



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FORTY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

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Volume XLVII

THIRD SESSION

Number 57

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HANSARD

*Speaker: Honourable Wade Verge, MHA*

Tuesday

December 16, 2014

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

**Statements by Members**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today we have members' statements from the Member for the District of Torngat Mountains; the Member for the District of Humber East; the Member for the District of Grand Falls-Windsor – Green Bay South; the Member for the District of Baie Verte – Springdale; the Member for the District of Conception Bay South; and, with leave, the Member for the District of Gander.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

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

I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate Joey Angnatok of Nain on winning the first ever National Inuit Recognition Award at the Arctic Change 2014 Conference in Ottawa.

Joey was recognized for his outstanding work and support for science research in the North. As a member of the research team representing the community of Nain on the ArcticNet project, Understanding and Responding to the Effects of Climate Change and Modernization in Nunatsiavut, Joey has excelled in his research skills and knowledge.

Joey is an avid fisherman and hunter, owning his own crab fishing vessel and enterprise. He was also a hometown favourite as a contender in the Cain's Quest Snowmobile Race 2014. Joey has served as a board member for the Torngat Joint Fisheries Board, and the Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board. He was elected to the Nain Inuit Community Government in November, 2014.

Through his hunting and fishing skills and his love for the environment, Joey has become a role model for his community. He is dedicated to improving the social fabric of his community and its people.

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

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. FLYNN:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House today to recognize and congratulate the organizing committee for the Forget Me Not Cenotaph Campaign in Corner Brook. This project, which began in March 2011, was designed to revitalize Remembrance Square, which is adjacent to the Corner Brook City Hall.

The project, which has full support of the Royal Canadian Legion, involved erecting a bronze caribou to be placed at the top of the existing Cenotaph; a pair of life-sized soldiers in bronze, one representing a First World War-era soldier and the other in the image of a current-day soldier. A plaque honouring women's contributions to military heritage and another noting various types of military involvement have also been included as a part of the new memorial.

The committee is to be congratulated for their foresight and incredible dedication in raising approximately \$425,000 to see this phase of the project completed. It is a fitting tribute to honour all those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice, as well as our veterans and our soldiers who continue to serve today.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Chair Dave Higdon, and Co-Chair Gudrid Hutchings, and their dedicated team of volunteers and supporters in this wonderful and thoughtful campaign. Lest we forget.

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 am pleased to rise in this hon. House to highlight the academic achievements of three outstanding high school graduates from the District of Grand Falls-Windsor – Green Bay South. Each year, provincial scholarships are awarded to the three high school graduates who achieve the highest Department of Education scholarship score.

This year, Mr. Speaker, the three proud recipients from the District of Grand Falls-Windsor – Green Bay South were Emily Williams and Quinn Snook from Dorset Collegiate on Pilley's Island, and Thomas Taylor from Exploits Valley High in Grand Falls-Windsor. This is an outstanding personal achievement which reflects a high level of commitment and hard work by these young individuals.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join with me in congratulating Emily, Quinn, and Thomas for their achievements and to wish them much success as they pursue the next phase of their education.

Thank you.

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

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

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

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

I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate the Town of Springdale upon capturing the Torngat Mountain Excellence in Governance award. Accepting the award, with beaming smiles, on behalf of the town were CAO Rick Ledrew and Councillor Philip Burton. It was presented to them at the MNL closing banquet in Corner Brook on Saturday, October 18.

With a population slightly over 2,900, Springdale is experiencing steady, manageable growth, serving as a vibrant hub for the Green Bay region. Sound planning, responsible fiscal management, and a visionary approach have been the hallmark of the town which continues

to propel the community forward, offering strong, sustainable programs and services for its residents.

Mayor Harvey Tizzard, council members, and staff are to be commended for their hard work and dedication as they continue to serve the community. The town courageously undertook an operational review a few years ago and implemented its recommendations, which resulted in more effective governance and utilization of its resources.

I ask all colleagues in this hon. House today to join me in applauding Mayor Tizzard and the Town of Springdale for achieving such a prestigious award.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

**MR. HILLIER:** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to congratulate the organizers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Giv'er on the River. The organizers of the three-kilometre fun run in my district have done a phenomenal job in growing the event in just two short years.

Over 250 participants of all ages got all warmed up with some Zumba and then giv'er on the Manuels River Trail system. The event brought together residents for a morning of fitness, while building on the tremendous Conception Bay South community spirit. While promoting healthy living, the event also raised funds to continue improvements to the trail system.

The organization committee was chaired by Shelley Moores and included: Paige Austin, Joan Butler, Janna Cleary, Gord Farrell, Andrea Gosse, Michelle Hawco and Michael Mooney.

In Conception Bay South we are very proud of our beautiful trail system and the ongoing promotion of active living for all ages. I encourage all members to join me in Conception Bay South next year to 'Giv'er on the River'. It

is a great cause with lots of fun, and a little exercise will never hurt anyone.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating Shelley Moores and her committee, and all participants for a successful second annual Giv'er on the River in Conception Bay South.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for the District of Gander with leave.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Leave.

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank both Opposition parties for granting of leave.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to rise in this hon. House today to congratulate a former member, Ms Hazel Newhook of Gander, who will celebrate her 100th birthday on December 24.

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

**MR. O'BRIEN:** Hazel was born in Grand Falls in 1914 and moved to Gander with her husband, Harry, in 1947 where she embarked on a trailblazing entrepreneurial career. First she purchased a taxi company and then later opened other businesses including a bus company, service station and an auto parts store called Newhook Auto Supplies.

Mr. Speaker, it is very well-known in Gander and surrounding areas that when you went to Newhook Auto Supplies, Hazel would be on the front counter serving her customers, and very rarely did she have to look up a part number in the books – she knew them by heart.

Mr. Speaker, I consider Hazel a friend, mentor and an inspiration. She successfully ran for municipal council in Gander in 1975 and became one of the first women in the Province to become mayor. She entered provincial politics in 1979 to represent the District of

Gander, and was one of two women, who were the first females in Newfoundland and Labrador politics to be appointed to Cabinet.

The hon. Ms Newhook retired from politics in 1985 but that did not slow her down. She became a full-time volunteer and dedicated her time to giving back to the Town of Gander. She focused on issues affecting women and youth and became treasurer of the Gander Status of Women Council, helped create the Cara Transition House and served as a board member. Ms Newhook was also a member of the Alternative Members Organization, the Goodwill Centre and the Outreach Social Action Committee.

Ms Newhook was inducted into the Atlantic Hall of Fame for Women Entrepreneurs in 1993 and was invested into the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador in 2009.

She has set the bar high for everyone in this Province and is a role model for women. In every career she has taken on during her life, each has been aimed at giving back to people and providing for those who need it most.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House to please join me in wishing Ms Hazel Newhook of Gander a wonderful 100th birthday this Christmas Eve.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

#### Statements by Ministers

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

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

**MR. DALLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to highlight today's announcement by the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board that reserves for the Hibernia field have increased to an estimated 1,644 million barrels of oil.

This is a substantial increase from the 1,395 million barrels of oil last updated in 2010 and may extend the productive life of the field by seven years.

This news is evidence that Newfoundland and Labrador will remain a major player in the offshore oil sector for decades to come. It demonstrates the sustainability of the Province's mature producing basins and the longevity of the Hibernia field.

Mr. Speaker, Hibernia was our Province's first major pioneer offshore oil project and has returned substantial benefits to the people of the Province and Canada. Sales from the additional 249 million barrels of production will generate a significant increase in value to the Province. Using PIRA's latest long-term oil price outlook for Brent crude from 2015 onward, this increase in Hibernia reserves is estimated to generate an incremental \$12 billion in royalty, tax and equity for the Province.

Newfoundland and Labrador is home to three producing offshore projects – Hibernia, Terra Nova, and White Rose. The Province is positioned for growth with the Hebron development and the advancement of the White Rose Extension Project.

Today's reserve update joins a growing list of strategic developments in the offshore industry, including the discovery of oil at Bay du Nord, the new scheduled land tenure system, and the recent success of the Calls for Bids which resulted in a \$559 million commitment to exploration in the Flemish Pass Basin.

The provincial government's continued leadership in the offshore petroleum industry will ensure the continuity of offshore production, employment and business activity for the long term.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I want to thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. Certainly all of us on this side of the House are encouraged by the announcement in the increase in the reserve from 1,395 million to 1,644 million barrels. Of course, it is a significant improvement.

It is hard to believe that this oil field goes back to 1979. It first produced oil in November, 1997. When it was first discovered, interesting to note, the estimated reserves at the time were 520 million barrels of recoverable oil in two separate reservoirs, Hibernia and Avalon. Basically, through more exploration and the commitment that we see from the companies to stay involved in this very difficult environment, we have now seen this estimate triple over the years. We all know how important oil is to our provincial economy.

Before I finish, I want to thank the leadership we have seen in the petroleum companies as they continue to develop offshore; but, most importantly, I want to recognize the men and women who work in such a very difficult environment. Of course through their commitment, we see many of the benefits that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians enjoy on a daily basis.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I too thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. Yes, this is good news, 250 million barrels more of oil from the Hibernia field is a good news announcement but they are still estimated. It is good to know that it is there. Hopefully, we will be able to get at it.

It is not an overly surprising announcement. The technology is continually changing with a greater ability to produce oil out of dwindling reserves, and I guess we are going to see more of it.

I notice the minister says he is using PIRA's latest long-term report for 2015. We certainly hope the numbers are more practical than the ones used for Budget 2014-2015, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

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

Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

**MR. KENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your patience and understanding as always, gracious Speaker.

I am pleased to rise today in this hon. House to speak to the continued success of the Operation Tooth program. Again this year, Operation Tooth is bringing vital dental services to children in rural areas who require specialist dental surgery.

It is impressive that members opposite are so enthusiastic by what I am saying here today.

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

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

**MR. KENT:** I urge members opposite to contain your enthusiasm until I at least finish my statement.

Mr. Speaker, thank you.

Launched in 2008 by the Department of Health and Community Services, Operation Tooth has brought specialized dental care closer to home for residents in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Gander and Burin, and has helped a great deal in relieving barriers associated with accessing this care in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, by bringing the dentist to the patient, the program has helped more than 800 children to date who were wait-listed at the Janeway Children's Health and Rehabilitation Centre. Since it was created, seventeen sessions have taken place in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, four in Gander, and seven in Burin.

Mr. Speaker, the success of Operation Tooth depends greatly on the collaborative efforts of a variety of health professionals across the Province. It is a team effort amongst regional health authorities and many professionals, including pediatric surgical dentists, resident surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses and support staff. All exhibit an outstanding level of dedication and professionalism to this initiative. We owe them a great deal of thanks for their contributions.

The provincial government is very proud of the success of this program, and we commend the Labrador-Grenfell Regional Health Authority in particular for providing the very first clinic. As well, an especially generous thank you is owed to pediatric dentist Dr. Geoff Smith, who has tirelessly conducted Operation Tooth clinics since its inception in 2008. In fact, it was Dr. Smith himself who coined the phrase "Operation Tooth".

I ask that all hon. members join me in thanking those responsible for the success of Operation Tooth.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. I am certainly glad he could swing on in today to make this very important announcement here.

Us living in rural and remote areas of the Province can face very great challenges in accessing health care. While we do have a public health care system, access to the full spectrum is often dependent on income and geography. Operation Tooth is a much needed program, and I certainly commend the health care professionals visiting communities to provide the specialized dental care.

The importance of dental care is often underestimated and we certainly know the links between poor oral health, diabetes,

cardiovascular, Alzheimer's, amongst others. Ensuring children have access to this program is essential and we are glad to see it.

Again, we talk about income – it is good to see that the Province has success with this dental plan because certainly the adult dental plan has had its challenges in the last number of years. We commend the professionals and commend the department for making this happen.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Operation Tooth is a wonderful example of team work, collaboration at its best. Thank you, Dr. Geoff Smith, tooth fairy extraordinaire. Also, bravo to the whole team, both at the Janeway, Grenfell, and across the Province who make it possible to deliver these really needed clinics.

Two years ago government took the teeth right out of the Adult Dental Program. I encourage government to revisit that decision and restore the program to levels that meets the needs of the people. I am sure dental specialists can advise the minister how important it is to entire health.

Thank you again, team Operation Tooth, and bravo.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further statements by ministers?

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

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

**MS SULLIVAN:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend congratulations to the students of Newfoundland and Labrador on the impressive results they are achieving across a broad range of subject areas. Their determination to learn, their understanding and use of information, and their willingness to engage have earned them above average scores on two recent national and international assessments: the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program and the International Computer and Information Literacy Study.

The Pan-Canadian Assessment Program tests Grade 8 students every three years in science, math and reading, and the results for 2013 demonstrate the highest ranking achieved by Newfoundland and Labrador since the program began in 2007. The primary subject area for assessment changes year to year, and last year it was science. I am proud to note that our students ranked first in Atlantic Canada and fourth in the country in science with 94 per cent achieving at or above the accepted level of performance.

They also showed excellent results in reading, placing first in Atlantic Canada and fifth in Canada. In mathematics, our students placed third in Atlantic Canada, and eighth in the country. While the Province's national ranking in mathematics did not change, only three other provinces finished significantly higher than Newfoundland and Labrador. Math scores have improved, Mr. Speaker, by fifteen points since the 2010 assessment, indicating that students are achieving at a higher rate with the renewed mathematics curriculum and the Excellence in Mathematics Strategy.

Newfoundland and Labrador students are also excelling in the fields of information and communication technology, as shown through the recently released results of the 2013 International Computer and Information Literacy Study. The study was administered to Grade 8 students in twenty countries, including 1,556 students from 118 schools in this Province. I am thrilled to say our students finished above the international average, placing seventh overall internationally, with the girls outperforming the boys.

Mr. Speaker, the results of these two national and international assessments are concrete proof

that our government's investments in teaching resources, learning resources and technology are positively impacting students and the education system overall. The total education budget has increased by 48 per cent since 2003, and we continue to have the best pupil-teacher ratio of any province in Canada.

We continue to focus on helping the students of Newfoundland and Labrador achieve their best and show the world what they can do. Yesterday I had a productive meeting with the President and Executive Director of the Federation of School Councils and we discussed the tremendous achievements of our students and they agreed with me that we need to celebrate our students and express our pride in their accomplishments. So I ask all hon. members to join us in applauding our students for their continued impressive achievements.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

My thanks to the minister for the advance copy of her statement. If I do not have another opportunity in this session, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Newfoundland and Labrador's teachers and school staff for all of their hard work and dedication.

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

**MR. KIRBY:** I would like to wish them and all of the Province's students a very merry and safe Christmas. There is no doubt our teachers are working very hard, but some of what the minister has just said is very troubling. She just said that our students' math scores are third in Atlantic Canada and eighth in Canada – third in Atlantic Canada and eighth in Canada. That is a profoundly worrying result, Mr. Speaker.

It is not just me, Mr. Speaker, or our members because we hear it from parents all of the time. We are all worried about mathematics achievement in this Province, not just in this House of Assembly in this Province under this

government. We have repeatedly called on the Minister of Education to order a curriculum review and they have simply just dismissed that.

Instead of just pretending there is nothing wrong, we ask once again for the government to finally do the right thing and order a review of the curriculum that they chose for our students, Mr. Speaker. The bottom line is this government is failing our students. They need educational reform right now to fix these problems.

**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.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. It is good news that our Grade 8 students did so well in the Pan-Canadian science assessment. I congratulate them and their teachers. I hope there will be continued improvement in math and reading in the future however.

I was glad to hear that students placed above average in computer and information literacy, as these are vital skills for the digital age. Students should have the opportunity to take a full slate of computer science courses to develop the computational and critical thinking skills they will need in our future economy; but we are not keeping up with other provinces in computer science in the schools, and I urge the department and the minister to begin providing more of these courses.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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



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

Well, this morning government finally provided the mid-year financial update, predicting a \$916 million deficit this year, net debt increasing to \$10.3 billion. In the press conference today, the minister said that the Province's sustainability plan will help secure our future.

So I ask the Premier: Are you still committed to the sustainability plan that your government announced just over a year ago?

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

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

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

It is a very important matter for people of the Province, and us as a government as well. As members opposite are quite aware, and not only people in Newfoundland and Labrador, people in Canada and around the world are very much aware of what is happening with oil prices, global oil prices in the last several months. Because what has happened, nobody – nobody – has predicted. What is going to happen in the future is very difficult to predict as well. That is one of the reasons why we have delayed doing this announcement, this mid-year update today, is because we are still watching the volatility of oil prices.

Mr. Speaker, the actions and the steps that we take as a government, we have to be very careful and very measured. We have an economy that is strong and vibrant in Newfoundland and Labrador. While we know the oil prices have a significant impact on us as a government, we have to take our steps very carefully.

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

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

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

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

My question was about the sustainability plan that was announced just one year ago when it was this government who then made the

announcement on the 10-Year Sustainability Plan, recognizing that it is a very volatile environment. My question was about are you still committed to that.

Well, in a similar situation, we have the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan who are also facing Budget pressure as a result of oil prices. In response, the Premier of Alberta said planning in 2015 is not budgeting as usual, and he went ahead and formed a Budget 2015 committee with six senior Cabinet ministers, himself included.

So I ask the Premier: Have you considered a similar measure for Newfoundland and Labrador for Budget 2015?

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

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

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

I can say yes, absolutely. We have considered a similar type of format, and we are considering other types of processes as well. Because it is important that we do our work very carefully. We have to be careful in how we plan for the future, but it is important that we do that. Not only that we plan for the next few months, Mr. Speaker, but for the next fiscal year and the fiscal year after that and the fiscal year after that.

