address those. We try to make sure that everybody has a quality of life, be it safety, education, health care, income, peace of mind. That is what this is about, Mr. Speaker, and that is what politics are all about.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to get up on the anniversary of my first entrance into this great Chamber and getting to listen to so many people in here and seeing the dialogue that has gone on, and the debate, and the important things that have been done over the last four years, that I am proud to be able to say I was part of this. I want to continue to be part of this. We have a great Province, we have great citizens, and we have a great number of programs that we are going to still continue to implement for the people of this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Cross): The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs, that we adjourn debate on Address in Reply.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that we adjourn debate 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 would like to call from the Order Paper, Order 4, second reading of a bill, An Act To Amend The Provincial Offences Act, Bill 35.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Provincial Offences Act". (Bill 35)

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am going to take a couple of moments to introduce this bill to the House. For the benefit of those who are following debate at home, we are talking about Bill 35, An Act To Amend The Provincial Offences Act. What we are attempting to do here today, it is not a significant change but more of taking the opportunity to bring the Provincial Offences Act in line so there is no contradiction with the Young Offenders Act; so by way of explanation

to the bill, the amendments that are proposed here today would provide that "a ticket being issued under section 18.1(8) of the Act to a young person as defined in the Young Persons Offences Act in respect of an offence under the Highway Traffic Act or the Motorized Snow Vehicles and All-Terrain Vehicles Act".

In other words, Mr. Speaker, if the ticket is provided under the Highway Traffic Act or the Motorized Snow Vehicles and All-Terrain Vehicles Act to a young person, it would still provide them with all of the rules, all of the protections and whatnot, that is provided in the Young Persons Offences Act.

By way of a little bit of background, Mr. Speaker, the Young Persons Offences Act is a piece of legislation brought in some time ago. It applies to those young persons in the Province, defined as between the age of twelve and eighteen. I think it was brought in because government and Members of the House of Assembly at the time felt there were certain provisions that ought to be provided in legislation by government to ensure young persons, in spite of the fact that they do break the law on occasion, are at the age of a minor and ought to be treated in a little different way than those who are of adult age.

What we have happening currently, Mr. Speaker, under the Highway Traffic Act, if a ticket is provided to an individual, including a young offender, it has been the process that a ticket can simply be paid voluntarily, or there can be a conviction without default, or there can be a required court appearance. The issue we want to deal with here in particular relates to the court appearance of a minor, which is not running parallel with the rules and the regulations provided in the Young Persons Offences Act.

Just a little bit of background, subsequent to 2012 the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, which obviously operates in a vast number of areas in the Province, advised us that they would be issuing a new form of summary offence ticket that would result basically, Mr. Speaker, in an offender being arrested or given a mandatory court date with no option of voluntarily payment or default conviction being provided. While the Provincial Offences Act allows for this alternate

form of ticket, back in 2012 no such ticket had been developed and no contemplation I suspect at that point in time. This new arrest ticket has now come into being as part of the RNC's way of enforcing traffic regulations in particular, and trying to improve their collection rates.

Technically, what could happen under such an arrest ticket is a young offender could be arrested and brought before a court, which would contradict the intention and the spirit of the Young Persons Offences Act. The amendments that we are making here today basically propose to provide clarification around these, what we call, arrest tickets so that a young person who is ticketed or charged as a result of violating the Highway Traffic Act or the motorized vehicle act can in fact be charged if they break the law; but it provides that if and where a judge deems it necessary that a court appearance is required, that they would still receive the protections of the Young Persons Offences Act and the same procedures outlined in the Young Persons Offences Act would be followed.

As I said, the bill itself is very straightforward. There is one particular section that is being modified and, essentially, it will bring the Highway Traffic Act and the procedures that it follows in line to ensure that a young person in particular does not have their rights violated, that they are provided for under the Young Persons Offences Act.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to say a lot more. As I said, it is very much an opportunity for us to tighten up some of the things that we are doing right now and make sure, as we do from time to time in this Legislature, that one piece of legislation does not infringe or contradict or impede the ability of the other legislation to take place and to do what is intended by the legislation. In this particular case we have the Young Persons Offences Act and we have the Highway Traffic Act or the Motorized Snow Vehicles and All-Terrain Vehicles Act. This particular change today will simply ensure that young persons' rights are protected under the act as we move forward with the new ticketing procedures that are being implemented.

Thank you.

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

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

I am happy to stand here today and speak to this particular bill, which is Bill 35, An Act To Amend The Provincial Offences Act. Before I begin, I would like to thank the member of the Department of Justice's staff that took the time to sit down with me today to go through this. We had a great discussion on it. I appreciate his time to go through this, because again it is very small what we are doing in terms of size; however, it does relate to other pieces of legislation and it can be a bit convoluted.

I read it at first, but after having some questions initially and sitting down and getting the explanation and why this came about, he did a very good job of making it clear to me. Sometimes that can be tough trying to get things through my head, but he did a great job. So I am going to hope to put on the record my understanding of this, knowing that if I do get something wrong the members of the Department of Justice staff will certainly let me know to make sure we get it clear here on the record because that is the point of this.