One of the volatilities – and we all recognize here in the House of Assembly, and I know the hon. Leader of the Opposition recognizes as well the difficulties in predicting those oil prices. Currently, in our environment today, in our Province, we rely very heavily on oil for our Budget and for the work that we do throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, but we have to look at the future. We have to look at the best information.

The minister has spent a considerable amount of his time in capturing what information is available, what advice is available, by the highest and best experts in Canada and throughout the world. We will continue to do our work, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

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

The Minister of Finance said in his update that government would be going to the markets in mid-January to borrow money.

I ask the Premier: How much money will we be looking to borrow to cover this year's deficit?

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** Mr. Speaker, when the Budget came down back in March of this year, the Minister of Finance, at that time, indicated that we would be borrowing somewhere in the order of \$1 billion in this year. Thus far, we have been able to raise some short-term financing through T bills.

Sometime in January – I said this morning mid-January, but around sometime in mid-to-late January, we will go to the market again. Depending on our cash flow requirements to take us to the end of March, whether it will be exactly \$1 billion, I am not sure we will get to that full number, but we will be somewhere in the range of maybe \$700 million or \$800 million that we will have to borrow in total to take us to the end of the year.

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

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

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

The Premier mentioned a few minutes ago the importance of long-term planning as we try to gauge the economy within the Province. The minister just mentioned about borrowing between \$700 million and \$800 million.

In this long-term planning, I ask the minister or the Premier: How much money will you be planning to borrow for next year's Budget?

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** Mr. Speaker, one of the things, in the operative part of the member's question, is planning. I said this morning we had announced the results of where we think we will be at the end of March 2015. We are already full stride in developing next year's Budget.

When we develop next year's Budget, we will then do some forecasting about what cash we will need. We will do some forecasting about what we will need in the year beyond that.

As the Premier just said, the Budget cycle is twelve months, but our planning cycle is much longer. We now need to adjust that sustainability plan that was referenced a moment ago because that was a 10-Year Sustainability Plan that we said, at that time, was a living document. That will be adjusted as we move forward in the next couple of months.

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

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

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

Well, the minister this morning in his mid-year update gave an indication of where we are in the economy this year and painted a picture that is very different than what we saw in the Budget documents that were released early in the spring. In the spring it forecasted decreases in our labour force employment, housing starts, capital investment, as well as an increase in the Consumer Price Index.

I ask the Premier: Since the deficit we can add now – we know it is getting larger in this Budget – how have you changed and can you produce a document that will now show us where you see the economy, the economic indicators past 2015?

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** Mr. Speaker, one of the things I want to make a distinction – I did this this morning as well. I want to make a distinction in how we describe the strength of Newfoundland and Labrador's economy versus how we describe the fiscal position that the Province finds ourselves in. Newfoundland and Labrador still has a bright future. It still has a strong economy today. It still has tremendous opportunity for new investment.

It still has the confidence of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, consumer confidence. Just look at the retail sales increase that we are experiencing this year because it is confidence that people have in the future of Newfoundland and Labrador. Look at public sector investment, Mr. Speaker; never before in our history have we had capital investment as strong and as healthy as we are today, and that is a reflection of the confidence people have in the future economic prosperity of this Province.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters.

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

I would remind the Minister of Finance that we have seen declining housing prices, declining GDP and declining employment, and those numbers are continuing to forecast to be negative in the next number of years, based on his own numbers.

Today I sat a press conference that the minister hosted around the fiscal update. We have been asking for the fiscal update for weeks and we received no technical briefing, yet government just announced a \$960 million deficit, a 70 per cent increase in the forecasted deficit.

I ask the minister: Is this the standard this government sets for important fiscal discussions; and why wasn't the briefing provided on such a serious provincial fiscal matter?

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** Unless you have been hiding under a rock, unless you have not been listening to any news, unless you have not read a piece of paper in the last four or five months, you would fully understand that we were in for a bit of a change in our forecast, Mr. Speaker. We have seen oil prices plummet in the last two months.

Everybody understands fully that we forecasted \$105 as the price of oil. We understand fully and we have seen witness since the middle of summer those prices dropped. So unless you have been hiding under a rock and just had blinders on, you would have recognized that we were going to have a significant change in our forecasted deficit for this year.

I have been saying it in the House and I have been saying it in the public, we were not going to meet our targets for this year, so it should not be any big surprise this morning.

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

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

**MS C. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, it certainly was not a surprise. That is why we have been asking the question for a number of weeks.

The AG has previously identified a lack of fiscal responsibility with this government. He released another report yesterday and identified areas where the procedures that were supposed to exist to control the spending were not in place.

I ask the minister: Why are you not ensuring that management systems are in place to make sure that taxpayers' money and public money is spent in a responsible way?

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

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

**MR. WISEMAN:** Mr. Speaker, as the member would know from her vast business experience, that accountants come in at the end of a year and do audits. They provide management letters if you are in the private sector where they make

recommendations as to how you may improve internal controls, how you may make some changes to improve your fiscal position. The Auditor General, together with the Comptroller General, does the exact same thing when they review the performance of government departments and how we account for our money and how we track it.

We rely heavily on the Comptroller General who looks at internal controls and provides feedback to departments. We rely heavily on the Auditor General who comes in from the outside, independent of the operation of government, to provide recommendations as to how we might improve fiscal performance. We respect the comments that he makes and we respond to them by implementing the changes.

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

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

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

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

The 2003 review of government's light vehicle fleet produced eighty-two recommendations, another twelve were added in the 2006 review. In his 2011 annual report, the Auditor General noted that only a few of those recommendations had been implemented. The same concerns raised in those reports are raised again in this year's report.

I ask the minister: How many of the 2003 recommendations are still not addressed?

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

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

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

We respect the work of the Auditor General, and in this case we welcome it. I have reviewed the Auditor General's report. We have looked at the issues here and the issues around managing the fleet, keeping in mind that we have 1,600 light vehicles that we manage as part of TW, but they are in partnership with a number of other departments.

We have started an exercise of looking at how we better manage the fleet itself. We have engaged other line departments to have those conversations about how we best look at fuel consumption, how we best look at replacing the vehicles themselves, how we best manage the documentation around where the vehicles are at any given time.

We have started that process, Mr. Speaker, and I am very confident over the next number of months we will work closely with the Auditor General, but particularly those line departments, to find a solution that is in the best interest of our department and the taxpayers of this Province.

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

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

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** That is funny, Mr. Speaker. They have been almost fifteen years looking at eighty-two recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, in 2006 it was determined that eighteen vehicles were underutilized and government had agreed to reduce the fleet by eighteen. However, by 2010 the fleet had grown by ninety-one vehicles to 1,033; 217 of those were deemed underutilized. Yesterday's report shows a fleet of 1,136 vehicles, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the minister: How many of those 1,136 vehicles are deemed underutilized?

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

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

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

None of our fleet vehicles are underutilized, Mr. Speaker. They may not be used twenty-four seven, seven days a week. It does not work that way. They are put in place so our employees have access to vehicles so that they can better do their job, they can better mobilize the resources they need, and they can be at a moment's notice on the spot to do the job that they were hired to

do. We are still monitoring the best way that we implement those processes, the best way we manage the fleet itself, and the best way we utilize our employees to use that asset to the benefit of the people of this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** This guy says he respects the work of the AG, Mr. Speaker. In 2010 there were vehicles with less than 5,000 kilometres on them. That is underutilized.

Mr. Speaker, in 2006 it was determined that approval of usage of government vehicles to employee residences was a benefit to the employee, not the department, and in many cases led to after hour personal use.

I ask the minister: Despite the recommendation of over several years to reduce and monitor this practice, why hasn't the issue been addressed yet?

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

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

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

I first should note, though, there are many vehicles out there that are being used by the general public out there and the public itself that have less than 1,000 kilometres on them. Fire vehicles itself, emergency vehicles are being part of it.

What I might note here is that no employee personally gains from the use of a government vehicle. They are used for the better interest of the people in this Province. They are parked sometimes at their place of origin, their homes, so they can better be utilized if they have to respond to an emergency right after, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** That was the intent. We have assessed exactly where they are. We are going to address if there are needs that we can remobilize them in other areas. The intent here is to make sure that our staff have the asset necessary so they can respond to the needs of the people of this Province, Mr. Speaker.

That is what we have done. That is what we are looking at in the Auditor General's report. That is what we are doing with the line departments to make sure it is more effective.

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

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** The 217 vehicles underutilized are not fire equipment or emergency vehicles, Mr. Speaker, they are highway vehicles operated by government. If the logbooks were kept up to date, they would know how many were underutilized this year.

Mr. Speaker, every report since 2003 determined that there were a number of vehicles in all departments not even accounted for. In yesterday's report, the AG determined that there were sixty-one vehicles missing from inventory.

I ask the minister: Why is your department failing to maintain an accurate and up-to-date inventory of government vehicles?

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

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

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

As I said earlier, we have a vast fleet of vehicles that we use out there, and our employees do due diligence here when they operate those pieces of equipment for the people of this Province. They do a very integral piece of work for the people in this Province around safety, about road safety. They maintain our roads so that people can travel in a safe manner. The integrity of our employees is second to none, Mr. Speaker, and we do maintain our fleets in the proper manner.

We work very closely with our employees, our management, and the line departments to make sure the best use of those vehicles are not put in place for the employees themselves, Mr. Speaker, but for the people of this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, fuel purchase has been flagged as a major concern by the AG. Purchases for fuel amounts exceeding the tank size in vehicles. Purchases for diesel fuel for a vehicle with a gasoline engine.

I ask the minister: How do you explain these unusual and unaccounted fuel purchases?

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** Mr. Speaker, while we have nearly 1,500 vehicles in the fleet, there are a number of other things that we are responsible for and our employees when it goes to fueling. We have chainsaws, we have generators, and we have all-terrain vehicles. It is not as simple as saying, let's pull up with your pickup truck. That is one part of the asset that is needed to get to a specific job site or to deal with an emergency here.

So, the gas on a tank of a vehicle may not be necessary with the four or five jerry cans that are in the back because they have to go in the wilderness or something to deal with a situation that best serves the people of this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Speaker, Minister Manning announced yesterday a two-month delay in 911 services. Apparently further time is

needed to allow for additional testing and training.

I ask the minister: Isn't it a little late to make this announcement? Why are you only now realizing that we need more time?

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

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

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

I welcome the member to the House.

If he had been here two weeks ago, he would be aware that we shared information in this House very clearly that we would update the people of the Province before Christmas on the status of the implementation of the 911 system. As the minister has outlined very clearly, we want to make sure we get things ready and that are done right. We have some technology things to iron out. We have the geographical information system that we have to make sure is working properly, and the 911 software before things are ready.

Mr. Speaker, our anticipated start date now will be two months into the calendar year of 2015.

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

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

**MR. CROCKER:** That is done here in the House.

Mr. Speaker, the former Minister of Fire and Emergency Services was adamant that the new 911 service would be up and running by the beginning of 2015.

I ask the minister: Can you assure the people of the Province that this delay will not mean extra cost to the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

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

**MR. KING:** Mr. Speaker, there is no cost associated with this delay. As I just said to the member a few moments ago, this delay is about making sure we get things done right for the people of the Province. There is a need to make sure the technology works; there is a need to make sure the software works.

We have done what we committed to do. What the Member for Bay of Islands asked us to do was to make sure this House was updated before Christmas as to the status of the implementation of 911. The minister has done that, Mr. Speaker. We are fully prepared to discuss this issue but this is not about a cost to the taxpayers, Mr. Speaker, it is about getting it done and getting it done right.

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

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

**MR. LANE:** Mr. Speaker, employees of the IOC mine in Lab West have been experiencing ongoing concerns regarding silica dust which has resulted in numerous cases of silicosis by current and former employees.

I ask the Minister of Service NL: What are you doing to ensure the protection of workers at this facility?

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

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

**MR. CORNET:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member across the way for his concerns.

Do you know what, hon. member? We share those concerns as well. That is why we asked for a medical audit. I understand officials from Service NL, OHS, and Horizons Occupational Health Solutions – the project consultants were in Lab City just last week to meet with workers there. The company and union representatives were also in attendance, and we are looking for some progress report very soon.

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

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

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

I say to the minister, I believe that study was supposed to be done three or four years ago.

Mr. Speaker, the number of provincial OHS officers in Lab West has gone from three permanent positions to periodically flying an officer in and out every couple of months.

I ask the minister: How do you expect to get a handle on safety concerns at IOC as well as at other locations in Lab West without the permanent presence of OHS officers?

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

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

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

Again, the concern that the Opposition member expresses is our concern as well. Every concern of the people of the Province is our concern, Mr. Speaker.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, since the position was open for the OHS officer for Labrador, five public competitions have been held. No qualified candidate accepted the position in Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, what we are doing now, we are redoing the work. We have people on the Island who go to Labrador on a shift system, or rotation system, Mr. Speaker. So, we do have OHS officers in Labrador to take care of the business.

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

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

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, Access to Information requests by the media have revealed thirty-five deaths and forty-three critical incidents involving children and youth receiving services from government since 2009.

I ask the minister: Of the thirty-five children who died while receiving services since 2009, were any of these children involved in the forty-three critical incidents just reported?

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

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

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

My understanding is no, they were not included.

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

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

Minister, that means we have seventy-eight children; forty-three and thirty-five.

Mr. Speaker, last week the Child and Youth Advocate met with Cabinet to discuss legislating mandatory reporting of deaths and critical incidents involving child and youth receiving services. One month ago our private member's motion for this legislation passed unanimously in this House.

I ask the minister: Did you commit to the Advocate, as you did in this House, that mandatory reporting of deaths and critical incidents will be legislated?

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

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

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

While there isn't any requirement for CYFS to report critical incidents and deaths to the Advocate, we went against, obviously, the opinions and wishes of the Opposition when we asked for consultation with the Advocate.

I will echo the words of the Advocate from just a couple of days ago when she came in and met with Cabinet. We had a very fruitful discussion. She had said it was a great meeting. I am following up now with staff tomorrow. I am going to visit with the Advocate again. We are

looking to have a collaborative approach on this. It is not an easy answer, as has been proven by other jurisdictions in the country.

What is important here, Mr. Speaker, is we are working towards a solution, and we are working with the Advocate to find those solutions.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday we asked the minister about an internal laboratory medicine audit that was carried out at the Health Sciences, but he was not aware of the contents of the report. There were fifty-one concerns raised around seven main areas of concern, including staffing shortages, lack of succession planning, communication and leadership issues, and the list goes on.

I ask the minister: Now that your department has had a chance to review this month old report, are you concerned with the findings of the audit?

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

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

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

I am obviously concerned with any audit report and any findings that shed light on how we can continue to improve our health system. I think it is important to note that this internal audit, which was a one-day audit conducted by two staff people, is one piece of an ongoing quality assurance system. The system is working because if there are issues where we can make improvements, that is the whole purpose of doing quality assurance audits.

In this particular case, I met with the CEO and the vice-president of medical services of Eastern Health this morning to fully review the report. A lot of action has been taken since November 12. I am confident that Eastern Health is taking the steps necessary to ensure that issues are addressed. I can also assure you that there are



no issues with quality or patient safety that have arisen as a result of this work.

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile has time for a quick question.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** I ask the minister: Will you ensure that you exercise your duty to ensure proper oversight? Will you formally re-examine Eastern Health's compliance to all the Cameron recommendations as was recommended in this audit?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services for a quick reply.

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report to the House that since November 12, since this internal report was received by Eastern Health, a full review by senior management of Eastern Health has been done of compliance with Cameron recommendations. There were some minor issues, low-risk issues that were identified, and action has been taken on every single one of them.

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

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

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

Government's fall fiscal update paints a dismal fiscal picture as predicted recently by the Premier when he announced general spending restraint.

I ask the Premier: What specifically are the major government projects that are earmarked to be put on hold next year?

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

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

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

The hon. member is aware, and as she just referenced, the Minister of Finance did an update today not only for Members of the House of Assembly but for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador on the fiscal challenges that we face as a result of the global oil prices and the falling global oil prices that are impacting, not only Newfoundland and Labrador, but Canadians from coast to coast and countries around the world, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, we have some very serious concerns that we have to make decisions – very serious decisions that we have to make as we move forward.

We have taken some steps now to curb spending, discretionary spending, and also on the hiring and staffing actions within government. We are setting out a plan, Mr. Speaker. It will be part of our Budget process for this year and years to come. As we get to the point in time that we evolve and develop and announce our Budget, we will be –

**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.

For the past eleven years this government has only reacted to fiscal crises.

I ask the Premier: When is he going to develop long-term planning for economic diversity and sustainability, especially for the rural communities?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we have developed plans. We have been quite clear on the plans that we have developed for this Province. We did. We have developed plans.

As the minister referenced already, earlier in Question Period here today, those plans are, as he defined them, living documents. Mr. Speaker, they are there that way because there are factors that we cannot control as a government. As new factors come to have an impact on us as a government, then we have to take corrective action. We have to move, Mr. Speaker, we have to make corrections, and we have to respond to the factors that we face as a government.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you one thing, we are prepared as a government to make those very difficult and hard decisions that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador expect us to make on their behalf.

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

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

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

Therefore, I ask the Premier: Is he prepared to reverse corporate tax cuts of the past so corporations contribute a fairer share to our revenues?

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

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

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

I can tell the member opposite that any decisions we make, we do not take lightly. We are not about in the House of Assembly, based on a question by a member opposite, to get up and say oh yes, we are going to this or we are not going to do that. That is part of a very comprehensive process that we will undertake in the coming months. It is underway right now, I say to the hon. member opposite. It will continue, Mr. Speaker, and it will formulate the Budget that we bring forward for 2015.

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** Mr. Speaker, after extensive consultations, as government would put it, government used the advice of PIRA to project revenues based on \$105 US a barrel.

I ask the government: Will government be using PIRA's advice again this coming Budget year?

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, we use a variety of advice from a variety of sources, and we will continue to receive advice from those people who are knowledgeable in the different areas of finance and also in the areas of pricing of oil.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the member opposite, with all due respect, nobody predicted what was going to happen with the world oil prices as we are experiencing today. It is having significant impact on us as a government, it is having a significant impact on other governments in the country, and, as I said earlier, in countries around the world.

We will seek advice from people who can give their best advice and best knowledge, those who know these things, know these matters best, Mr. Speaker. We will reach out to them and then we will reach our conclusions based on those consultations.

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** Mr. Speaker, the PIRA report of 2012, October 26, warned of the possibility that prices could fall to \$58 US a barrel. They cannot say that this scenario was not there.

Why did government ignore the warnings and go with the high-end scenario rather than the low?

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

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the member opposite, we cannot cherry-pick a particular factor or piece of advice. As I have said here today, we take advice from a variety of sources. We receive advice from sources throughout not only Canada, but in other countries as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is a combination of those advices that we receive that causes us to make our decisions. Nobody saw what was going to happen with the oil prices around the world. We have no control over global oil prices, but we have to be serious about it, we have to reflect upon it, and we have to plan and we have to govern based on the facts that we face today.

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

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

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

**Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees**

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

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

It gives me pleasure to rise today and present the third report of the Standing Committee of Public Accounts to the forty-seventh General Assembly of the House of Assembly.

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

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

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Mr. Speaker, in summary of what we are reporting this year, this report is being presented a little earlier than usual in the fall session because we have actually completed the work that was found in the first section of the Auditor General's report which was delivered back in the spring.

Over the past twelve months, this year, we have had seven in camera meetings, six public hearings into six departments and agencies where we heard from thirty-six witnesses.

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

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

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Also, Mr. Speaker, this year we were pleased to host the annual conference of the Public Accounts committees of all the provinces and the federal committees, the Auditor Generals, and the Clerks of the provinces' Legislatures as well.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table this report.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tabling of Documents.

**Tabling of Documents**

**MR. SPEAKER:** I am pleased to table the Citizens' Representative Annual Digest for 2013-2014.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

**Petitions**

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

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

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

WHEREAS the Edinburgh Group Limited has been granted permission to proceed with the development of 110 recreational cottage lots at Ocean Pond near Whitbourne; and

WHEREAS the roadway accessing the new development was built by and maintained by cottage owners for the past thirty-five years; and

WHEREAS the existing Ocean Pond road cannot possibly withstand the heavy construction equipment and traffic of a 110 lot development; and

WHEREAS there have been questionable transactions making this piece of property a Crown grant to which no answers have been provided; and

WHEREAS there was access given to this property through Crown land as well as a change in the boundary of the original land licence shortly before the purchase by Edinburgh Group but after the grant was finalized; and

WHEREAS the project was released on September 29, 2014 with no apparent justification or concern for the substantial public response to the original requested undertaking and based on Environment and Conservation's guidelines;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to stop the current development by Edinburgh Group and hold a meeting with the Ocean Pond group to outline government's plans for the area and allow existing residents to have input into decisions made in their cottage area.

Mr. Speaker, I guess this will be the last opportunity to raise this now this session of the House. I have several signatures here from cottage owners and livyers in the Ocean Pond area. As has been indicated, they have many concerns about how this development came to fruition, the lack of public input, and the lack of disclosure to the public and to the residents about this development. There are concerns over the fact that as cottage owners there has been a land freeze there for thirty-plus years. Nobody has been able to further develop their properties or anyone could not put in a new property, yet we can have a 110 lot development go up there all of a sudden without any environmental assessment process, roads put through to it and so on.

There are many concerns about this that have been raised with me. I have been asked to bring this forward and I am certainly glad to do so. I do call upon the Minister of Environment and Conservation to have a meeting with these people and give them an opportunity to ask questions and, more importantly, get answers as to how this could have occurred. At the very

least, even if it is going ahead now, give them the opportunity to have their say and perhaps, as it develops, have the opportunity to make improvements as it relates to what is currently being proposed and how it is being proposed and so on.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS the establishment of a national park reserve, a tourism demand generator, will significantly increase the potential for tourism development in all communities of Southeastern Labrador; and

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

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to finalize the land transfer agreement with Parks Canada so as to allow for the establishment of the national park in the Mealy Mountains of Labrador to occur before the 2015 tourism season.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the Mealy Mountains National Park is a file that has been ongoing for far too long – I think 2007, maybe. There has been significant work that has been done around that. The only portion of that, to my understanding, that it is held up with this land transfer

agreement with the Province, which I find very sad.

Mr. Speaker, over 450,000 people visited national parks in our Province last year – 450,000. If I could quote from the Premier, Mr. Speaker, it was the Premier who said tourism is a top priority for rural development. Outside the City of St. John's, national parks in this Province are the biggest tourism demand generators.

According to Destination Labrador research, Mr. Speaker, Labrador will experience unprecedented growth in the tourism industry over the next five to ten years, and a catalyst for this, I believe, would be the Mealy Mountains National Park. We have organizations like NCC that are ready to sign agreements with Parks Canada which will provide significant capacity for rural tourism, but the money, Mr. Speaker, sadly, is being held up until the land transfer agreement is complete.

Every day in this House I talk about issues in my district and I talk about financial struggles, yet when we have an opportunity to bring something forward, to see something positive happen, it takes years and years and years. Sometimes if it is a deal that they want to go through fast, or money to be released like we talked about last week, deals are made in hours, but here we have a case where a community is waiting. This will breathe life into the community of Cartwright. It will breathe life into the southeast, and it would generate revenue, Mr. Speaker, so that small communities will have a chance not to be so reliant on government services.

It will probably be my only time this fall, Mr. Speaker, to stand on my feet for this, but I will be up many times in the spring, and I urge the minister to look at this file.

Thank you.

**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 petitioned of the undersigned residents 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 youth, Aboriginal people, immigrants and refugees; and

WHEREAS deep fiscal cuts in the last budget 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 and mental health 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 very happy once again to stand and present this petition. It must be noted that there have been thousands and thousands of signatures on this petition all across the Province. This petition came from a collaborative group of experts in the area, individuals working in the area on mental health.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, tomorrow – I have already moved my private member's motion that carries forth the main intention of this petition, to ask government to immediately strike an all-party committee on mental health.

The reason this Community Coalition 4 Mental Health, and the thousands of people who have signed this petition, are asking for that is because they know that is the best way to look at and to thoroughly take a comprehensive look at the huge gaps in services in our mental health system, what is working, what is not working. Also, to get a real handle on what is the need, because we cannot develop a good strategic plan on addressing mental health needs unless we have a really good, evidence-based assessment of what the needs are in the Province. That is what these people are asking for.

Mr. Speaker, I fully, fully support this. I look forward to debating my private member's motion in the House tomorrow.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS the speed limit is 100 kilometres an hour on the Veterans Memorial Highway; and

WHEREAS traffic entering and exiting Veterans Memorial Highway is often heavy at Jamie's Way intersection; and

WHEREAS because of heavy traffic turning left into Jamie's Way having to cross traffic that is travelling at 100 kilometres and higher, creating potential for a serious accident;

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

limit on Veterans Memorial Highway in the area of Jaime's Way to seventy kilometres an hour.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I did take note this morning on the way in, down towards the Carbonear way they do have the speed limit dropped back to seventy kilometres an hour but up on the other side it is not. If the Department of Transportation would have a look at this and see if it is possible – a mile on each side of that intersection to reduce the speed there, I am sure the people in that area would be very happy because it certainly, certainly creates a dangerous intersection there where it is four ways of traffic coming, two going back and forth, one going north and south.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation should have a look at it and see if that can be reduced down just in case there ever is an accident there. I do know one woman was T-boned there not long ago. That is where this petition is spawning from. I would like to just pass that along to you, Mr. Speaker, and hopefully the Department of Transportation will have a look at it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

We the citizens serviced by Curtis Hospital located in St. Anthony, Newfoundland and Labrador petition the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and Labrador Grenfell Health to retain the midwives and allow them to continue to perform all their duties at Curtis Hospital. Our midwives offer services that cannot be duplicated and which cannot be replaced. The level of care they offer and the knowledge and training they have in the area of obstetrics is immense. It will be a great disservice to the people of this area if our midwives are no longer available to care for the people here.

Privatizing midwifery or waiting five to seven years for regulation as stated by government is

unacceptable. We have an operational model of midwifery here in St. Anthony that has been delivering outstanding care for over ninety years.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have received these petitions from Southern Labrador, I have also received petitions from the lower North Shore of Quebec that are unable to be presented in the House, as well as various communities I represent on the Great Northern Peninsula. With the current round tables that are happening on primary health care, I did not want it to go unnoticed.

This is a petition that I have been presenting several times on midwifery and how we can look at delivering primary health care better in terms of a service that worked extremely well and where can that grow in other areas such as maybe on the North Coast in Nain where you could have more midwives, and in other areas like in Stephenville, the Kippens area, where we have to take an ambulance and go to Corner Brook to deliver a baby. There are mechanisms in place of which we can do health care more efficiently and find ways where we are utilizing the full scope, the full team, as in other provinces. I think there is a mechanism and way to move forward.

I presented petitions in this House of Assembly on the nurse practitioner and implementing regular nurse practitioner clinics at the Strait of Belle Isle Health Centre. Seeing that put in place is certainly going to lead to a more efficient system and a better delivery of health care.

When we look at primary health care, midwifery can play a role. The Province of Ontario sees the value in this and Newfoundland and Labrador should as well. It was working for over ninety years. It can work well into the next century. Mr. Speaker, I present this petition on behalf of my constituents and hope that this will play a role leading forward when we are looking at the outcomes of primary health care in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

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

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

I have another petition to present today on the health care situation in the Heatherton to Highlands area.

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 in the clinic at Jeffrey's for almost a year; and

WHEREAS the 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, I continue to receive these petitions from people of the area. It is a situation that is continuing to cause people in the area a lot of concern. This is the issue that I receive most concerns about through e-mails and through telephone calls. People have contacted me to tell me their particular situations and how this absence of a doctor at the clinic in Jeffrey's is causing them and their families problems.

Also, the situation in the area, in terms of health care, is getting worse, rather than better. St. George's is losing their doctor this week. So it is another community that is going to be left without a doctor, people not able to get the medical care they need. So it is going to add to

the problem; it is going to add to the waiting times at the hospital in Stephenville, where people often now have to wait a whole day just to get a prescription filled. So it is important to note as well this is not a new position the people who signed this petition are asking for. It is a position that has been budgeted for and that has existed for a number of years, and people want the position to be filled.

I have talked with officials at the Western Health Care Board, and they are aware of the situation here. I have talked to the Minister of Health. He is aware of the situation. I am hopeful that by bringing forward petitions like this that people in the area have signed, that it will add to the awareness of the situation and, hopefully, result in a doctor being found for the area.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

WHEREAS the residents of Burgeo, Ramea, Grey River, and François of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador must use Route 480 on a regular basis for work, medical, educational, and social reasons; and

WHEREAS Route 480 is in deplorable condition such that the shoulders of the road continuously wash away and there are huge potholes in the road; and

WHEREAS the condition of Route 480 poses a safety hazard to residents and visitors to Burgeo, Ramea, Grey River, and François; and

WHEREAS the Department of Transportation and Works is responsible for the maintenance and repairs in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador; and

WHEREAS the local division of the Department of Transportation does make periodic repairs,

but they are only temporary, and the road needs to be resurfaced;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House to urge the government to support the users of Route 480.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the reason I am standing here today is to talk about the specific situation that is occurring on Route 480. Again, this petition is one thing, but this is giving me an opportunity to speak about the road and what is going on.

The first thing I want to do is I want to pass my appreciation and my gratitude on to the members of the Department of Transportation and Works for everything that they have done over the last three days to deal with this situation which arose, and which nobody wanted to see – certainly none of my constituents. I do not want to see it, nobody who has to use the road wants to see it, and nobody in the department wants to see it. So I appreciate the fact that since this incident occurred on Sunday morning, they have gone out of their way to try to make accommodations, and to make this work. We have a very difficult situation, and I appreciate that.

The fact is right now, just to provide an update, there is a helicopter that is ferrying people back and forth. There has been a bus put in place. Again, I appreciate that the department has done what they can to make this happen. I appreciate the fact that people have been inconvenienced and it is very difficult time for this, but people are making due. We recognize that there are people needing to get back and forth for medical and for work reasons, and everybody who can is trying to take the steps necessary to make this happen.

I do realize that we have a difficult fiscal situation and I do realize that down the road, I think the road is going to need work because we have a serious issue. This is very scary when a man drives out the road 5:30 in the morning and therefore, but the grace of God, did not die. We are very lucky that he is in a hospital right now with just broken bones and that he is alive.

I think it is incumbent on us to make sure this work gets done because the stability of the road



may be an issue. Dealing with the issue at hand right now, I appreciate the work that the minister has done, the deputy minister. I appreciate the work that the people in Burgeo and Ramea and everywhere have done to make this difficult situation a little bit easier, given the time of the year.

I want to put this out there and say a thank you to everybody who has expressed patience with this situation, and hopefully we can have it resolved and the route will be open again on Friday in time for Christmas.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I will stand with the last petition for this year on the hospital in Corner Brook.

WHEREAS we wish to raise concerns regarding the recent delays of 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 of Newfoundland and Labrador to commit to planning and construction of the new hospital in Corner Brook as previously committed to and in a timely manner as originally announced without further delay or changes.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I stand in this House and present a petition. I was astonished yesterday when the Member for Humber East stood up and asked a question about the hospital in Corner Brook, when he asked the minister about the ultrasound units. As we know, we have been told, all the people out in Corner Brook, Western Newfoundland and Labrador have been told that the functional plan is not complete, yet we know that there are going to be cuts in obstetrics out in the Corner Brook area.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Shameful.

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, shameful is right. You talk about a growth strategy, how we are going to improve for the growth of Western

Newfoundland, yet we will cut maternity wards out in the new hospital.

Mr. Speaker, when the Member for Humber East – during the by-election, it was constantly brought up about the hospital – asked the minister about the cuts to the ultrasound, the minister said: I do not know; I will get back to you. It went a full day, Mr. Speaker. I waited today for the minister to stand on his feet and do the honorable thing and say here is the answer to the question from the Member for Humber East, and we never got it, Mr. Speaker.

That is the lack of respect the people of Western Newfoundland and Labrador have been getting from this government. When the minister said, in the previous question, if you ask me a question, I will answer it. The Member for Humber East stood up on behalf of the constituents where he just won in a by-election and he is representing, and it is a major concern out there especially for women – women out in Western Newfoundland and Labrador with ultrasounds. The Member for Humber East could not get an answer.

I waited the full day for the minister to do that honourable thing, as he said in this House: I will get back to you. This is the last day of the House of Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Here is an opportunity for the minister to stand on his feet and fulfill the commitment that you made to the Member for Humber East, for standing up for the people in Corner Brook and Western Newfoundland, because they are asking us. They are asking me from the District of Bay of Islands, the Member for Humber East, and the Member for Humber Valley, Mr. Speaker. I am just saying they are asking us to get answers.

We do not hear anything from the Member for Humber West, Mr. Speaker, so we asked that question yesterday, he did not answer it. The Member for Humber East has made a commitment, he will not give up until he gets answers, Mr. Speaker, that is what he was elected to do and I am sure he is going to do it.

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

**MR. JOYCE:** I ask the Minister of Health, if you have the answer, stand up and do the

honourable thing and tell the people of Western Newfoundland.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, we move to Orders of the Day.

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

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

#### **Orders of the Day**

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

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

This time, I would like to move to Order 2, third reading of a bill, An Act To Amend The Social Workers Act, Bill 38.

It is so moved by me, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that the said bill be now read a third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 38 be read a third 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 Social Workers Act. (Bill 38)

**MR. SPEAKER:** This bill has now been read a third time. It is ordered that that bill do pass and its title be as on the Order Paper.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Social Workers Act", read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 38)

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

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

This time, I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs, the House do resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 41, An Act To Amend The Municipalities Act, 1999.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has been moved that the House do resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 41.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

#### **Committee of the Whole**

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

We are now considering Bill 41, An Act To Amend The Municipalities Act, 1999.

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Municipalities Act, 1999". (Bill 41)

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

The hon. the Member for Bay of Islands.

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

I am just going to stand and have a few minutes on Bill 41, on clause 1 about the market value of personal property less than \$500. Mr. Chair, as we discussed in this House this whole bill was adopted at an MNL convention. I just want to mention also that the government did act on this and it is a great initiative to act because it is going to help a lot of municipalities in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Chair, just to all of the volunteers, to all the towns in the whole of Newfoundland and Labrador it is a great time and I am sure the minister will also wish them all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. They put a lot of time and energy into this type of work. The work that they are doing here is reflected in the government, and I know the minister would also like to congratulate a lot of the councils over this whole bill.

It is 99 per cent of what they wanted. I know the minister is going to explain about the rationale behind the less than \$500. I know the minister is going to do that.

Mr. Chair, I will just sit down. I just wanted to recognize the work that the councils all across Newfoundland and Labrador do on a volunteer basis to keep our towns running, to keep them safe, and this is one good step that the government – to all of the members in the House of Assembly, have a safe and joyous Christmas. We know we are all going back to the district and we are going to see a lot of these councillors, and it is time now to relax with family and friends and to appreciate the work that a lot of these volunteers do.