I think the best way to do this is to just try to break it down into little sections of what we are trying to do. We are trying to amend the Provincial Offences Act. What we are saying here is that section 18.1 of the – I am going to call it, just for brevity, the POA, Provincial Offences Act. Section 18.1 will be amended by adding after subsection (10), subsection (11), which says, "Notwithstanding subsection (8), a peace officer or any other person having responsibility for the enforcement of a provision of an enactment shall not issue a ticket under subsection (8) to a young person as defined in the Young Persons Offences Act in respect of an offence under the Highway Traffic Act or the Motorized Snow Vehicles and All-Terrain Vehicles Act." That is the purpose here of what we are trying to do. I think we need to go back to get a further understanding of why it is here. It seems simple, but in and of itself and by itself it can be a bit confusing.

We are amending section 18.1; what we need to do then is go back and look at 18.1 as a whole.

Section 18.1 of the Provincial Offences Act, the POA, talks about ticketing under the Provincial Offences Act. I am willing to wager that the primary act that it is referring to is the Highway Traffic Act. It affects every driver in this Province on every roadway, all those who get their beginner's right up until they are not able to drive. I would assume that is the act that gets the greatest application here.

What it talks about, and the minister referred to this, is the procedure one follows when they get a ticket. I am going to try my best in layman's terms to define. You get, I call them, low-end tickets or your speeding ticket, or your parking ticket where you do not need to go to court. You get the ticket and usually if you are not going to fight it, then you have an option to pay the fine, and that is it. There is no need to go into court and allocate resources to deal with that. You were going too fast, you got dinged on the highway, you were caught, and you pay the fine. We have a system set up. We talk about the speed variance and where it was. Was it in a particular zone and so on and so forth?

There is a difference. There are other offences that are more serious in nature, such as dangerous driving. I think the minister referred to it as an arrest ticket. In that case, yes, you are going to court and there is the possibility of more than just a fine. There is the possibility in some cases of even jail time, depending on the facts of each particular circumstance. We are also talking about fines, and so on and so forth.

Section 18.1 talks about a person who is served with a ticket shall, where he or she does not wish to dispute it, what they do. If they wish to enter a plea, what they have to do. If they want to dispute it, what they have to do. It talks about what they have to do with the procedure of signing the ticket, sending it in, so on and so forth.

We go further and this is referenced in the amendment, talking about notwithstanding subsection (8). Subsection (8) says, "Subject to section 28, a peace officer or any other person having responsibility for the enforcement of a provision of an enactment, may issue a ticket...". That is one of the sections that are being referred to. That references section 28.

We go to section 28 of the Provincial Offences Act and that says appearance not required. What we are talking about here are certain matters where you get a ticket and you are not required to go into court. Notwithstanding another provision of the act, the person who has been served with a ticket is not required, if before that time they entered a plea of guilty before the judge and within the time period, or they obtain an adjournment. There are certain provisions there.

I think the greatest reason is that we go back, and this was referenced by the minister, to the Young Persons Offences Act, which we debated right here in the House in 2012. This used to be called the Young Offenders Act. I hope I can do it interchangeably because that is, a lot of times, what we used to refer to it as – the Young Offenders Act. It is not meant to be a slight to anybody. This is the Young Persons Offences Act. That act was changed here in 2012, but the predecessor to that was in place well before that.

The crux of why we have that is we respect the fact that offenders of a tender age should be treated differently than offenders once they hit the age of majority. We need to treat them differently. It comes down to a mental state. It comes down to just a whole number of sociological reasons. We look at the twelve-year-old offender differently than we look at the forty-two-year-old offender. There is a whole number of different things in play.

One of the things that I come back to is there are a number of provisions. When the young person is involved in wrongdoing and they are ticketed or they are charged, we have the notification of parents and/or guardians. Sometimes we do not necessarily want them brought in front of the court. We talk about the fact when it comes to the penalties, especially the financial penalties, what is the point of putting a significant financial penalty on a twelve-year-old? Who is going to pay it? Mom, or dad, or caregiver, it defeats the purpose. We had no problem with that.

We had this briefing this morning, but I am willing to bet that if I go back to when we debated that, I do not think we would have contested that. I think we would have spoken in favour of the purpose behind that and why we

did that. What happened here is we had two bills at the same time, related but going through different streams, that were debated, and there were issues here. There were issues at hand. I do not blame this on the drafters; I do not blame this on the people who look at it. Sometimes these things happen. For whatever reason when you had these two similar bills getting put together, there was a loophole. There was a loophole here and that is what we are trying to close here today.

I have been assured by the department that the loophole is one that was never used. I do not think it was deliberate. Usually when we think of a loophole, we think of somebody who is trying to deliberately exploit a weakness in the legislation. That is not the case here. This loophole is a case where something could have happened to defeat the purpose of why we made the changes to the Young Persons Offences Act.

What that meant was that you go back to after this ticketing offence was – and this is something we have seen all across the Province, you can look at the news. We look at these arrest warrants and there was a decision made in 2013 by, I believe it was the RNC, that we look at those people out there, those people who owe significant amounts of money in fines and we see them all the time. You can look on the VOCM Web site. In fact, I have done my own talking in this House about how it is a huge burden to this Province, to all of us here, to those who pay their taxes.