Mr. Chair, to the minister on this, it is a great job bringing this forward. This is the way that this government should work and this is the way the Opposition should work with government. When there is a positive move, we have to recognize it. Every time we make something positive in this House, it is going to benefit all the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. This is a prime example.

Congratulations to the minister, to the government, and to all the volunteers out there with town councils. It is a great job. Thank you for keeping our towns running.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**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:** Clauses 2 and 3.

**CHAIR:** Shall clauses 2 and 3 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 and 3 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 Municipalities Act, 1999.

**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. Chair.

I move that the Committee rise and report on Bill 41, An Act To Amend The Municipalities Act, 1999.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 41.

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 (Cross):** Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Port de Grave, Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

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

The Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report Bill 41 without amendment.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report Bill 41 without amendment.

When shall the said report be received?

**MR. KING:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs, that Bill 41, An Act To Amend The Municipalities Act, 1999, be now read the third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the said bill be now read a third time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion that Bill 41 be read a third 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 Municipalities Act, 1999. (Bill 41)

**MR. SPEAKER:** This bill is now read a third time and it is ordered that the bill do pass and its title be as on the Order Paper.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Municipalities Act, 1999", read a third time,

ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 41)

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

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

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

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

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

It is with a great sense of pride and humility that today I rise in this hon. House to address the Assembly. I want to begin by expressing my deep gratitude to the people of Humber East who have placed their trust and confidence in me to represent them as their member. I pledge that I will work hard to do my best to bring forth the issues that are relevant and important to all of the constituents of Humber East.

I want to take the opportunity to acknowledge the support of my family, my wife, Betty, my sons, Reg and Martin, as well as the excellent team of supporters and volunteers, without whom this election victory would not have been possible.

My campaign for this office began back in August when I decided to seek the Liberal nomination. At that time the leaves were green and still on the trees. When the final ballots were cast on November 25, those leaves were long gone and early winter had already begun to sink in. Now some time between all of that they did turn red, which was nice.

While the campaign for the nomination and for the district was long and arduous, it was very fulfilling to meet so many residents of Humber East and to have the opportunity to listen to their concerns for this beautiful area of the Province. Part of my plan was to speak to as many residents as possible and knock on every door in the district. My goal was to listen to as many concerns as I could during the campaign. It was also a great fitness motivator as I was able to lose about twenty pounds during the campaign

which is attributed to walking down, probably Humber Road and up and down over the hills.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to myself and my background, I was born in Forteau, Labrador; one of eight children, to the late Wilfred Flynn and Isabella Barney. In the years before he was married, my father, and his father, spent winters on the West Coast of the Island; actually adjacent to the District of Humber East, in the area behind Mount Moriah, woodcutting for Bowater's Pulp and Paper Mill in Corner Brook. After marrying my mother and returning to Forteau, he spent the greater part of his working life operating and managing the general store in Forteau that served the residents of the area. My mother, as was the custom of the day for most women, remained home and I feel did a great job bringing us up.

After graduating from Mountain Field Central High School in the early 1970s, I attended the College of Trades and Technology here in St. John's, in a program commercial cooking. When I was nineteen I returned to Forteau and started my first venture into the business world, operating a food service establishment in 1975. Over the years, this small establishment had grown to a much larger enterprise that included a restaurant and lounge, bakery, housekeeping units, two grocery stores and a manufacturing plant for preserving the sale of wild native berries from this Province.

Mr. Speaker, during that time, I was fortunate to meet my wife, Betty. In 1977 she had moved to Forteau as a public health nurse. We married and built a home in Forteau, where we raised our family. We later on expanded with my family and our business interests to Corner Brook and the Steady Brook area. It was not long after that, that we chose to make a permanent move to the West Coast in the District of Humber East.

Mr. Speaker, from the early days I can remember, I had always believed in being part of the community. It means just more than filling up a space in that community. As Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, we have always exhibited a generous spirit when it comes to assisting our neighbours and doing what we can to make our communities a better place to live. It is this belief that helped me make a conscious decision to become involved and offer

whatever talents I could to contribute not only to my community, but to the Province as a whole.

Over the years I have been blessed to serve in a number of capacities covering a broad range of interests. Mr. Speaker, some of these would include, but not necessarily limited to, I served for thirty years as President of the Labrador South Home Care Board, which was a volunteer board serving roughly 100 clients with twenty-five employees. I served six years as Mayor of my community of Forteau. I chaired for twenty years, the Labrador Straits Historical Development Corporation, building on our culture as a tourism product in The Straits.

I was a member of the provincial committee for the Gulf ferry forum report: On Deck and Below, back in, I think 2000. I was Chair of the first Regional Economic Development Board. I was a member of the Labrador Institute of Northern Studies, which was an arm of the university that did research in Labrador.

I served as President of the Cruise Association of Newfoundland and Labrador for five years. Mr. Speaker, at the helm of the Cruise Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, I had an opportunity to work with many groups around our Province on a clear objective to increase our tourism potential. The wealth of experience and insight I gathered during my time with the Cruise Association helped me to understand the value of looking outside of the box and eliminating how things are done wrong, but taking what was right from other jurisdictions around the world.

Everyone knows the old saying: if it isn't broke – don't fix it. Our cruise ship industry has grown in leaps and bounds over these five years, almost 300 per cent. Newfoundland and Labrador is now a key destination for cruise ships from around the world, even though we are way out into the mid-Atlantic. We have lots of room to grow. Visitors are excited to learn about our culture and our unique heritage, whether they land in the port of Corner Brook, along the Labrador Coast, or here in the capital City of St. John's. I had the privilege of working with Mayor Dennis O'Keefe over these years and we have become really good friends.

Mr. Speaker, I also had the privilege to serve a two-year term of the President of Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador, much as my colleague across the way. It is a great pleasure to work with so many service providers in our provincial tourism industry. The association advocates strongly on behalf of all stakeholders for a vibrant and diverse tourism sector.

During my tenure as president, we worked aggressively to grow the membership of the association. I am very proud of the success Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador has made over the years. Today, the association is working with its members to adapt innovative technology and further educate the Province, the country, and the world about all the benefits that we have to offer here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, these organizations and others similar to these play a vital role in the development of our Province. They give a voice to the people at the local level and provide for input for those who might otherwise not be heard. One of my goals, as Member for Humber East, is to connect with organizations in the district to hear their concerns and to bring their issues forward in this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, the District of Humber East, located on the West Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, as all of you would know, takes in a portion of the City of Corner Brook, the Town of Massey Drive and Steady Brook, Humber Village, Humber Valley Resort, Little Rapids, and a portion of the Town of Pasadena. On the western side, it also takes in the community of Pinchgut Lake.

The district encompasses elements of both rural and urban makeup, and from an aesthetic perspective, it is absolutely the most beautiful part of our Province. Over the course of time, both before and after Confederation with Canada, this area has been a dynamic and a contributing partner to our Province and its economy.

From the beginning of construction in 1923 to present day, the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper mill has been the lifeblood of the local economy. With its associated industries in forestry, transportation, saw milling and so on, it remains

an integral part of the West Coast economy. As the paper industry moves forward, we need to do all we can to ensure that Corner Brook Pulp and Paper is able to survive and continue as a viable entity.

Mr. Speaker, the Humber River has long been a destination for tourists seeking sporting adventures; and right from my own front door I can actually do salmon fishing, if I so had the patience, canoeing or rafting, hiking, and other associated activities. Have we tapped the full potential that this river and Deer Lake itself can bring to the area? Likely not, and we must be innovative in creating an environment where other businesses can begin, grow, and flourish in this area.

Mr. Speaker, in the winter of 2016, Corner Brook and the surrounding communities will host the Canadian Special Olympics. It will be an exceptional opportunity to host athletes, coaches, and people from all across our country. Residents from all over our Province will gather in Corner Brook that winter to take in the games, which include alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, curling, figure skating, floor hockey, speed skating, and snowshoeing – and probably a little snow shovelling as well. This will be the first time the winter games for the Special Olympics will be held in our Province. I am looking forward to showing the rest of Canada just how much the West Coast has to offer.

Mr. Speaker, sitting in the heart of the District of Humber East is one of the finest ski hills in Canada. On any day during the winter, Marble Mountain can attract anywhere from 900 to 1,000 visitors, which could mean up to 90,000 visits during the ski season. Marble Mountain is an important contributor to the economy of the district. During the winter months it not only provides jobs, but it also creates an increased use in our restaurants, accommodations, retail stores that might otherwise experience a slow economic time for many of these businesses.

I believe the potential of Marble Mountain extends beyond the winter season, and in looking at similar ventures across Canada, many of those have developed into three- or four-season businesses. I believe that by creating the right growth environment and encouraging business development, Marble Mountain can

continue to grow and expand, bringing in more jobs and more tourism to the district and, indeed, the entire Province.

Mr. Speaker, the cultural identity of our Province can be a catalyst for advancing development. As I reflect on my own experience in the development of the tourism industry, I know that people enjoy coming to this Province and spending time here. Yet, I am not satisfied that we are doing all that we can in this area. Whether it is improving our many attractions or even lobbying for better transportation rates and accessibility from the mainland, we must do our part to make Newfoundland and Labrador a choice destination across the country and around the world.

Mr. Speaker, another wonderful asset to the District of Humber East is the port of Corner Brook. The port itself is a sheltered, deepwater port that is strategically located, allowing for easy shipping to and from destinations in North America such as ports along the St. Lawrence Seaway and in the Atlantic Provinces and, in reality, anywhere in the world. The port is readily accessible on a year-round basis. A tremendous amount of infrastructure has already been established to support commercial and industrial activity at the port. The port of Corner Brook has a tremendous amount of potential and it is imperative for all the stakeholders and all the potential partners to work together to find a way to maximize this potential.

We are fortunate on the West Coast and specifically within Corner Brook to be the home of Sir Wilfred Grenfell College and the College of the North Atlantic. Both of these have been great assets to the district as economic drivers and also institutions of learning. Colleges in similar situations often serve to generate ideas which contribute to the growth of communities and indeed a society as a whole. Partnerships with educational institutions are often tied to new ideas around business development, research and tourism, just to name a few, Mr. Speaker. I believe there are opportunities here that would benefit not just Humber East, but indeed the entire Province.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the years since Confederation in 1949, our Province has relied

heavily on the development of our natural resources, the fishery, forestry, mining, hydro power, and most recently oil and gas. Thankfully, we have been blessed with many of these and they have been instrumental in sustaining our provincial economy and providing for our people. Over the past decade or so, there seems to have been an overreliance on oil and gas as a mainstay for our economy, to the point where sometimes we are held hostage by the volatility of prices within these markets. Obviously, the current drop in oil prices is a testament to that fact.

More than ever, it is important that we begin to work hard to examine viable other options to diversify our economy and introduce other revenue streams to complement our reliance on natural resources. One of these things we have to do is to enhance the environment which business and small business, in particular, can grow and flourish. As an example, we need to find ways to assist small business in the marketing of our products in getting to the world markets. We have come to realize how important marketing is in the fishing industry, and I would think as we try to expand that industry, it is so important that we market our products.

Mr. Speaker, time does not permit me to speak to all the interests I heard from residents while campaigning in the district. One of the issues that was paramount on the minds of the constituents as I travelled throughout the district was health care, no exception. The delays in the construction of the proposed West Coast hospital and the lack of some primary medical services in the district were important concerns for the area residents.

Residents of Humber East are anxious to see the construction of the hospital to begin. I look forward to working with my colleagues from both sides of the House to ensure that happens quicker rather than later. They want to see the establishment of a health care facility that not only addresses their current needs, but also their needs for the years and decades ahead.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to stand in this hon. House to represent the people of Humber East. I look forward to working with every member of the Liberal caucus, and indeed,

all members of this House on important issues that not only affects the district but the Province. I am very thankful and humbled by the opportunity that they have given me.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great privilege just to have a few minutes to get on my feet and have a few words to say, and to congratulate the members on the other side for their new introduction to a different lifestyle, but to congratulate you for a job well done to get here.

Mr. Speaker, after being here sixteen years almost now, I have seen a lot of changes. My district is such a great district, Grand Falls-Windsor – Green Bay South. It used to be Windsor – Springdale. I have seen a lot of things happen in my district over the years that made me proud to be a Member of the House of Assembly to represent these people.

Over the years, Mr. Speaker, I have seen a lot of Premiers come and go. I have seen a lot of Speakers come and go, five Speakers since I have been here; different Lieutenant Governors and Leaders of the Opposition. It is a learning experience every day that I come into the House of Assembly. I listen to all the people who have to get up and speak and say a few words about their districts, about policy and about legislation.

When we are debating legislation, Mr. Speaker, we see the views of the Members of the House of Assembly who are representing the people who elected them to come here to do that. It is a great honour for everybody to represent the full Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, in my district over the years – I am no different than any other member in the House of Assembly. We get in here and we fight, behind the scenes, behind closed doors, and sometimes in the House of Assembly.



Sometimes it gets a little bit exciting and a little bit contentious on both sides, but we learn to deal with that. We learn to accept each other's opinions and each other's ways of representing our districts.

I have to say, going back to 1999 when I first came in, we did not have cameras in the House for the first two or three or four years. Back then, things were a lot different than they are now. I would not say it publicly of some of the things I heard or seen, but some of the members here know what I am talking about. I know one member knows over on that side and one member on this side knows – two on that side actually.

Me being the second longest member in the House of Assembly right now, along with my colleague on this side, it gives us a view of different things because we can relate back to years ago when I sat in Opposition for four and a half years and having to deal with issues in my district and trying to get ministers on this side to co-operate and try to get things for my district. I have to say, it was a pretty good time. We always worked out things.

I think that is the key to surviving in the House of Assembly, is working out things. No matter where you sit to, you can sit on the Third Party side, or the Opposition side, the Liberal side, or on this side, we always have to compromise. We have to sit down and talk out the issues that we need corrected, because it goes far beyond just here, and we cannot take it. We always cannot take this with us day and night, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, because if you did you would never get anything done. So we do our best to try to convince ministers, convince government and the bureaucrats, that this is what I need.

My biggest challenge over the last number of years, I have to say, was the roadwork in my district. The roadwork for a number of years was terrible. For several years we did not get any roadwork at all. I did not get one cent, one kilometre of road for many years; but, when the money was available, I have to say, even in Opposition, when the time came that I could get something, I got something.

In 2003, I remember too – before we took over government in 2003, we were in Stephenville one time. We had a caucus meeting in Stephenville. I know former Premier Williams was at the caucus meeting and we were discussing, what will we do when we take over government? What are we going to do? We do not know how much money is there. We cannot see the books. The government would not show us the books, so we did not know. We were developing our Blue Book at the time. We were coming up with all these policies on what we would like to see being done in the next ten years.

Our Blue Book was not just a one year picture of what we wanted to do the first year we got in. We had to plan it for longer than that. So we were looking at a ten-year span or more. I remember our leader putting his head down and saying, boy, I do not know how we are going to do it. We have all these promises in our Blue Book, but there is no money. There is absolutely no money to do anything. We could not prove it because we did not have the ability to get at the books at the time, but from what was being done from budget after budget when the Liberals were in power, we could tell there was not enough money to do the things we needed done that were falling behind for years and years. Roadwork was one of them. Education was another big area that we were falling behind in, and health care.

I can remember when we had a very small caucus and we had this caucus meeting in Stephenville. We had some of our potential candidates sit in on the caucus meeting just to get a feel for what they could be into if they were lucky enough to get elected. The priority with our leader at the time was to make sure that when we promised that we were going to do something and we were going to put it in our Blue Book, then we were going to do it. We are going to make sure that if we promise it, we will do it. If we cannot do it, we do not promise it.

I have to say Premier Williams worked very, very hard to make sure that all the things we promised since 2003 or 2002 when he came in, he had a vision of where he wanted to go for ten years. We, as a small caucus, had a vision. We had a vision where we could say that we are going to take over government, and 2003 was

the most likely time that we could do it because things were falling in place. Not unlike today. It is the same thing. People are saying it is time for a change. Maybe it is, maybe it is not.

We recognized at that time it was a time for a change so we had to be ready. We were starting to develop policy and a plan for ten years where that if we got in and came over here, we would be ready. I remember very well in the 2003 election it was a joyous time. We worked hard and it was a very small caucus. We started out with nine and ended up with I think it was twelve before 2003. We worked very hard to take over this side.

The hardest thing I had to deal with back – other than the roads issues, but one particular item I went to the Premier about was the cancer clinic in Grand Falls-Windsor. I did not say much publicly. A lot of people do not know what you do most of the time because you are doing a lot of stuff behind closed doors.

The day when we took over and the Minister of Finance said we have to postpone the cancer clinic in Grand Falls-Windsor, to me that was unbelievable. It was just like my whole career was finished, gone. The interest that I had, if we are going to cancel this cancer clinic, then I do not know how I could survive in the House of Assembly. To be here, knowing very well what we had to go through in Central Newfoundland and what people were going through.

Unfortunately, I did take a stand. I am not saying unfortunately because I took the stand, but because I had to go against my leader and I had to go against the Premier to take that stand in favour of the cancer clinic, but it did happen. He did promise to me that when the money can be found – and that is why I understood. I understood exactly what we were going through. I understood exactly where the government was coming from. We had to postpone several things because we did not have the money, the money was not there.

After a while when the money started coming in from the oil resources and things were looking up, then I received a firm commitment that that cancer clinic would be done. Mr. Speaker, it was done. We have a beautiful centre in there now, delivering a very, very, very good service

to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. That is only one instance of by being an MHA, you have to do a lot of things sometimes that you feel like you should not have to do.

Circumstances control what we do. Right now we are in a circumstance of financial problems again with the oil prices so low. We may have to go back to some things being postponed; and I do not mean cancelled because if the thing is a good idea and people buy into it and want to do it, then you do not cancel it you would have to postpone it for a while until the money becomes available.

Unfortunately because of the oil prices, we are in a position where we have to look at every dollar that we spend, because it is the people's money. It is not the Liberal's money. It is not the NDP's money. It is not the PC's money. It is not my money. It is the people of the Province. We have to get the best bang for the buck, do the most we can do, and services are paramount to everybody in the Province. Everybody wants good roads, everybody wants good hospitals, they want the best of all services that you can get, but they all come with a price.

Not unlike what it was back when I was in the Opposition, when there were many, many times that I sat in on meetings wondering where the dollars were coming from. At that time there were no dollars. There was no big dollars to do two kilometres or three kilometres of roads. There were no dollars to give out a \$5,000 grant or a \$10,000 grant or a \$1,000 grant. It was just tight times. After sixteen years of being here and comparing today, last year, the year before, and times when there was lots of money, there was money flowing everywhere, but we still had to do the right thing with that money. We had to make sure the services that we give to the people of the Province were services that they needed. It was not always the services that they wanted, but the services that they needed, and that was important. It was important for the future. It was important to the people of the Province.

We have a lot of respect for our youth in the Province. So, we have to put money into education. We have to put money into recreation. We have to be respectful to the seniors of our Province. So, we have to put money into health care and drug costs, and all of

these things that seniors depend on. We are trying to help seniors stay in their own homes and trying to help them to buy groceries and pay the light bill too.

That is all things that we do as a government. We do it, not because you want to do it to get that other vote, we do it because we have to do it. We have to take care of the people of the Province who put us here, to make the best decisions that we can. It does not matter if you are in Opposition or in government. We are still fighting for the same cause. We are still fighting to make sure the right thing is done.

Opposition's role, lots of times, is to keep the government on their toes, keep their feet to the fire, to make sure that we make the right decisions. I do not see anything wrong with that. I can accept that. I can accept, on our side, when some of our members might get a little bit upset sometimes with ministers and government and bureaucrats, policy, but we have to look at all of that stuff as a government and say we have to do this right. You just do not do it for the sake of doing it.

Maybe it is time – the people of the Province now might be looking at us and saying we are looking for a change, but that does not mean that we cannot change things. You do not have to throw out a government because you want a change. You can go back to a government and say okay, we want a change.

So, why can't government change? Why can't government do things a little different? Instead of having this rule, this cyclical thing that has been happening for years and years and years, when every ten or twelve years you have to put a Liberal government in for twelve years or ten years, then you put a PC government for a number of years, maybe it is time to get away from that.

It might be time now that the people of the Province could say okay if we want a change, why can't our government change? Why can't our policies change? Maybe our policies, maybe our legislation and bills need to be looked at. Some things need to be overhauled. It is possible that by us being in here and the Opposition with the government, we can change legislation. We can change policy. We can

make life better for people in the Province. That is the name of the game. That is why we are here.

I do not apologize for anything that I have been involved in in government, if we do the right thing for the people of the Province. Lots of time people do not see that. They look at what government does and they probably blame government for this and blame government for that, but in the meantime it is all done with good intentions. It is all done with the end result being the best thing for the people of the Province. It is Opposition's responsibility to keep our feet to the fire. Sure, why not? That is your job.

If I were a minister today, I would welcome questions from anybody on that side. I would welcome criticism. I would certainly be man enough to stand up and say yes, maybe we should do something different. Maybe you are right, maybe I am going to have to look at this and we are going to have to change that, but we have to have the guts to do it. It is no good to be in a government, it is no good to be a minister and a government in power if you do not have the guts to do things. That is probably where all governments need to be.

I have seen it while I was in Opposition. It is the same thing. It is no different now than what it was back fifteen or sixteen years ago. When the Liberals were in power, they had to do certain things, that they did not do, but they should have done. Maybe we have to do certain things, that we should do, that we have not done yet, but time will tell.

Having said that, that was just one thing I wanted to get off my chest for a while; it has been bothering me. So, today was the day to do it and get it off my chest and if I do not return back in this House in the next election well, today was the day that I might have made a difference; I do not know. Because it is the Christmas season, then the significance of me wanting to speak today too was to bring special greetings to all of the people in Newfoundland and Labrador and to wish everybody in the Province a great new year, a healthy and wealthy new year.

Having gone through a lot of sickness in the last two-and-a-half years myself, I understand fully what it takes to be healthy. I know what it means to be sick after going through cancer, heart trouble, and diabetes. It was just unending for the last two-and-a-half years. Today, I feel pretty good, I feel pretty great and I am coming along pretty good, but there is no guarantee that I will be returning to the House after the next election, if I do not run. I will ponder that over the Christmas season and decide for sure.

To my colleagues, to the Opposition, my colleagues over there who have been friends for a long time and battled out a lot of issues over the years, and to the new people sitting in the House, even on our side – we have pretty well all new faces in the last few years, since I have been here, all new faces except for one.

I just want to wish all my colleagues a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and hopefully things will turn around and be a successful year for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who deserve to have the best representation that they can get in the House of Assembly, not only to fight for them, because sometimes fighting does not mean anything. It means you are just going to get knocked down and end up having the you know what kicked out of you.

Making the right decisions, even if you do fight – you have to fight for the right cause; you have to fight for the right things. That is why we are here. That is why you are here. That is why the people of the Province look at the House of Assembly sometimes and say oh yes, they may act like a bunch of youngsters half the time, but in the long run you are here for the one reason: to fight for me as a person and a resident of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, to fight for my road, to fight for my hospital, to fight for my children, to fight for my future.

Whoever decides to stay and be part of that future, I congratulate you and commend you for doing that. Some of us will not stay, but the ones who do stay and the future ones who get elected – someone watching today might be inspired to say I want to be a politician; I want to sit in the House of Assembly.

There is nothing like the first day that you come into the House of Assembly, the very first time you sit in this House. It is the one you are going to remember forever. You will look around and say – when I came, it was fifty-two members. You look around now and you say there are forty-eight members in the House of Assembly and I am one of them representing over 500,000 people in our Province. It is such a geographically big area that we have.

So the many, many problems that we have, I am one who is sitting in the House of Assembly. I am the one who is going to be speaking out for the thousands of people who live in my district. I am the one who is going to be speaking out for everybody in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador to make it a better place.

I know my time is up. Merry Christmas to everybody, have a great one, and see you in the new year.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that we do adjourn debate on Address in Reply.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved that we now do adjourn debate on Address in Reply.

All those in favour, ‘aye’.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

At this time I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, that the House do resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole

to consider Bill 36, An Act Respecting Missing Persons.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into the Committee of the Whole to consider the said bill.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

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 36, An Act Respecting Missing Persons.

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

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Against?

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

**CLERK:** Clauses 2 to 21 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall clauses 2 to 21 carry?

The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

I am asking questions specifically on section 2(c) where we talk about the definition of missing person. This is something I brought up yesterday in debate. I ask because I think the definition – and this has actually been outlined by legal counsel. Actually there was a fairly prominent lawyer who did an interview recently where we talked about this. I have the same concerns when I look at this.

Just so we understand, it says a "missing person" means (i) an individual whose whereabouts are unknown and who has not been in contact with those persons who would likely be in contact with the individual". This is An Act Respecting Missing Persons, so this is key to the legislation when we talk about what defines a missing person. I think that this definition is quite broad when it says "...whose whereabouts are unknown and who has not been in contact with those persons who would likely be in contact...".

What is the timeline that we use here to define how long that period is? Is it twenty-four hours? Is it forty-eight hours? Is it someone that can go seven days? The reason I say that this is important is because this section is going to be used to allow a warrantless search of just about every record in a person's home to locate that person.

I had to put it out there because sometimes people can get overzealous and say, well, you do not want us to find missing persons. That is not it. I think I described that quite adequately yesterday. My concern, though, is that we have a long history of jurisprudence and civil liberties where persons are protected against unlawful search and seizure.

You look at the sections here. We have every record, whether it is health, finance, just about anything. Their credit checks, their work records, their hotel records, anything and everything, plus the fact that you can get into the home based on them being a missing person, which is very vague.

I have looked through other legislation. I believe there are four other provinces that have an act similar to this. Some of them will say a missing person is an individual whose whereabouts are unknown despite reasonable

efforts to locate the individual, and they lay out a bit more detail.

We have that. When you look at 2(c)(ii) it also says, an individual who is unknown despite reasonable efforts. We have that same clause, but this first part here is troubling. We know that the various authorities – this is one of those situations where we are trying to protect against the abuse of possible powers. I guess what I am putting out here is, why did we specifically go with this? Which I think is quite vague and it allows itself to possible abuse. We do not want any unlawful intrusions to be exercised.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I appreciate the member raising that particular question. I think I actually did address that a little yesterday when I brought my concluding remarks.

I accept the premise of his question as well, because as the member who is bringing this particular legislation forward, I certainly share his concern. We want to make sure there is no room for abuse here. Unfortunately, we cannot say no room for error because we have seen it in all too many occupations, whether it is in the legal system or elsewhere. People make mistakes. Sometimes there are judgement calls and mistakes are made. I am not sure any amount of legislation that we can bring in would actually prevent that.

His question is a good one. The short answer on that is that while the definition provided here is obviously provided for the legislation, the actual practice of the law enforcement officials will not change from what it currently is. So, in other words, it really depends on the accuracy of the information provided.

What I am told by both police forces, the RNC and the RCMP, is that there may be instances, for example, where they will assess the validity of the information they are provided, and somebody could be missing for as long as maybe, I will just say four or five hours as an example – and to be clear, I am just using this as a hypothetical example. Someone could be

missing for a period of time, but an assessment of the information they are provided, they may deem that the person is in no real threat, or there is no missing person, per se.

There may be other instances – and I think one example I was given was if someone, for example, happened to be out in a bar in a small community and calls home at 12:00 and says I am on my way home, and at 2:30 or 3:00 they get a call from a spouse saying they are missing. They may deem that to be a little more serious. It is really determined by the police officer's assessment of the risk, based on the evidence or the data provided to them and their assessment of the data.

The other piece I want to emphasize here is that this legislation only changes their ability to access information. It does not change the way they operate, and, for example, the way they would determine whether they say that a person is missing or whether they need to wait an hour or two or three, or they need more information. None of that in practice, I say to my hon. colleague opposite, has changed. The only thing changed with the legislation is their ability to access more records, depending on the information provided.

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

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

Certainly, I agree that this does change the ability to access information. It changes it on a very great scale, in my opinion. My understanding, and the minister is probably more versed in this than I am. I have never been involved in a missing person's case. I do not know the exact procedure. So a lot of times I am asking this because I feel if I do not ask it and something were to happen down the road, they say you guys – and when I say you guys, it means all of us in here. We are all treated the same. We want to make sure this scrutiny is given to this legislation so they can say we did our job as legislators.

My understanding is that previously, if the cops – cops, officers, I am speaking as a general person here. The cops received the information. We have a missing person. We have a situation.

We have fear, we have whatever. What they used to do, I believe, was go to the judge and look for a warrant. They would say, here is what we have, here is our grounds, here is why we think there is reasonable harm here, and we want this judge to give the warrant. I believe that can happen fairly quickly. You have judges who are available to do this very quickly, I am told.

You could go to the judge and the judge was that independent arbiter, that person who would be the gatekeeper to allowing it or not allowing it. The judge would hear it and say, yes, I think this is good, and sign off; or, no, I do not think you have satisfied it, and that seemed to work.

Now I understand the process here. What the police are saying is, look, if we have that fear and we have pretty good information, we want to bypass that because that will save us time. Not only does it save time, but we have a wide range of information that can be accessed very quickly.

My fear is with the lack of that arbiter, when you look at section 10(1) notwithstanding section 6, which talks about “A member of a police force who has reasonable grounds to believe that a person has records respecting a missing person may apply to a judge for an order...”. So that is what you had to do before.

Now we are saying, “Notwithstanding section 6, if there are reasonable grounds to believe that immediate access to records is necessary to prevent imminent bodily harm...” a member may serve a written demand on the person holding that information. Now here is my concern. My concern is there may be individuals out there, for whatever reason, perhaps dubious, who could go out and try to mislead people, say that harm is imminent, and there may be a negative or undue influence that is exercised here for whatever reason.

I know I am putting it out there, but I think my friend from St. Barbe is on the same page here. There is the possibility that bad people try to mislead good people. When I say good people, I am talking about our authorities.

Before the authorities would take it and go right to the judge and say, look, let's get this. Boom

you have it, there we are, but there is the possibility now that it is done for dubious reasons. There is no independent gatekeeper. There is no arbiter to say, no, I am not satisfied with the person you heard from. I think you need to do a little bit more before we grant that. Again, fully understanding the balance here that needs to be met with. We have people who may be missing. Let's do our jobs versus protecting somebody's rights, which is also important.

I put that out there, that this is a concern that I have. I understand all the aspects here. Sometimes it is hard when you are asking a question and you know what the answer is going to be. You know the reasoning behind it, but a part of it does not quite jive because there is a possibility that there is a bad person out there who has an illicit gain that they could be getting by going to the police to say look, this person is missing, you better go search their records, get all the records and maybe there is a gain to be had. I put that out there.

I would imagine – I would hope that in every single case where this happens or will happen, that we are going to deal with rightful reasons, rightful causes and good reasons, and for the purposes of allowing quicker access so that we can possibly save this person who is in imminent danger, imminent harm – going by section 6 here: imminent bodily harm or the death. That is the purpose.

I put that out there. The minister may choose to speak to this or not. Maybe it is just me sort of putting it on the record and talking about it, and that is fine; but I think that concern needs to be recognized because this could lead to people trying to do things for the wrong reasons. That is my concern here. It is not the RCMP so much, or RNC. I think they do what they have to because they have a cause; but sometimes if that person who is contributing to that cause does not have the same thing, we could lead to a situation where a person's rights are breached. That is what I want to avoid.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I appreciate the member putting it out there, as he has indicated, raising concerns around this bill. I think it is important that we do that. We had a good debate yesterday. The Member for St. John's Centre raised a number of important points. We do not always agree on the points that are raised. Most cases, we disagree – in a lot of cases, not most cases. I think in a lot of cases we come down on the right side of legislation here. Sometimes we tweak things. A lot of times we do disagree, but it is important to put the points out there.

I certainly appreciate the Member for Burgeo – La Poile raising it. Let me just say this, first of all. What we are talking about here in this legislation, the significant change is providing the police with the ability to access records in particular and expedited search orders. The member is raising the concern about whether, in fact, a process could be bypassed to the point where they can gain immediate access without a thorough review of the intelligence or the information or the knowledge that they have, or the claim that they have that a person is missing.

So, I want to say a couple of things about that. First of all, in only one instance can the police actually access information without going through the courts. It can only happen in an emergency situation where there is some potential threat of bodily harm or a death threat that they are aware of. In all other instances, Mr. Chair, if it is a record access order under normal circumstances, they would apply to the court, to a judge. If they are looking for a search order – and the search order is also still very narrow. It applies mainly to missing minors or vulnerable individuals.

The specific piece that the member is raising, which is a very good point, is around the emergency. I want to be very clear; police are only able to bypass going to the courts if there is an indication of an emergency which is defined as potential for bodily harm or a death threat against an individual.

In this circumstance, Mr. Chair, however, a police officer or two officers cannot act on their own. They cannot make an independent decision to move forward and bypass the court. There is still a check and balance in the system where they have to go to their chief of police or

their commissioner. There is a process where approval still has to be sought. It just does not have to be sought through the court system; it has to be sought through the head of the police agency, whether that be the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The other point that I think is very important to be reiterated here, because I talked about it a little bit yesterday, is that in every instance where it is deemed by the chief of police of the RNC or the RCMP that it is an emergency situation, and they give the green light to allow police to access records without going through the court system, that has to be published and made public knowledge. There is an annual report where each time that piece of the legislation is invoked and accessed; it has to be made public and duly accounted for.

My point being, Mr. Chair – I accept the member's concerns; I really do. I appreciate him raising it. I think that there are checks and balances here. There is only one opportunity where the police can avoid going through the regular court channels for either a search warrant or a record access and that is where it is deemed to be an emergency situation, potential bodily harm or a death threat. In that case, they still have to have the approval of the head of the police organization, that being the RNC or RCMP.

**CHAIR:** Before I recognize the member, could I just make a general comment? I understood – and maybe it needs to be clarified – we started calling and identified a point in clause 2. We have not adopted clause 2 yet, but we have gone to clause 10 and clause 6. In a reference I saw a tie-in to clause 2, but I am just wondering in a clause-by-clause analysis if it is okay to pass clause 2 first and then move on.

The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** If it is okay with the minister – I mean, a lot of questions I have are connected. So once we are done with the questioning, I think it is going to be all the sections at once, I would assume, if that is fine with the minister.



**CHAIR:** The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. KING:** Yes, if the Third Party are fine with it – I think the nature of this bill is that there are a lot of dots connected all through from the beginning to the end so if everyone is fine with that, I prefer maybe if we just have open questions and dialogue and once we get through the point where questions are answered, we can simply move through the procedural piece.

**CHAIR:** Okay, clarify that.

The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile.

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

Thank you to the Government House Leader. I think everybody is on the same page here in asking these questions that it is serious piece of legislation, it is an important piece, a lot of it is linked together, and we are hoping that the questions that we ask and the answers that we are given will hopefully ensure that the bill is what it needs to be.