We have people out there owing tens of thousands of dollars. In a lot of cases you wonder, how did they get to that point? How did we allow that to happen? In many cases you get stopped, you get this ticket, you get charged a bit more money, and these people are not going to pay anyway.

What the RNC started doing was start issuing arrest tickets. They started arresting these people, bringing them in, and putting them up before the judge I guess with the whole purpose to raise attention and maybe embarrassment. Hopefully the greater point is that they are going to start paying the fines they owe. They should not be on the road in the first place. They are an absolute nuisance in many cases, but that is where we are.

What happened was there was this step made that the RNC was starting doing arrest warrants. What happened is that through no ‘mal-intent’, but these protections that the Young Persons Offences Act is supposed to apply to young offenders could be overlooked through these arrest warrants. These young offenders, depending on the circumstances, could be marched in front of the court defeating the purpose of what we had done originally.

What we are doing here is we are basically changing the legislation to close off that loophole so that is not going to happen. I have some notes that we made here. This is going to reinforce the intention of the 2012 amendments that tickets are meant to be tickets. We have to provide these young offenders with proper precautions and proper protections because they are of a young age. One of these comes down to the fines alone. I think there is a max on what young offenders can pay. That max is not there when we talk about the older ones.

The potential is that these young people could be marched up in front of a judge. Depending on the circumstances, we are getting rid of that. I do not have any issue with that. That was the purpose behind doing this in the first place. It has never been done, but the possibility exists. I do not blame the RNC for what they are doing. That is great. I think the law was put in place for a good reason. I have no problem with the concept of the Young Offenders Act

All this is fine and dandy, but I wanted to provide sort of a history as to how we got to this place. We talk about the Young Persons Offences Act and we are providing – this is the one part. This is maybe not so much speaking to this bill, but just speaking about it in generalities.

When we talk about the Young Persons Offences Act, I look at the twelve-year-old who gets caught up with the wrong crowd, does not have any guidance and goes out and does a string of B&Es, a string of thefts, breaking into cabins, stealing whatever. That is in many cases why this is there, because we have to try to sort that person out and provide them with supports to keep them out of falling into that lifestyle.

One of the problems – again, maybe it is not something that is caught under there, but I want to put it out there. The one thing I find interesting is that drivers who are seventeen and eighteen are actually going to be treated differently than drivers above the age of majority when it comes to this. If they get into a very dangerous situation, dangerous driving, et cetera, they are going to be provided these protections that – I just look at the fact that we have to go through a process in order to be allowed to drive in the first place.

I would remind some people – I maybe never thought of this when I was getting my beginners. Driving is a privilege, not a right. It is a privilege, one that is given to us by the state. It is not an absolute right.

I think we have to do more to ensure the Young Persons Offences Act – I am not speaking about why we have it there, but there may be a debate as to if there are people out there who are very young who are not getting the concept of the rules of the road. I am not speaking as to specifics because I do not have that, but if those specifics were to present themselves I would hope that this would not be used to allow them to continue that.

I hope I have made my point clear. I actually had this discussion today with the individual at the Department of Justice. It is one you could have a debate about that would span for days, but that is certainly not what I am going to do here.

I think on behalf of our caucus, we are going to be supporting this. There is a reason that we are here to fix this. These things do happen. It is making sure that the changes we made previously will have full effect, that they will have the right purpose and will be utilized properly to close any possibility that they cannot be used even through no wrongdoing or intent of wrongdoing.

I would commend the RNC for what they do to get those people owing tens of thousands of dollars off the road. In fact, I would love to see more done. It is an issue everywhere, I am aware.

However, Mr. Speaker, on that note, I think I have spoken adequately. I may have some questions in the Committee stage, but on this point I am going to take my seat and listen to the rest of the debate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. POLLARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I just want to thank the people of the District of Baie Verte – Springdale for their ongoing support and for their continued support. Without them, I would not be here today.

It is certainly a privilege and an honour to be standing in this House in debate and to look at the pictures of the Speakers in the House on the wall. It is surreal. When I walk the halls of this building and see the names of former people, MHAs, what a privilege, what an honour to be here, Mr. Speaker.

Also, I am so grateful to have an opportunity to speak on Bill 35, An Act To Amend The Provincial Offences Act. The title, An Act To Amend The Provincial Offences Act, I just want to turn over on page 2, as I usually do, and read the explanatory note, Mr. Speaker. This is what it says, “This Bill would amend the Provincial Offences Act to prohibit a ticket being issued under subsection 18.1(8) of the Act to a young person as defined in the Young Persons Offences Act in respect of an offence under the Highway Traffic Act or the Motorized Snow Vehicles and All-Terrain Vehicles Act.”

Mr. Speaker, in a nutshell, as I understand it – and I am not a lawyer by no means – this amendment will not permit a police officer or any other enforcement person to issue a ticket to a young person between the ages of twelve and eighteen who commit offences under the Highway Traffic Act, for example. Because if you do, automatically you would assume the young person is guilty of an offence. Instead of issuing a ticket for minor offences, the young person would be given a court order if the violation is very, very serious and have the protection of the Young Persons Offences Act.

What is the Young Persons Offences Act? This is just a special type of legislation that applies to youth who are at least twelve years old but less than eighteen years of age who break such provincial laws. What this amendment will do, Mr. Speaker, it will ensure that where a young person is arrested and required to appear in court because the violation is serious, the procedures and the protection of the Young Persons Offences Act will continue to apply to them. Theoretically, a youth could be arrested and appear in court and not have that protection of the Young Persons Offences Act prior to this amendment, from my understanding, but that was not the case or the intention of the 2012 amendment.

In addition, because of this amendment, parents will be also aware and notified if their son or their daughter will end up in a court appearance. As you know, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to notify parents or guardians of what is happening with their son or daughter, and every stakeholder would be involved.

In addition, in a nutshell this amendment enables the police officer to have the option of charging the young person, as opposed to issuing a ticket. The proposed amendment will provide some clarity – as the minister pointed out – where a police officer feels that a young person should be arrested and brought before a court, the officer still has the option of laying an information as opposed to giving out a ticket.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of this proposed amendment, minors are always subject to having an information laid against them and being required to appear in court, but in those processes, the Young Persons Offences Act will continue to apply for the young person's protection or benefit.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that minors and youth between twelve and eighteen are very important to all of us, and they need our support. They need the community support. They need all of our support, government support, parent support. They all need some encouragement every now and then because youth between twelve and eighteen, or even older, Mr. Speaker, they all trip up once in a while and make some mistakes, but we all need to encourage them and put them

back on their feet, put them back on the right road, so to speak.

So, with these brief remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude and take my seat in a minute. I do believe that all three parties, from what I am hearing this afternoon, will certainly be in favour and voting for this bill, Bill 35. I just want to say how grateful I am to participate in this debate today in the House of Assembly.

I do want to thank the minister for the opportunity, and, of course, the Government House Leader spoke very adequately and articulated the concerns. The Member for Burgeo – La Poile also did a very good job in articulating what this Bill 35 is all about today, Mr. Speaker. So with that, I will take my seat.

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I can speak in support of the bill; however, I think we need to be crystal clear about what the outcomes will be. Because what this means when we pass this bill is that if we have two people, for example, one eighteen and one seventeen, riding a bicycle without helmets and they are pulled over by a police officer, the eighteen year old can get a ticket with a maximum penalty of \$180, do not bother to plead anything at all, and it will be a default finding of conviction and you will get your charge in the mail.

The person who is seventeen will not be able to get a ticket anymore because this amendment to the Provincial Offences Act will say that the peace officer shall not issue a ticket to a young person who is between the age of twelve and eighteen in respect of an offence under the Highway Traffic Act or the Motorized Snow Vehicles and All-Terrain Vehicles Act.

What does that mean with respect to the administration of justice? Mr. Speaker, the Young Persons Offences Act is one of the acts that falls under the responsibility of the

Department of Child, Youth and Family Services. I would be surprised if the minister would not want to speak to this from Child, Youth and Family Services.

What it means when a young person who is covered by the Young Persons Offences Act is charged, which now the person will be, because they will not be able to be ticketed so you will not be able to let them go scot-free. It means that they will be entitled to all of the rights, privileges, and defences found under the Young Persons Offences Act.

That means it falls under, first of all, the declaration of principles, which means that the Youth Court judge will have to recognize that he or she is not to take any measures other than judicial proceedings under this act which would be considered in dealing with the young people. Also, the Youth Court judge now will be entitled to impose extrajudicial sanctions that could be alternative measures. The whole range of measures that would be available to be implemented in dealing with a person who is charged under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, now all of these defences and rights are in place.

What it further means is that young person now will have a promise to appear, a PTA, maybe an undertaking given to a peace officer. If the person fails to appear for court then that person may very well be charged with breach, which is a criminal offence. The eighteen-year-old would have had a ticket and may be in default, a fine might get paid one of these days. The seventeen-year-old will be charged. A fail to appear ends up being a criminal charge which now a simple ticket was elevated to a criminal charge because the person did not comply.

Mr. Speaker, I have on a couple of occasions defended people charged with criminal charges who in fact were found not guilty of the criminal charge, but in the meanwhile they had failed to comply with their conditions. They were convicted of a breach of their release conditions, so they got a criminal conviction in spite of being not guilty of the charge they were charged with in the first place, if there is any logic to that.

In any event, when the young person shows up – this could be a twelve-year-old, thirteen-year-

old, anywhere up to seventeen years old – where the young person is not represented in Youth Court by counsel, which means if they did not hire a lawyer, do not show up with a lawyer, not represented by duty counsel, not represented by Legal Aid, the Youth Court judge shall, before accepting a plea, guilty or not guilty, the Youth Court must satisfy itself that the young person understands the charge and explains to the young person a plea of guilty or not guilty may be entered to the charge.