The question I have now for the Government House Leader is under section 10(5), and it is something that he just reference in his last answer. Again, this all relates going back to section 2, because section 2 comes back this missing person, which again I still have concerns about – any time a law can be vague, it allows the law to be not as strong or perhaps in some cases too strong, if that is a proper term.

The minister just mentioned that when we talk about these emergency orders that are done without going through the judge, it talked about an annual report being filed and it says here, “A police force shall prepare an annual report respecting its use of demands under this section, and shall file it with the Minister of Justice and Public Safety who shall make the report available to the public.” The report shall include “the number of missing person investigations in which a demand under this section was made... the total number of persons who were served with a demand... and other information prescribed in the regulations.”

What I am putting out here now is that it is my estimation that the usage of that specific

provision, section 10, is likely going to be rare. It is my position that an annual report is not timely enough. If we are going to be dealing with a limited number, it is my suggestion – and maybe the minister will be able to advise of reasons why we would not do this. When it comes to information, time is of the essence. Having access to timely information is what is important. We all know that as members of Opposition and having to use Access to Information requests to get information, we know how important time can be.

What I am saying here is that this is likely going to be a rarity, and it is likely going to be pretty important. I do not know if it is something where the amount of work that will go into it – I do not see why it could not be done within thirty days and happen on maybe an annual digest of all of them, but if this is used I think it should be – even if you were to go quarterly, even if you were to go every thirty days, let’s hope there is no need of it. Let’s hope there is no annual report. Let’s hope the annual report comes out and says we did not use this provision. That is good news for everybody.

I have some concerns as to the timeline here. If this is used January 2, and we have to wait until the next year to see it, that is a long time. It is hard to gauge the effectiveness, it is hard to gauge the repercussions, it is hard to gauge just about anything if you have to wait that long. So, I put that out there. I do not know if that is something that could be done or not. I think it is a suggestion that is worth looking at.

The other part is when it comes to the information here, again, fully understanding that we need to have privacy applied for certain parts of this information to protect the well-being of those individuals. We are talking about situations that are so serious that they are involving imminent bodily harm or possible death. Yes, we all agree we do not want that information being put out to the public in certain cases, but I am wondering, when it says other information prescribed in the regulations. I am not aware of what the regulations say. Maybe I should be aware. Are the regulations done, are they not done? What is the other information?

Right now, we just have: how many times was the demand made, and how many people did you

hit with the demand? I would be interested to know, and maybe I should not know this. I would be interested to know, what was the information that you used to get the demand made? Because it is not going through the judge. It is not part of a public record or a court record. I am just wondering about that. Maybe I am going a bit too far with it, but I believe in the timely access to the information.

I put that out to the minister. Maybe this is something that could be addressed at some point. Because I think perhaps a quicker timeline, rather than the one year, is necessary. I do not think doing it quicker, if you have to use it – maybe we are going to see within the first thirty days of this being enforced, maybe it is used a bunch of times, I do not know, but I would like to know what we are dealing with within a shorter time frame. I would rather three months or thirty days, rather than twelve months. That is a long period of time to know what we are dealing with. I just put that out there for the minister.

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

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

I am very happy to stand and speak to this particular bill on specific clauses. Again, I applaud the government. We know how important it is to have expeditious access to information in the case of a missing person. We know sometimes it could mean the difference between life and death or serious harm, so this is very important work that we are doing here today.

I too, as my colleague mentioned, would like to look at clause 2(c) and the definition of a missing person. A number of different people and organizations have raised that issue to me as well in terms of their concern about that. They feel that particular clause is a bit broad. I do not have a solution, but I certainly would hope the minister would consider some of the concerns that I might raise here today.

For instance, someone had raised a concern to me, if a person completely, inexplicably vanished, say a mom of two on her way to get groceries, it might be feasible to lead evidence

that this is completely unexpected, to the point it suggests something harmful has occurred. If the definition captured that, then that is good.

However, if a person is just a guy who appears to have gone underground, who has reasons to maybe want to, or who does this from time to time, it should be savable because that person is not missing – they are actually not missing. They are exercising and asserting their privacy over their whereabouts, essentially. That is what they are doing. Somebody has decided, I am just checking out. I want the world to leave me alone. I want everyone to leave me alone. I am just checking out for a while, or I want to start my life over.

Then, all of a sudden there are police looking for him everywhere, searching his own personal records, and maybe searching the records of anyone he has last been seen with. I applaud the work of the RNC and the RCMP in this kind of work, but these are the kinds of things that raise questions for people. Really, what is the definition of a missing person? Should it have a time element associated with it?

Somebody else suggested maybe that definition of a missing person should have something like somebody who is missing without a reasonable, alternative explanation. Those are the kinds of concerns that have been raised. Again, because as I mentioned yesterday, this is a major piece of legislation. Not so much in volume but in scope and what it means in terms of the law.

Mr. Chair, I also would like to turn to section 6(3). This allows the police to search the records of anyone who may have had contact with the missing person. Again, we can see how that might be really useful in the case of trying to find a vulnerable person in a timely matter. That makes a lot of sense to me.

However, I have a copy of a letter that was written by Elizabeth Denham. She is the Information and Privacy Commissioner for BC. She wrote her Minister of Justice with some concerns. She is writing from the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. She wrote this to her Minister of Justice in February, 2014.

Mr. Chair, I really like what she had to say and I would hope that government might take a look at this. I am going to be happy to actually give a copy of this letter to the minister in case he has not seen it. He probably has seen it, but I would like to table it in the House and make sure that the minister gets a copy.

What she says, in order to add some counter balances to the potential problems here that any third party who has had their records searched in pursuit of trying to find a missing person, that they be notified. I am not so sure that is in our law. It may be in a regulation that the department may come up with, but I am hoping the minister, in fact, might look at that possibility.

I can see he is busy right there, but I am hoping that he would look at the possibility of any time a third party – for instance, if we were last seen with somebody who is missing and there was a concern about them, and all your bank records, your e-mails, your phone records, or your texts were searched, one would hope that you would then be notified. That someone would notify you. That the police would notify you and say, in pursuit of a missing person we have had to search your records.

I am hoping that would be a safeguard, just because if all of your personal records – it could be your health records, anything – have been searched I believe that you have a right to know that. I do not think it slows down any of the searches. I do not think it puts anybody in jeopardy that this can be done after the fact. I am not suggesting the police do it right away, but that it be done as soon as possible, as reasonably possible. That is also what the Privacy Commissioner in BC had suggested to her own government.

Now, the other thing that I wonder about: Once those records have been accessed or the records have been accessed of a particular person who has been missing, what happens to those records? They are in the hands of the police – and hopefully it is information that is helpful in finding a missing person – but then what happens to those records? Is there a time limit on them, on the disposal of the records when the file is closed? Are those records destroyed? Are those records no longer in the possession of the

police? I am not so sure that the government has answered that question. I would like the government to take a look at that.

The other issue that is of concern, that has been raised to me is the issue of, oftentimes, it is not unusual for a woman who is a victim of domestic violence who will flee a situation and her abuser may report her (a) as missing; may report her as having a mental health issue. That is often a tactic that is used.

I know there is provision in the legislation that if the police are looking for a woman, they find her in a transition house or somewhere and she says I am fleeing an abusive situation that it allows then for the police to simply say that this case of the missing person is closed. That is great, but one of the concerns that have been raised by transition houses is the fact that, again, they can be a third party where police can compel them to release their information. Transition houses have expressed a concern about that. So, I would hope that government take that concern seriously and take a look at that.

The emergency demand, Mr. Chair, section 10(1), this applies to the emergency demand for records. That may be, in fact, very necessary in some cases when the police need to work very quickly, in an expeditious manner.

The Privacy Commissioner from BC has suggested that what happens when police have to go the route of an emergency demand for records, that that be reported to her office. I think it is a very interesting solution, Mr. Chair, to have those checks and balances in place.

Now, in the line of duty, that the police not do it right away, but the police have to write a report to their commanding officer. So, this would simply mean that a copy of that report also go to our Privacy Commissioner. What that does is that gives us some checks and balances. We know then what is going on. This is also, Mr. Chair, under section 10(4) and that is where we see this, “When a member of a police force serves a demand under this section, he or she shall file a written report with his or her commanding officer that sets out the circumstances in which the demand was made.”

Mr. Chair, an easy solution to that, in fact, may be to present that report as well to our Privacy Commissioner. Because this is a new law, I think it would be –

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MS ROGERS:** Mr. Chair, I ask for leave. I need about one minute.

**CHAIR:** The member has asked for leave.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** By leave.

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

Thank you very much. What she has said actually is that she believes the recommendations that she has given to her government – I would hope that our government would recommend them. She emphasizes that these recommendations will not hinder the timely access to personal information needed for the investigation and location of missing persons. That is what we are all concerned about here, Mr. Chair, that we give the tools to the police that are necessary so that they can do their work. We know that their work is so very important.

For me, the issues are that if a person, a third party's information and records have been accessed, that they be notified; if there is a demand order for information, that demand order be written up not just for the commanding officer but for our Information and Privacy Commissioner; and that we be really careful about any kind of action that is taken on transition houses so as not to interfere with the work that they do.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MS ROGERS:** Mr. Chair, I will be happy to deliver these documents and a document from the transition house association of BC to the minister.

Thank you very much.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for St. Barbe.

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

I would like to maybe make a few observations to be certain that I understand the nature of the legislation. I think that it is useful legislation. I think it is well intended. I think it provides an extra tool for police officers to be able to help people.

It says on the sides of the cars: protect and serve. They actually mean it. They really do mean to protect and serve. I did hear the Premier introduce the bill and it made sense to me. Police officers already have ample tools when we are looking at criminal activity, but this is not about criminal activity, this is to provide another civil tool to find somebody who has gone missing.

Just by way of example, if I understand the legislation correctly, let us say somebody gets up some morning in St. John's and leaves home, and maybe it is an older person. Let us say that it is a man and he does not show up back at home, and maybe this person is suffering from some mild dementia. The person might not suffer severe dementia. Many people are operating and they operate motor vehicles and they come and go in neighbourhoods where they are familiar with. This person's wife contacts the police saying he is gone. He did not come back for lunch. I am really concerned. He took his golf clubs. I thought he went golfing. Now it is getting dark. What do I do?

This person then may have these infirmities, and if the police have been advised this person is missing, then it would be relatively simple to be able to access records to show where he may have gone. Banking records, for example, could show that oh yes, he used his credit card in Clarendville, and he stopped in Gander, and, oh my, he bought a ticket on Marine Atlantic. What are we going to do? So, it could easily be in less than a day that a person who left home in the morning and did not show up could just be travelling and maybe somewhat lost, maybe have the means to be able to travel, and are relatively pleasant, accommodating, or whatever – but the police would not have the tools to be able to find this person.

It might be that he is a diabetic and has a prescription, and by being able to access these records, the police could determine where the person was on relatively short notice by

accessing these records to find the person and be able to help that person and be able to maybe save somebody from coming to harm.

So, the request for records, as I understand the bill, can be refused, and if refused, then the police can go and satisfy a judge that a warrant is required; but this is to provide a level of scrutiny that would be available to police officers on somebody's request that a person is missing to be able to help find that person.

Now, we can look at all sorts of mischief that someone might get involved in based on any legislation, but people will be up to mischief from time to time, with criminal matters, with civil matters, with whatever. I think that rather than look into what possibly could happen, I would prefer to look at why we have legislation – which exists in other provinces, which seems to be working in other provinces, and is a necessary and appropriate and useful tool for the police in our Province.

On the basis that my understanding is that this is to provide police with an extra tool to find somebody who has gone missing, who may very well need somebody to look for them – for example, in my district just a few years ago, a lady died in a parking lot between the hospital and the seniors' home. She fell into a ditch, with a walker, improperly and died of exposure. If somebody had raised the alarm for that person, it might have been very simple to say well, she is not gone very far because she uses a walker going between a hospital and a seniors' home.

This, in my understanding, is relatively straightforward for opportunities where the police might say well, you are going to have to file a missing persons report and we may need to get an order, it is going to be a little bit more difficult for us to find them. The police office might well say no, we have this authority with this legislation and make some inquiries, discrete inquiries, to find the person and save them from harm and get them back in good standing with the family. To me, it is nothing more and nothing less and if I understand on that basis, I have no hesitation to support it.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I appreciate the commentary from the Member for St. Barbe, as well as the Member for Burgeo – La Poile and the Member for St. John's Centre. I am going to try to respond to a number of the points that have been raised there, as best I can. I have a lot of scribbles here, so I apologize if I do not get them in any particular order.

One thing I do want to say is some concerns have been raised around the process in the legislation and whether or not enough due process is going to be afforded there, and I appreciate and fully respect the commentary that has been provided. I want to say for the record that the issue we are dealing with is all around missing persons, so one of the objectives here in putting together the legislation – and we did that, as I said before, with consultations with a number of groups and in particular with the two police forces here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The emphasis here is on simplifying the process. Because the last thing anyone needs when someone goes missing, one of our siblings or spouse or someone like that, the last thing anyone wants is some bureaucratic red tape to slow things down. The emphasis here was on simplifying the process to the extent we possibly could. Now having said that, I fully appreciate the commentary and the caution provided by the Member for Burgeo – La Poile, the Member for St. Barbe, and the Member for St. John's Centre around ensuring that the rights of all are protected as we move forward with a piece of legislation in this manner.

The Member for St. John's Centre, I believe, raised a question around if a third party's information is accessed, the question was raised how long would police be in possession of that information and when, in fact, they would dispose of it. The answer to that for the member is that there are currently policies and procedures in place by both forces that outline how long information or evidence, depending on whether it is a potential crime, has to be

maintained, how it has to be maintained and when, in fact, it can be disposed of.

**MS ROGERS:** (Inaudible).

**MR. KING:** Evidence or information. It applies to both – I am just responding. The member is asking another question there.

I use the term evidence if, in fact, it is a potential crime; otherwise, it is just called information, but the protocol applies to both. Whether it is evidence of a crime or whether it is simply information collected, as this legislation refers to, there are protocols in place that provide the parameters of when it can be disposed of and when it cannot be.

The same protocols, I say to the member, would apply to this piece of legislation as it applies to any other type of information that the police would collect as to how long it has to be maintained and how it has to be maintained.

Also, for the record, I want to make a correction because I think I said to the Member for Burgeo – La Poile in answering one of his questions earlier that one of the checks and balances – I used the term chief of police. It is actually the commanding officer that police officers would have to be engaged with. That may not be the chief of police at any particular point in time. I just want to clarify that for the record. It is not always going to be the chief of police.

The other thing raised, again, I think by the Member for St. John's Centre, was around the Office of the Chief Information Officer having access to reports that are produced for the minister in instances where the emergency order is enacted. That, in fact, will happen. That is part of this process, that the Office of the Chief Information Officer will have access to these reports, I say to the member.

The other point I want to speak to before I go back to some general comments is the Member for Burgeo – La Poile talked at length about section 10 in particular. Again, this section, for those who are following the debate, refers to enacting the emergency clause. We call it emergency demand for information where, in fact, the court permission is not sought, but

rather the commanding officer's approval is sought before this can be enacted.

The member raises the question, a good question, around why we are specifying annual reports versus some other shorter period of time. There are a couple of points I want to make on that. First of all, when the legislation references an annual report, it is only referencing an annual report to be made public. It does not stipulate that more frequent reports cannot and, in fact, will not be made to the Minister of Justice and Public Safety and the Attorney General by the respective chiefs of police for the RNC and the RCMP.

I would submit to the member that there will be more frequent reporting. I suspect this legislation being new, that likely any time as we start out the process – any time section 10 is enacted and an emergency order given, that there will be a reporting mechanism from the chiefs of police to the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

What I will say to the Member for Burgeo – La Poile is I fully understand and appreciate the concerns he has raised. As government, we are certainly prepared to closely monitor the implementation of this legislation over the first six, eight, ten months, whatever period it takes. If, in fact, we see there is a feeling that we are not being transparent, or if there is a need to have more frequent reports, perhaps semi-annually or quarterly, I commit to the member that we are prepared to have a look at that and if need be, bring it back into the House here.

For us, it is all about producing good legislation that allows law enforcement officials access to greater tools to find our missing siblings or our missing spouses. If we need to tweak that as we move along –

**MR. A. PARSONS:** (Inaudible).

**MR. KING:** I thank you, I say to the Member for Burgeo – La Poile, for that compliment. I appreciate your support on this. I am anticipating and hopefully looking at a vote of support from you as we move forward with this legislation.

Mr. Chair, I am going to wind down my commentary with respect to what I just presented simply to say that our intent here is to produce a piece of good legislation notwithstanding a lot of good concerns that have been raised. I do commit to him that if on the reporting piece, if there is a way that we need to or should improve that as we implement this legislation, then we are certainly prepared to take a look at it.

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

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

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

I thank the minister for his response to the issues that both myself and my colleagues have raised. Two points of clarification there; I understand that there is a protocol for evidence and information to either a file be closed or destroyed.

I am wondering, Mr. Chair, if it is a case of someone gone missing, for instance my records have been accessed because I was last seen with that person and no one can find me, maybe I have gone away somewhere and that person is found – maybe it is somebody with dementia and have wandered off or whatever. Would it not be reasonable to close that file and destroy those records right away? I am just wondering.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Premier.

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

I thank the member opposite for her question because it is a valuable question. I know from my own experience in policing that police have protocols on retention of documents. It is a very confidential type of process.

I know in the RNC's case they have lockdown, security, in retention of documents, with controlled access to documents and so on; but quite often, especially when it comes to missing persons, documents are kept for a period of time, regardless of what they are. There are protocols on how long those documents will be kept, depending on what the nature of it is, the nature

of the information contained, the nature of the matter itself.