So one person had a ticket with a maximum of \$180, the other person ends up going to court. It is quite easy to see how two young people could be simultaneously stopped by a police officer and have completely different avenues, routes, open to them; whereas this change is being proposed to implement the rights for the young person, it will come at a significant cost both in court time and in the rights the young person is entitled to.

If, for example, on the ticket, if the top rate for the ticket is \$180 as proposed in the legislation, the bill that was presented to us today, let's say it is \$100 instead of \$180 – it is an automatic, if you are ticketed – and in this case if the young person shows up, the protection provided to them under the Young Persons Offences Act, under section 12 says, "A youth court justice shall, in imposing a fine on a young person or making an order against the young person for the payment of money or restitution, have regard to the present and future means of the young person to pay." So the judge needs to make inquiries about a thirteen-year-old's ability to pay a fine; whereas the eighteen-year-old, maybe if it was an eighteen-year-old and a thirteen-year-old got a ticket, the ticket got paid or added to the \$33 million that we are already owed in tickets and never got paid.

So, Mr. Speaker, while I am not saying that I would not support this bill, because I think it is important to do, I think that we should understand fully that in order to guarantee the rights of a young person by having this type of an offence now caught under the Young Persons Offences Act, the Young Persons Offences Act does not create any offences. There are no offences under the Young Persons Offences Act. The Young Persons Offences Act is more procedural and it also guarantees the rights of

the young person to be dealt with properly and fairly in accordance with the processes and procedures that are set forth in the Young Persons Offences Act.

By way of an extreme example to the opposite, I remember being as a very young person and a fourteen was charged in Ontario with murder, Steven Truscott. Fourteen years of age and he was convicted after a jury trial and he was sentenced to hang. We had a Juvenile Delinquents Act, but he was charged as an adult and he was sentenced to hang. Ultimately, he served ten years in prison and there are significant concerns that he may not have been guilty in any event because it is likely that somebody else committed the offence of murdering twelve-year-old Lynne Harper.

We have put into place protections for young people and now we are extending this protection so that if somebody gets a helmet ticket, they cannot get a helmet ticket because the police officer is not allowed to give him a helmet ticket. We just changed this section to say you cannot issue a helmet ticket, you cannot issue a snowmobile ticket, and you cannot issue an ATV ticket because it says here that the peace officer, having the responsibility for the enforcement of a provision or an enactment, shall not issue a ticket. He cannot issue a ticket. He has to lay a charge.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible) subsection 8.

MR. J. BENNETT: Under subsection 8 – I have this in front of me, Mr. Speaker, and subsection 8 clearly identifies how the officer lays a ticket. This will mean the young person under the age of eighteen will not get a ticket but will be charged. It means that we will have to ensure that their rights are protected.

As long as we understand that this is what we are doing with this piece of legislation, I have no difficulty to support it.

Thank you.

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

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

I am happy to stand to speak to Bill 35, An Act To Amend The Provincial Offences Act. This is an amendment to this act and it is an amendment to remedy an unforeseen circumstance which has arisen since the last time that government amended the Young Persons Offences Act back in 2012 – 2012, two years ago, and a lot has happened in those two years.

The purpose behind this amendment is to ensure that young persons are covered by the Young Persons Offences Act and not issued an adult ticket for an adult court. That is really important, Mr. Speaker, because although the nature of crimes between adults and youth may have similarities and may seem to be different, oftentimes the motivations and the conditions in those crimes are different because of the nature of youth, because of their age, because of their life experience, because of their maturity and because of their consequent ability to judge circumstances.

So, in the undertaking of a crime, we have to consider youth in a different way. This amendment stems from the RNC who advised the Department of Justice that they wanted to increase their enforcement efforts with a new type of ticket. It is known colloquially as an arrest ticket. This situation was not envisioned when the amendments were made in 2012. Normally, if a driver is pulled over and the officer wants to issue a ticket, that ticket can be paid unless the person wants to contest it. There is no court date.

This new type of ticket automatically triggers a court date. The offender will have to appear in front of a judge at a future time. This ticket is issued to people with more serious violations, people who may have huge outstanding fines that are owed, or a very serious moving violation.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot issue those types of tickets to youth and compel them to appear in Youth Court. It would be a direct contravention of the Young Persons Offences Act. Basically, what we have is a new provision that is in contravention of an already existing Young Persons Offences Act. This is about making sure that none of our laws are contradicting one another.

These tickets that the RNC want to be able to administer now are issued at the discretion of an officer. We know how important it is to ensure our youth are protected under the law, because of the issues of their life experience, their maturity, and their consequent judgement.

One of the things we do know, Mr. Speaker, is that most youth who are in contravention of the law, most youth who are committing crimes are youth with serious addiction problems or youth with mental health issues. We know adult court is not the place to deal with them. It is not the place to try them. It is not the place to hear their cases.

This amendment enables the RNC to do what it is they want to do in order to be able to deal in a more comprehensive way with large outstanding fines and violations, but undertaken by adults, not by youth. This is simply a legal remedy to close a gap in the law. This has been in practice for some time.