In missing persons' cases, it is not unusual for the police to go back and look at earlier files, earlier investigations, in the case of a repeat missing person, which quite often assist them and help them in locating a person.

If there is a missing person today and through this legislation, information is obtained which helps to locate that person that may be an avenue that may available to the police to review that previous case. In many cases, those types of information that are on file have been helpful in the police being more effective in allocating a missing person, being able to locate that person faster than they could the time before that.

I do not know if that helps. I think it helps.

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

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

I do continue to have concerns about the broadness of that.

The other thing I am not so sure if the minister has addressed, the issue that I raised that if, for instance, my personal records have been searched because of my association with someone who has been missing, I would like and I think it would be reasonable to be formally notified that, in fact, my personal information, my records, my cellphone records, my text messages, my e-mail has been accessed by the police. That a notification would be in order. I would think that any of us in this House would actually want that. I am wondering if there is a consideration of that, what would be the due course.

In fact, if I have not committed a crime, but in the process of trying to help find someone, the police deem that it would be helpful in the search to actually search, for instance, my personally records, I do believe that it would be only proper, taking into account our human rights, to be notified that has taken place.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Premier.

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

Under criminal law, when a search warrant is executed in a criminal case, there is a requirement that the judge who has issued the search warrant be notified of the outcome of the search. So there is a report that goes back to the judge who issued that search warrant and the judge then can direct action or follow-up action that the judge may require the police to take in regard to the results of their search, if I may.

A judge has the authority under this legislation to direct the police to do notifications. So, it depends on the circumstances. When you go to a judge and ask for an authorization to search, the judge can indicate when you have completed your search, depending on what is being searched for, what records are being obtained, the judge can order the person requesting the authorization to do certain things with that information, such as notify the person that you have done the search and what you have found.

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

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

I thank the Premier for that clarification, but I guess what I am asking for is not that can, but that must. In fact, anyone whose personal information has been – because particularly here, this is talking about a non-criminal matter where it is not about a warrant but that the police are asking for the authority to search records because of the missing person where there is not a belief of criminal matter. I would like to ask the government and the minister to consider that automatically, within a reasonable time, that anyone whose personal records have been accessed that they be notified.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I do not want to belabour this point. I think the Premier has provided some great insight into that, and the member continues to ask the question. What I can say, on two points that she has raised, there will be a delineation of more specific detail in the regulations, particularly on

the storage of records, and I take note of your point on notification of third parties. I am not committing that we will include that, but what I am committing is that we will review that point and we will certainly engage you, if you would like, as we move that process forward. Your point is duly noted.

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

**MS ROGERS:** Mr. Chair, I also appreciate when the minister said that the Privacy Commissioner will have access to any emergency demands for information. Many have said and also the Privacy Commissioner in BC has also set out, that the Privacy Commissioner's office, as a matter of course, be notified, rather than having to search out. So that when an emergency demand is undertaken, when the report is sent to the commanding officer that that report can also be sent to the Privacy Commissioner. It is not an extra step, not slowing down any process, not any bureaucratic red tape, not asking for approval, but simply a copy so that the Privacy Commissioner, particularly because it is a new law, can have an eye on what is happening.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 2 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, clause 2 carried.

**CLERK:** Clauses 3 through 21 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall clauses 3 to 21 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

On motion, clauses 3 through 21 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 Respecting Missing Persons.

**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. Chair.

I moved, seconded by the Premier, that the Committee rise and report Bill 36, An Act Respecting Missing Persons.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise and report Bill 36.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay'.

Carried.

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

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

The hon. the Member for 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 36 without amendment.

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

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

When shall the report be received?

**MR. KING:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

**MR. KING:** Now.

On motion report received and adopted. Bill ordered read a third time presently, by leave.

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

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

At this time I move, seconded by the Premier, that Bill 36, An Act Respecting Missing Persons, be now read the third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the said bill be now read a third time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion that the bill be now read a third time?

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** This bill has now been read a third time and it is ordered that the bill do pass and that its title be as on the Order Paper.

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting Missing Persons", read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 36)

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

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

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

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

The hon. the Premier.

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

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

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to rise this afternoon to take a little bit of time in Address in Reply. I am going to utilize my time this afternoon to talk about and debate about, and focus on the CETA, the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement that has been very much in discussion in recent days, recent weeks,

recent months, and even in recent years in many respects, Mr. Speaker.

The Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement is being led by the Government of Canada with officials from the European Union, the twenty-eight member states of the European Union. During that process, I am very pleased to point out and to acknowledge the hard work that we have had done by officials in the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. There have been many of them within the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador who are involved with this piece of work.

The very name of it is accurate, in saying that it is comprehensive because it is certainly that in many, many respects. I would like to acknowledge – I will not name them today but they know who they are. There are a couple of officials who have been intensely on this, a broader range who have been involved with it in a very high way as well in the last, I would say five or six years, I think.

I look to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs because I know he knows the file. It is probably five or six years for sure that they have been heavily involved in this file. I want to acknowledge the work they have done because I know it has been challenging work for them. It has taken them away from their homes at times for extended periods of time. I recognize the pressure, the implications on their personal lives and so on. So, I would like to acknowledge that and thank them, especially at this time of year as we are reaching close to the Christmas season. I hope they were able to take some time with their families as well.

I want to acknowledge those and what they have done, and also acknowledge the work of ministers in our government who have worked very hard in the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement in the last number of years. The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, who is seated here in the House today, has been very much active in his different roles and different portfolios that he has. I can tell you, I have relied heavily on his knowledge and understanding and history of the agreement, and the discussions and the history that has brought us to where we are today.

The Minister of Fisheries, of course, is involved. It is a new department for him, but as a new Minister of Fisheries I know he has dived pretty deep into this. He has demonstrated to me a very strong knowledge of the agreements as well, and the nuances and implications for the fishery. So I want to acknowledge him as well.

Also, the Minister of Business, who has been involved in the file himself. The Minister of Natural Resources has been involved in it. I cannot stop here now. Is there anyone else that I have left out, I wonder? Because there has been a number of current sitting members – the Minister of Finance, as well, has had his hands on this from time to time, and others past as well.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the former Premier who worked very hard on this file during her term as Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador. Also, past ministers who have been in our government, who have also worked on the file as well.

Through the whole process, Mr. Speaker, Canada has engaged in this process where they have had to have bilateral discussions with provinces. Now Canada is negotiating on behalf of the country. The federal government is negotiating on behalf of the people of Canada, but they have also had to come to provinces and have discussions and bilateral agreements with provinces.

Minister Ed Fast, who is the Minister of International Trade for Canada, has been the lead minister on this for a fair bit of time. He has taken steps and was involved with us as a government, and I know in other provinces as well. He has taken steps and made decisions to move the file forward and move the agreement forward. During that process, they had discussions with other provinces. There were steps they took with other provinces for items such as – sorry, but other provinces have MPRs.

This discussion is heavily around MPRs, and MPRs are Minimum Processing Requirements. I know that in British Columbia they have MPRs for logs, as an example. Their MPRs require that round logs are not exported from the Province of British Columbia. They have carved that out from CETA. They have taken

that away from CETA. That minimum processing requirement of logs continues to exist today and through CETA, will continue to exist through CETA.

They did things with – an example I have used is wine. My understanding is in British Columbia, in province owned liquor stores, they only sell wine produced in British Columbia. There is a similar type of arrangement in Quebec, where in grocery stores you can buy wine that is produced in Quebec but you cannot buy wine produced in other provinces – or outside of Quebec, you cannot buy that in grocery stores in Quebec.

That is a form of a minimum processing requirement. It is a minimum standard required by the Province and it does a number of things. It ensures economic value. It ensures protection to the industry. It provides benefits to people of those particular provinces. Those types of things happen. It happens in all provinces. It happened in Ontario. It happened in Quebec. It happened in BC, and others.

Then when it came to Newfoundland and Labrador, there were discussions about commodities and trade within Newfoundland and Labrador, and one of the ones was around the fishery. Canada came to Newfoundland and Labrador and said in order for us to conclude the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement with the EU we require you to relinquish MPRs in the fishery, Minimum Processing Requirements in the fishery. So the first thought was, well, that is going to mean they are going to take unprocessed seafood now and ship it to the EU without it going through our fish processing facilities.

Then the government and the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture went away and they started to do their work. They did it with stakeholders, such as the FFAW and other stakeholders, to say what are the implications? They recognized very quickly that today in the EU processing costs are relatively high. They have high electricity costs. They have high water costs. They have costs comparable in labour costs. So it is difficult today for the EU to compete with Newfoundland and Labrador on processing; therefore, it is safe to conclude that today there would not be a significant impact on processing in Newfoundland and Labrador, but

we cannot see into the future. We cannot see what is going to happen into the future.

If you look back in the fishery, we are all quite aware of the collapse in the fishery that occurred in 1992 when the fishery came to an end in many ways in Newfoundland and Labrador. None of us need to be reminded of the significant impact, in particular to rural Newfoundland and Labrador, that occurred in 1992.

I would say that if you went back to 1985, no one saw what was going to happen in 1992; or if you go back to 1982 and you said what is going to happen to the fishery ten years from now? Nobody would have predicted what was going to happen on that day that we remember. It is one of those moments I remember watching it unfold on TV. Many of us remember where we were and what we were doing at those times when the announcement was made that the ground fishery, the cod fishery was coming to an end. It was a change. It was a game changer for the Province. It had significant impacts ever since then I would say, Mr. Speaker. Ever since that point in time, it has had an impact on us.

We do not know what is going to happen in the fishery in the future. We do not know what is going to happen with a European country's ability to process seafood. We said we needed to take steps to ensure the safety of our processing sector in our fishery in the Province so that they can stay competitive, that we can provide good products, and we can market those products. We need to have that opportunity to do it.

A negotiation took place between the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Government of Canada. Through those discussions there were periods of time that they were intense and they would cool off. We would all go to our respective corners and we would come back and have further discussions.

The discussions became frequent and it was a frequent exchange in late-May, early-June 2013. They were focused primarily between the minister of the day who is now the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and federal Minister Ed Fast. I can reference on May 28 there was correspondence from Fast to Hutchings. They

were going back and forth about what are we going to do here.

There was a fund. Initially, we said we arrived at a \$400 million fund and the federal government should pay for that. Then there was a discussion maybe we will cost share it on 50-50 and we landed at 70-30 so that the federal government would put in 70 per cent, \$280 million, and the provincial government would put in 30 per cent, \$120 million.

It is a good time for me to note as well because throughout the correspondence we know that part of the discussion and public discussion in the House here has been around use of the term "up to". I can clarify that, Mr. Speaker. The federal government said it is a 70-30 fund, so we will put in 70 per cent and the Province puts in 30 per cent. We will put in 70 per cent up to \$280 million.

That means the Province – in order to maximize or to leverage that entire \$280 million – had to put in \$120 million. If the Province decided we cannot put in \$120 million, we are only going to put in \$60 million, then the federal government would only put in the corresponding amount, which in that case would be \$140 million, if my math is right. It would be \$140 million to the fund which would still be a 70-30 ratio.

They said they would put in up to \$280 million. If the Province decided instead of putting in \$120 million, we are going to put in \$200 million as an example, well they are maxed out at \$280 million. They are not going to put in any more than \$280 million. It was a 70-30 based fund that was contingent on us putting in our share and them putting in their share up to \$280 million. So the fund would be up to \$400 million. We had to put in our fair share, which is \$120 million. If we put in less, they put in less. If we put in more, they would not go beyond the \$280 million.

That is the way it was termed and that was the reason for the terminology. That is referenced actually in a document later in October, whereby the minister of the day, Minister Charlene Johnson, had a night-time telephone call and discussion with Minister Fast. Then the next day, there was a document created, a letter to

confirm our discussion last night. That is what it was referring to, which clarifies the “up to”.

I am a little bit ahead of myself on the dates. I want to go back to May 28, 2013. There was letter from Minister Fast to the current Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. There was another one on June 1. The one on June 1 from Minister Fast to Hutchings, and I quote from a portion of that document, “With respect to the proposed transition program of up to \$400 million, we note your willingness to agree to a 70/30,” – because we had agreed to a 70-30 – “federal/provincial cost-sharing formula. In the context of this commitment on cost-sharing, we are prepared to instruct our officials that the transition program address industry development and renewal as well as worker displacement.” Now there is a longer letter than that, but I just wanted to highlight those particular words because it was about industry development and renewal.

So, if there is any question about what the fund was intended to do, because the federal government’s position today is about demonstrating a loss and compensating for a loss. On that particular day, for Minister Fast who was the lead minister, he talks about industry development and renewal which is a very different topic than loss and compensation.

From there, that was June, there were a number of other pieces of correspondence. Mr. Speaker, I point out all of these documents are available online for the general public or for anybody to have a look at. We have tabled them here in the House of Assembly and they are now on the House of Assembly Web site. I understand there is a tab there where it has documents that have been tabled in the House, under the House of Assembly Web site, and anybody can go into the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Web site, go to the House of Assembly, and then you can find tabled documents and you will find all of these documents there.

Then, in October, there was communication started again. On October 18 was the reference from Johnson to Fast, which was the one I just spoke about with respect to the commitment of the \$400 million 70-30, federal-provincial cost-shared program which was confirmed in previous correspondence and in our telephone

conversation on October 15. We welcome joint announcement between our government as soon as possible.

So, she has now raised that we are going to do this joint announcement. There was another one on October 22. There was also correspondence, which we just recently located from a former staffer in the Premier’s Office. There was correspondence between Bill Hawkins and the former Director of Communications in the Premier’s Office. Bill Hawkins, by the way, at the time was the Chief of Staff for Minister Fast. Now, my understanding is Mr. Hawkins today actually works in the Prime Minister’s Office, but at the time he was the Chief of Staff for Minister Fast, so I would take from that very close to the file.

So there was correspondence – e-mails, actually: October 23, October 28, and October 29. October 29 is an important day because October 29 was the day that the announcement was actually carried out. On October 23 there was an e-mail from Mr. Hawkins. In the e-mail he indicates – and just give me a moment, Mr. Speaker, to find the portion I am looking for.

He said: I just want to let you know that I don’t think we are going to be able to have representation – so, they are talking about the announcement on the twenty-ninth. I don’t think we are going to be able to have representation. Now, he does not say we are not going, we are not having anything to do with it, he says: I don’t think we are going to be able to have representation, but that we certainly do look forward to officials fleshing out the policy details – work that has been underway since then – of this cost-shared transition program in the weeks ahead, and of course, we look forward to continuing our strong working relations on trade-related files, including the CETA.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would say that that is a tone of an e-mail that shows a very strong working relationship and willingness between two governments to work together. He indicates in what appears to me to be a regrettable tone that they are not able to attend on the twenty-ninth. There were a couple of e-mails after that. One of them was when we shared with him the draft release for October 29, and the backgrounder

was also shared with Mr. Hawkins prior to the event.

It was attached that morning – I think it was that morning, just a moment now, Sir. No, sorry, it was the same day on the twenty-ninth that it was shared with him and sent to him and so on. It was shared with them. What this paints a picture of, to me, was a working relationship, Mr. Speaker. We worked and we negotiated, and our staff and our officials negotiated in good faith. We did that in good faith.

Subsequent to October 29, the file is taken from Minister Fast and is now given to Minister Rob Moore, who is the Minister for ACOA – Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and also, ironically enough – and very ironic in my viewpoint – the minister who represents Newfoundland and Labrador in the federal Cabinet.

Minister Moore, who now has the file, is going to manage this fund and he is going to work with the Province to finalize the details of the fund. In my knowledge, ACOA is about creating opportunities. It is exactly what it is. Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency is about creating opportunities. It is about creating development. It is about creating new ways of doing business. It is not a place where compensation funds flow from the federal government to local governments, provinces or municipal governments. It is not about that. I stand to be corrected if they have ever done that. My understanding is it is Service Canada who would provide compensation funding.

It is not even in the department or area that would provide compensation funding. It is gone to an agency that creates development opportunities, that takes opportunities for development of employment opportunities and business development opportunities within Atlantic Canada. That is who is given the file.

From that point right through to October 2014, so from October 2013 right through to October 2014 – as a matter of fact, I can go back to May 2013 right through to October 2014. At no time – at no time – are the words demonstrated loss entered into the conversation. There was a seventeen-month period where at no time

demonstrated loss was entered into the conversation.

Including Minister Moore, who, in January of 2014, just a couple of months after this deal was finalized between the federal government and the Province, came to Newfoundland and Labrador, went to the Board of Trade here in St. John's – a room full of people wanted to see the federal minister and the representative in the federal Cabinet and spoke at some length about CETA. At no time during his speech did he say economic loss. You have to demonstrate economic loss.

He spoke at other places about CETA and at no time did he say about economic loss. Now we find ourselves in a position where when I came into this office, in the Premier's Office in September and met with and discussed the file with the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and get an update on it and said we needed to ramp up these discussions, we need to get this back as a priority and get this finalized, and then they started talking about oh by the way, the money is there for you, but you have to demonstrate a loss.

Mr. Speaker, what I have said is that they have changed the rules of the game. They have changed the rules of the game part way through. They are moving the goal post. This current condition, because of the work that I referenced earlier done by the Department of Fisheries in consultation with stakeholders, we know that today we cannot demonstrate a loss, and now the Prime Minister has put a new condition in that we must demonstrate a loss.