The RNC have assured us they are not going to issue these new arrest tickets to youth, but the practice is in contravention of the Young Persons Offences Act. We do not want laws contravening one another. We know, Mr. Speaker, what will happen is that will have serious – because of a conflict within the law and within our policies, they will end up in court in terms of just dealing with the contraventions in our laws and in our policies.

We do know, Mr. Speaker, how important the whole issue of moving violations are among youth. The towns in Conception Bay North, for instance, some of them are tortured by youth misusing ATVs and snowmobiles, racing through communities on main roads. These issues have to be dealt with as well. The RNC or the RCMP issuing arrest tickets to youth is not the way to deal with these issues. We cannot minimize these types of moving violations undertaken by youth and what it means to communities, how it affects the safety of communities, how it affects the safety on the roads of communities, and how it affects the peace and well-being of communities.

Those are issues that the RNC have to deal with. It is really important, as well, to note that when youth do have moving violations, their parents

or their guardians be notified. We cannot let our youth just run wild on the streets of our small communities, particularly in rural areas.

It is a given in most justice and regulatory systems that youth matters should be separated from adults, generally because young people's life experience, their maturity, and their consequent judgement is a factor. A different approach has to be made.

We see that in terms of incarceration and holding of youth. We know that, Mr. Speaker, for instance, there are cases in youth corrections where we have young people who are incarcerated, but they are really not criminals. In fact, they have severe mental health issues. Yet they are held in facilities that are meant for incarceration for juvenile delinquency. All these issues are really important for us to look at. We have to look at how we are dealing with our youth within the justice system and within the legal system.

We need to be able to handle some of the offences of youth, but we need to handle them in a way that is reparative, in a way that reduces recidivism. Streamlining our youth to adult court is not the way to do it. We know that. That is why we have a Young Persons Offences Act, so that we can deal with their offences in a way that is reparative, that does reduce recidivism, and that deals with the underlying causes of any kind of violation of the law.

For Criminal Code and other federal offences, youth matters are dealt with under an entirely separate procedural system regulated by the Youth Criminal Justice Act. When a young person provincially is suspected of violating a provincial act or regulation, this would normally trigger the provisions of the Young Persons Offences Act, which was pretty much the same goal as the federal legislation emphasizing how young people should be treated separately from adults.

Mr. Speaker, our party and our caucus will support this amendment. I would like to take the opportunity to raise the issue that we do have young people violating the traffics acts, particularly in rural communities, with the use of ATVs and snowmobiles, and also any kind of moving vehicle, whether it be a truck, or a car,

or a motorcycle. We need to be able to handle those issues.

We need to make sure that this does not seem like oh, well young people will not be dealt with in a thorough manner if they are disturbing the safety and the well-being of their communities. We have to deal with those. We hear so many people in smaller, rural communities where young people – some young people are using their ATVs and their snowmobiles in a very, very responsible way and it is not an issue, but there are those who violate that.

We support this, Mr. Speaker. I would like to again raise the issue of how we are dealing with our young people within the justice system, particularly young people who we may incarcerate because of violations and because of criminal activity. We have to make sure we are dealing with the root causes. Whether those root causes be addictions issues, or mental health issues, often they go hand in hand. We have to come up with better ways of dealing with those issues so that we can reduce the recidivism rate of criminal offences among our young people.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): If the hon. the Government House Leader speaks now he will close debate.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will just take a few moments to close debate on this amendment to the Provincial Offences Act. I want to thank my colleagues for their commentary and their insight. It is always interesting to listen to the Member for St. Barbe and the examples he uses, particularly the one about someone convicted and going to be hung, and how that might relate to what we are doing here with the Young Persons Offences Act. I have to say, it sounds like a bit of stretch to me but nonetheless, as my colleague for St. John's East said, all points of view matter. So we are glad to hear the member contribute to the debate. I am also pleased that the Member for St. John's Centre is also supportive of this change.

As I said at the introduction, Mr. Speaker, this essentially is a change that will bring the Highway Traffic Act and the process of ticketing to be compliant and in line with the spirit and the intent of the Young Persons Offences Act. I think as a number of members have alluded to, particularly I think my colleague for Burgeo – La Poile, what we are really talking about here that necessitated this is the change where the RNC, in particular, are using what is called as arrest tickets, which presented us a scenario where the spirit of the Young Persons Offences Act was not being followed with the issuance of arrest tickets to those between the ages of twelve and eighteen.

It is very much our objective here to bring these three particular pieces of legislation in line. I want to thank hon. members for their contribution to that, and at this time I will close debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the said bill be now read a second time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

CLERK: A bill, An Act To Amend The Provincial Offences Act. (Bill 35).

MR. SPEAKER: This bill has now been read a second time. When shall the bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole House?

MR. KING: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Provincial Offences Act", read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House presently, by leave. (Bill 35)

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, second by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 35, An Act To Amend The Provincial Offences Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 35, and that I do now leave the Chair.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

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

Committee of the Whole

CHAIR (Cross): Order, please!

We are now considering Bill 35, An Act To Amend The Provincial Offences Act.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Provincial Offences Act". (Bill 35)

CLERK: Clause 1.

CHAIR: Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

CLERK: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant-Governor and House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows.

CHAIR: Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

CLERK: An Act To Amend The Provincial Offences Act.

CHAIR: Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the bill without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

Motion, that the Committee report having passed the bill without amendment, carried.

CHAIR: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs, that the Committee rise and report Bill 35, An Act To Amend The Provincial Offences Act.

CHAIR: The motion is the Committee rise and report Bill 35.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again, Mr. Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): The hon. the Member for Bonavista South.

AN HON. MEMBER: North.

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

MR. CROSS: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 35 without amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole said that the Committee has considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 35 without amendment.

When shall the report be received?

MR. KING: Now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

MR. KING: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, report received and adopted, Bill 35 ordered read a third time on tomorrow.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Deputy Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BALL: (Inaudible).

MR. KENT: It was good, I say to the Leader of the Opposition.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a real privilege to rise in this hon. House any time you get the opportunity. I am pleased to rise today in response to the Speech from the Throne, which happened quite some time ago – and it gives members an opportunity to talk about any issues they may wish to talk about in their departments, in their district, or any issues affecting our Province.

I would like to talk about mental health. I would like to talk about one of the highest priority issues facing our Province and also facing the Department of Health and Community Services. So I would like to take a few minutes to do that today before the House adjourns.

I want to assure everybody in Newfoundland and Labrador that we are well aware of the challenges people are facing with mental health and addictions issues in this Province. It is a real concern and it is a growing concern. Access to timely and appropriate care and supports is absolutely essential.

We also have to address some of the issues of stigma and discrimination that exist when it comes to mental health. We need to create awareness in society at large. We need to create awareness in our health care settings and we need to create awareness in our workplaces as well.

Mental health and addictions issues will inevitably touch most of our lives. In fact, one in five people in Newfoundland and Labrador will experience mental illness of some form in their lifetime. More than any other illnesses, these are illnesses that are pervasive and they affect everyone, either directly or indirectly, through a family member, through a friend, through a colleague.

In terms of being affected by mental illness, I said one in five in a lifetime; in reality, in any given year, one in five people in the Province are touched by mental illness in some form or another. The most common forms of mental

illness that we see are anxiety and depression. These are issues that are not talked about enough in government. They are not talked about enough in this Legislature. They are not talked about enough in our society.

We do provide about \$100 million annually for mental health and addictions programs and services. Most of those programs and services are provided through our four regional health authorities. We continue to make inroads in new and enhanced mental health and addictions services in the Province, through partnerships with community groups and services that are provided by the health authorities as well.

Just recently two new provincial youth treatment centres for complex mental health needs and addictions were opened in Paradise and Grand Falls-Windsor. We are also working on a new adult addictions centre in Harbour Grace. We are also working on our plan to replace the existing Waterford Hospital. We provide over \$200 million annually to ten community agencies who provide mental health and addiction services as well.

Just this past spring, our department launched the campaign, Understanding Changes Everything. I am sure all members of the House saw the ads, the promotion that was both on television and online as well. This campaign was aimed at challenging and ultimately changing the way people think and act towards individuals who have a mental illness or an addiction. It was a very effective campaign. It is something that we need to continue as well, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, the four regional health authorities and a number of community organizations do deliver important programs and services to support people who are experiencing mental health issues or a mental illness. Like I said, there is approximately \$100 million provided annually for the programs right in the health authorities. We receive about 20,000 referrals annually to community services; 20,000 referrals, and this is increasing. That really speaks to the need for more services, and it speaks to the need for more attention to be paid to these critical issues.

We have about 3,000 admissions to in-patient mental health and addiction services every year

in this Province; 3,000 admissions. We receive about 10,000 crisis calls annually to our mental health crisis line. There was some discussion in the media just last week about the lack of anywhere to call if you are struggling with a mental health issue.

I want to let everybody know, there is a twenty-four seven crisis line that is staffed with professionals in our Province who handle about 10,000 crisis calls each and every year. There has been increased activity. There have been an increased number of calls year over year as well, which speaks to the need to do more. Again, about \$2 million is provided to ten community agencies that provide direct mental health and addiction services in our communities as well.

We have done a number of things to put more infrastructures in place. Again, I recognize that more work needs to be done. We have put \$10 million in place to advance the planning and design of the new psychiatric hospital in St. John's; \$7 million this year for the development of the new adult addictions centre in Harbour Grace; just over \$1.5 million to complete construction of the new centre in Paradise; \$50,000 to complete the construction of the new facility in Grand Falls-Windsor as well.

In the recent Budget that we unveiled in the spring, we also provided about \$384,000 for a second methadone maintenance treatment clinic that will be located in St. John's. The annualized cost of that is about \$508,000. We also funded a number of other programs that are related to mental health and addictions: Roots of Empathy, which is a mental health promotion program that teaches empathy to children in our schools; Choices for Youth, an outstanding organization to sustain outreach and support to at-risk youth in the metro region. We also funded the SWAP needle exchange program with the AIDs Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure the program was able to provide harm reduction services and needle exchange supplies for those with an IV drug addiction.

These are just some examples of the investments we have made, but it is not enough to talk just about the investments. There is a clear recognition that we need to do more, which is why in the new year we will embark on the

development of a brand new strategy to update and replace the strategy that has been in place for the last nine years.

One of the main messages I want to deliver today, Mr. Speaker, is there are many choices for people who need help. There are many options that span the continuum of care. From universal prevention and harm reduction supports to early response and intervention, to specialized, acute and highly specialized treatment services. All of these things do exist today in Newfoundland and Labrador. That is not to say there is not a need for more.

We have self-help and peer support groups. We see services provided through family physicians and primary care. There is outpatient counselling available. There are in-patient services, outreach programs, twenty-four hour help lines, and emergency services provided by the regional health authorities.

There are also five provincial treatment centres for addictions, and I am not sure that most people in the Province would necessarily know that or appreciate that. There is the Recovery Centre for in-patient withdrawal management services; the Rowan Centre for adolescent addictions services; the Opioid Treatment Centre for methadone treatment; the Humberwood Treatment Centre, currently the only provincial residential treatment centre, but that of course will change; and, the Grand Falls Youth Treatment Centre, which provides specialized addictions treatment services for young people. We also have the Mental Health Crisis Line.

Also within Eastern Health there is a psychiatric assessment unit that provides psychiatric assessment twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. In-patient psychiatric care and psychiatrists are on call in the other three regions.

We also have a Mobile Crisis Response Team. It operates in this region. It is comprised of psychiatric nurses, LPNs, and mental health social workers. They travel as a team to assist or intervene with mental health-related crisis. They go directly into a person's home or into the community. That is now operating seven days a week as well for twelve hours a day.

Throughout the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador there are fifty-nine outpatient counselling offices throughout the Province. There are three assertive community treatment teams in the Province for individuals who have severe or persistent mental illness and require long-term support. We have approximately twenty case managers in rural areas of the Province who provide specialized mental health services. In addition – and this is a relatively new initiative over the last number of years – we have twenty-two youth outreach workers throughout Newfoundland and Labrador who engage directly with at-risk youth. They work closely with our community youth networks as well in many cases. They are in the communities; they provide education and support and referral services wherever necessary also.

We also offer a number of outreach and prevention services for individuals and families and for groups as well. There are approximately seventy psychiatrists practicing in Newfoundland and Labrador. Each regional health authority offers emergency mental health services. The provincial HealthLine, in addition to the crisis line, provides twenty-four, seven telephone support and various information on services that are offered by community groups and also by some of these regional and provincial offices that I mentioned.

Just a couple of other quick examples: We have the provincial Smokers' Helpline that provides telephone, online and group counselling for tobacco addiction, and we have the Gambling Helpline that provides support for people experiencing problem gambling.

I know I only have a few minutes left, but I would also like to talk about some of the programming available that is specific to young people in our Province. We have a counselling service in Corner Brook that provides mental health education and prevention services and consultation and assessment and counselling services to children and youth under the age of nineteen, and to their families as well.

We have the Janeway Family Centre that provides specialized mental health treatment to children and youth. We have the Bridges Program in St. John's providing short-term,

urgent clinical mental health intervention to children and youth.

I give these examples just to give people a sense of what services presently exist, while fully acknowledging that there is a need to do more. There is a need to refocus some of our efforts. There is a need to revisit the strategy that has been in place for the last nine years to see if we can do better, to see what impact some of those initiatives have had, to see if there are things we are missing, to see if there are gaps that need to be filled. That is exactly what we intend to do over the next few months. We welcome input into that process from members opposite and from anybody out there who wishes to take part, who has a suggestion, who has a prospective that they wish to offer.

Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of more minutes, then I will move to adjourn debate. We have a specialized mental health unit at the Janeway as well that provides inpatient treatment for children that need mental health services, young people up to eighteen years of age. We have a number of youth case managers around the Province as well. They are located in three different centres and they are available to support young people with mental health needs.

As I said we have the new treatment centres in Paradise and Grand Falls-Windsor, we have the Rowan Centre, we have the outreach workers, and we also support the Kids Help Phone which is a national service, as I am sure that all members are aware that provides professional counselling service to children and youth.

There are a number of programs specific to adults in need as well. We have acute inpatient psychiatric services that are provided in a number of our hospitals, not just in St. John's. These services are available in Grand Falls-Windsor and in Corner Brook as well. We have approximately 165 inpatient beds at the Waterford Hospital that provide really specialized mental health treatment. That would include short-stay acute care, psychiatric rehabilitation, geriatric assessment and treatment as well. There is a geriatric day treatment program that is offered at the Miller Centre. If I get more time during the next day during debate, Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk more about

eating disorders and some of the services that are in place.

So again, lots out there, lots available. We clearly need to do a better job of making the public aware of what services and supports are available, and we need to do more. I look forward to the discussion that is going to ensue over the next few months while we determine exactly what approaches are needed moving forward.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I realize 5:30 p.m. is drawing near, so I will move that we adjourn debate at this time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that debate be now adjourned.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

On motion, debate adjourned.

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that this House do now adjourn.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

The House now stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned
until tomorrow, Tuesday, at 1:30 p.m.