Mr. Speaker, that makes this fund unreachable for us. That is why we never agreed to it in the first place. I have to say, and I know the clock is running and I am going to soon finish up my comments, but before I finish up I want to reference that we are going to do everything we can as a government. I am going to do everything I can as Premier to ensure that this fund, these monies, these opportunities flow to rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** That is what it is for, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like to acknowledge the members opposite as well. I have been listening attentively to the comments and discussions they have made, particularly the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the NDP – both Leaders of the Liberal Party and the NDP – who have made supportive comments about our position in the best interest of representing Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I thank both of them as well for supporting us in our efforts to secure these funds for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

This is about people, Mr. Speaker. It is about rural parts of our Province. It is not only about the families and people who rely on processing jobs to earn a living and to raise their families and grow their families in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, but it is also about the communities around them and it is about the greater Province as well.

Again, I thank members opposite for their support. I thank ministers for their hard work on this. I know it has been a tough couple of weeks for many of us. We are committed to it. I know with the support of our caucus as well we are committed to the people of the Province to ensure that we make every best effort that we can to ensure that this fund comes to Newfoundland and Labrador for the long-term benefit of the fishery that has such a significant impact and importance to all the people in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to end my time this afternoon. I move that we adjourn debate on Address in Reply.

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

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

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I understand that the Lieutenant Governor may be here. I am not quite sure the protocol here. Do we adjourn first? Your guidance I seek here at this point.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Yes, the hon. the Government House Leader is correct, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has arrived in the building. We will just take a brief recess to prepare for His Honour's arrival. It will not be any more than two or three minutes. Even if members could stay in the Chamber, it would be good.

### Recess

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

I ask members to please take their seats.

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

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

Has His Honour the Lieutenant Governor arrived?

Admit His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** All rise.

[His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor takes the Chair]

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** It is the wish of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor that all present please be seated.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Your Honour it is my agreeable duty, on behalf of Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, Her Faithful Commons in Newfoundland and Labrador, to present to Your Honour a bill for the appropriation of Supply granted in the present session.

**CLERK:** A bill, "An Act To Amend The Loan And Guarantee Act, 1957". (Bill 31)

**HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR (Frank F. Fagan CM, ONL, MBA):** In Her Majesty's Name, I thank Her

Loyal Subjects, I accept their benevolence, and I assent to this bill.

**MR. SPEAKER:** May it please Your Honour, the General Assembly of the Province has at its present session passed certain bills, to which, in the name and on behalf of the General Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

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

A bill, "An Act To Respecting Chartered Professional Accountants And Public Accountants". (Bill 27)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act". (Bill 29)

A bill, "An Act To Regulate Child Care Services". (Bill 30)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Registered Nurses Act, 2008". (Bill 32)

A bill, "An Act Respecting The Atlantic Provinces Harness Racing Commission". (Bill 33)

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

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

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

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Social Workers Act". (Bill 38)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Pensions Funding Act And The Public Service Pensions Act, 1991". (Bill 39)

A bill, "An Act To Modify Eligibility For Other Post-Employment Benefits". (Bill 40)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Municipalities Act, 1999". (Bill 41)

## **HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT**

**GOVERNOR:** In Her Majesty's name, I assent to all these bills.

Good afternoon everyone. It is a chilly afternoon out but it is not snowing, you will all be happy to hear.

First, let me just take this opportunity on behalf of the people of our Province to thank you. Thank you all for your commitment to this Province, for your dedication and the hard work you do on behalf of the people.

I am sure the people of our Province would join with me in wishing you all a very Merry Christmas, a very Merry Christmas, and our hopes for best wishes for the New Year.

Thank you very much, and have a very festive Christmas season with your family and your friends.

Thank you.

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

[His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor leaves the Chamber. Mr. Speaker returns to the Chair]

**MR. SPEAKER:** Please be seated.

The hon. the Leader of the Third Party.

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

Once again, here we are at the end of the sitting of the – I always have to look and see – the third session of the forty-seventy General Assembly. It is always an honour as a leader of one of the caucuses in the House of Assembly to speak at the end of our sittings and our sessions.

Before bringing greetings and wishing everybody well, which I shall do of course, this has been an interesting sitting that we have been in. When I was thinking about it last night, something struck me, looking at the spring and now at the fall, we have had something quite significant happen.

In the spring, it happened around the decision of the federal government with regard to the shrimp



quota for our Province. We formed an all-party committee and went to Ottawa and met with people in Ottawa, and met with the minister later on, when the minister came here. It was quite significant because, as the government and two Opposition parties, we realized that what happened was very, very significant for the people in the fishery and for the Province itself.

Now, in this sitting, we have had a similar thing happen in terms of decisions of the federal government, again, around the fishery, affecting us. I think once again what we are seeing this week, yesterday in particular, the government and the two Opposition parties agreeing that we have to stand together for what is good for the people of the Province, and especially the people in the fishery.

I think it is probably a thoughtful thing for us to do then, at the end of this sitting, to think about how we do continue that spirit of working together for the good of the people in the Province around the fishery issue.

I very respectfully say to the Premier, maybe we should think about it, as a standing committee or a select all-party committee on the fishery because it is such an important issue. Having it happen twice in one year, that we have a position of the Province up against the federal government – not that we want to be up against the federal government, but if something happens on that level, our ultimate duty is to the people of the Province.

I wanted to share that thought as we stand here today and take a break that will last for a couple of months at least. As we go out, and for a lot of people in the Legislature, not myself, but for a large, large number going out to be with people who are in the fishing industry and in communities in rural Newfoundland and coastal Labrador, people who are affected by what has happened here in the House this week in a very, very special way, just like they were affected all over the summer and still being affected probably by what happened with regard to the shrimp quota, it may be a bit of a sobering thought for us and a serious thought as we take our break as to how we can better serve the people of the Province. I just thought I would share that thought with all of you.

Having done that, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that it has been a good session. I think yesterday was an extremely important day for all of us. I just hope you all relax. I hope everybody takes time with family, friends, and community to enjoy the holiday season in whatever way people do that. All communities and families, et cetera, have their own little traditions. I hope every one of us enjoy with our family and friends the holiday season and come back, whether we come back into this building or just stay in our constituencies working, that we will be refreshed to do that work.

Once again, I want to recognize everybody who supports us here in this room when we come here to do the work. The few hours we spend here is only a small part of the work that we do. I actually forgot to do this in the spring, so I am putting it right up front. I am thanking all those who are behind the scenes working for us: those in Hansard, those in the Legislative Library, those in the Broadcast Centre, those who are visible but still doing supportive work, the Pages, our Table Officers, all the tremendous work that is done, the Commissionaires as well, the Sergeant-at-Arms. Work that makes it easy for us, even to the point of every time you put out your hand there is water in the glass for us. That is pretty special.

I also want to think of my own constituents and I am sure we all think of our constituents. I know being in the city even though we are seated here in the Legislature for the past two weeks actually I think there has almost been something every day happening in my constituency preparing for celebrating the season. It is hard for us to be here and we should not be here not thinking of our constituents. I just want to let them know that I am thinking of them too and wish my own constituents and all of yours all the best in this season, and that it is a season of joy, peace, and a sense of equality for them as well.

I think that is all I have to say, Mr. Speaker, to everybody. Although I also want to thank all my colleagues who sent cards my way to this desk. Thank you very much. I have enjoyed looking at the pictures. Some of you have had pictures of your family. I have enjoyed looking at those pictures.

Once again, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your job – it has been a new position for you, sitting in the Chair, permanently as the Speaker, and I thank you very much for how you have served us over the last four-and-a-half weeks.

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

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

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

When I look back and had some reflection today on bringing closure to this session of the House of Assembly, it hardly seems that a year has passed by and we are about to stand and bring Christmas greetings to my colleagues here in the House of Assembly.

In particular, I want to mention the Premier and the Deputy Premier this year who I know have been through – being through the leadership race with my colleagues last year, I know the difficult summer that you have had, and how trying it has been, especially on your families and all that. I really encourage you to get home, get some rest, recharge those batteries, the work continues.

I want to wish the Premier and certainly the Deputy Premier a very Merry Christmas, and that is extended to all the Cabinet members who have a job to do working on behalf of the people of the Province, and I really appreciate the work that you have done making yourselves available and accessible to us as Opposition members.

Indeed, your supporting cast, being the government MHAs that are back there on a daily basis supporting your Cabinet ministers and your government. So, to the Premier and the Deputy Premier, especially, I want to wish you a very Merry Christmas.

It gets lost sometimes when we do our work here in the House of Assembly, the great work that is done by staff in bringing briefing sessions and so on. As this goes on, as people who watch the Webcast, and as the Leader of the Third Party just mentioned, there is a lot of work that goes on in the background in supporting all of this that you see on the floor of the House of Assembly, which includes the staff of the various departments and the work that you have

done in providing the briefing sessions for us. So we really appreciate that, and I want to extend, too, a very Merry Christmas to those staff.

To you, Mr. Speaker, in your new role this year, I think you have done a great job in keeping this House in order from time to time, and of course with your deputies that you have with you there supporting you as they too get involved in the Committee role and the debate that occurs in the House of Assembly. We really appreciate the work you do with keeping us in order and in place from time to time.

To our Table staff, here we go again. It seems to be relentless – we take it sometimes, I believe, for granted, as we go back and forth in this House of Assembly, here you are, you are sitting there in this crossfire all the time. So I really want to wish you and extend to you and your family a very Merry Christmas. We do appreciate the work that you have done.

I, too, want to mention the Third Party and the work that they do in making sure that the debate continues in the House. What you do and what you bring to this debate is really appreciated. It does not go unnoticed. We are paying attention to all of this that is occurring, and it is an important piece of what happens on a daily basis.

It has been mentioned about Hansard. Of course, we rely on this on a daily basis, as do many members who are actually following us online and the work that we do. I keep telling our members to sometimes keep in mind that we – from time to time we might stand here and what might seem to be just one of those off the cuff remarks, it is recorded forever. So we must be always cognizant of that. We really appreciate the staff and the work they are doing with Hansard.

The Sergeant-at-Arms, I thank you too, Sir, for the work you do, and your commissionaires. You were always friendly outside of this room, but always there to make sure that you are doing your work. I want to extend a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you as well.

This year we have seen some significant changes with our Pages. We have some of our veterans

back. If you can call someone in a second or third year to be a veteran, but certainly you do a remarkable job, and has been mentioned just keeping our desks where they are. It is not just about bringing the water. It is all the other things you do from time to time. We really appreciate the fact that you are doing this. Thank you and we wish you a Merry Christmas as well.

The security outside, I think it is not lost on any of us – and those of us who watched what happened in Ottawa this year, it is really important that we never underestimate the work they have done. They are there twenty-four hours a day. Once again, we need to recognize and certainly reach out and extend a very Merry Christmas to them.

Before I sit down, I want to say a very special Merry Christmas to my colleagues here who obviously help me on a day-to-day basis and our staff who are upstairs in their offices. It is really important to know the support is there. I extend to all of the Official Opposition MHAs a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and to get recharged because there is going to be lots of work to be done.

I also want to say to the Premier too, that when it comes to standing for the people of this Province, Sir, you will never have to second guess where I will come from as Leader of the Official Opposition. When it comes to doing what is right for the people of the Province, I will be there. You can be rest assured of that.

Things that will happen in this Province will certainly outlive any single member here who sits in this House of Assembly. So when it comes to standing shoulder to shoulder for the people of the Province, we will be there to do what is right, regardless of what political stripe.

I will finish up by acknowledging my own family, and the District of Humber Valley. I am really looking forward to getting back home for a few days and recharging my own batteries, as I said, and creating some new Christmas memories with family and friends. I am looking forward to this as well.

Thank you for this time, and to one and all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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

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

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

I thank both the Leader of the Third Party, the NDP, and also the Leader of the Opposition, the Liberal Party, for their very kind comments this afternoon. I thank you for your comments regarding defending the people of the Province. Not too long ago, about a half hour or so ago in the House, I did acknowledge their recent support and public comments as well. I do appreciate that. We do stand in the House together.

As Members of the House of Assembly, we are elected to represent the people. I know we all come here with that in first and top of mind, because that is what we are here to do. We bring our own backgrounds. We bring our own points of view. We bring our own knowledge and experience to the House of Assembly, and then we represent what we believe to be right. Sometimes we do that with vigor and passion. We have the debates. That is the nature of what we do here in the House, but we all do that in the best interest of the Province. I acknowledge all members of the House, on both sides of the House, for the good work and hard work you do in representing the people who have brought us here to this House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite as well have acknowledged the staff here in the House of Assembly who are required here so that we can do our jobs and our work here in the House; the Pages who work tirelessly for us on a regular basis; the Table Officers, and the Leader of the Opposition mentioned that they sit between the fire sometimes.

What really always surprises me – sometimes it might be a matter of humour that has come up, because we have that happen between members of the House. When you are on your feet talking sometimes we have a little bit of healthy bantering that goes back and forth behind the scenes, we hear comments go back and forth. The Table Officers are here between us and the expression never changes. I would never want to play poker with them, because you can never read their faces. They stay neutral at all times. I

think I got a smile there now, Mr. Speaker. When was the last time?

We do know they do good work. They stay here. They conduct the affairs of the House, and for them, as well as the people who work in Hansard, the Broadcast Centre, also in Corporate Members' Services, and also, Mr. Speaker, the people who work directly in your own office, we certainly appreciate all the work they do, their patience, and their support as we carry out the work that we are here elected to do.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to reference the Commissionaires who are in the House here with us on a daily basis, who are in charge and responsible for the visiting public who come to the House of Assembly, screening, sitting and the conduct of the general public when they come to the House, as well as the Sergeant-at-Arms. While I reference them and thank them for the work they do – as well as the security outside, who work not only here in the House of Assembly, but also have a broader role in government.

I think I would also be remiss, or it would be important for us also to acknowledge people in uniform who look after us as a society, at home here in Canada, but also represent us abroad. I want to take a moment to acknowledge all the women and men in uniform who give significant sacrifice and sometimes, far too often, the ultimate sacrifice in defence of the opportunity for us to participate in this process, this democracy in our House, and in Assemblies across the country. I offer them my sincere thanks and appreciation, and also best wishes during the Christmas season.

As well, Mr. Speaker, here in Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as other places, we have people who work throughout the Christmas season; first responders, emergency personnel, people in fire, policing and health care, and also in private industry who find lives and responsibilities that cause them to have to work throughout the holiday season, Christmas Day, and days that are important to them.

We know sometimes they miss those opportunities to spend time with family and friends, but we are cognizant of what they do for us as a people. We appreciate that. We send our

thanks and appreciation to them and also best wishes to them during the Christmas season. Even though many people work on Christmas Day, New Year's Day and New Year's Eve, those days that are important to many of us during the holiday season, we do hope they take the time to spend with family and friends.

I also want to take the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to express my gratitude to all of the people who work in government to make government work throughout the year. In government departments, agencies and boards, and associated agencies at some length from government, I want to thank all of them for the work they do as well for the people of the Province because that is what they do every day.

Sometimes it is unfortunate, it always troubled me that – I always look at it that they do not get the recognition they quite often deserve because we have very hard working and talented people in government. I know members opposite share in this sentiment as well. I know they do, as they have expressed it themselves in the past.

I sometimes come to work early, and we have people who come here very, very early in the morning and we have people who work here very late in the evening. They are here on Saturdays and Sundays. They are here on holidays and they continue to do the work of running government which provides services to the people of the Province. So, I want to thank all public servants throughout Newfoundland and Labrador for the work they do for us throughout the year.

I want to take a moment to thank my own constituents in my own District of Topsail. We know in the world of representing our districts that we try to make an effort to attend as many functions and opportunities to meet with, talk to, and engage with the people of our districts. Sometimes we do not get to do that as often as we would like to do because of other responsibilities we have, and the roles that we find ourselves in, either in our own caucus or in government.

I want to thank my constituents for their continued support, for their patience when I cannot be there. I like to attend as many events as I can, but I cannot always be there.

Sometimes it is well, you missed that event last week. I could not be there, but I thank them for their patience and continued support. Without the support of our constituents, we obviously would not be here to do the work that we do and put in the efforts that we do put in.

As well my family, we all know that it takes special family supports in order for us to do the jobs that we do. For those who represent rural communities especially, and some of them have to travel – they have great challenges in travelling to get to the House of Assembly while the House is open, or to come into St. John's or the Confederation Building when the House is not open. I particularly want to acknowledge how they are absent from their homes, absent from their own families for sometimes long periods. Some of us, like myself, I get to go home most days to my family at the end of the workday, but there are many of you who do not get that opportunity because you are in here doing the work that you do.

I want to acknowledge the support of our families and our close friends. Sometimes it is your friends – and I mean this in the most good way now – will fill in for you and help you out and help out your family, support your own family when you are away. I think it is important to acknowledge them and thank them for the supports that we have.

Also, Mr. Speaker, and finally, the people of the Province, because they are the ones as well who allow us to do our jobs. I want to take an opportunity to wish all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and Members of the House of Assembly here on both sides of the House all the very best in the Christmas season. I hope they do take time to reflect on the past year, to spend valuable time with your family and what is most important to all of us, and that we all look forward to a good 2015 in the coming year. We hope that it is a good year for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and all the best for 2015.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I thank the Leader of the Third Party, the Leader of the Official Opposition, and the Premier for your comments.

I will not take the time to recognize all the same people you just recognized, but I would like to join with you in saying Merry Christmas to everybody and thanking all the people that make the House of Assembly work.

I could not help but think when the Premier referenced the Table staff that sometimes get caught in the middle of what goes on between both sides, and I thought I would use my couple of minutes, actually, to make special mention of somebody that I have grown to respect and admire in my three years as Deputy Speaker, and now my term here.

I have come to respect and admire all the people I work with, but Elizabeth has been here since 1980 sitting at the Table. In my term as Deputy Speaker I have come to respect her advice, to seek her advice, and I want to thank her for the great knowledge that she brings, and the corporate memory that she brings to this place, and for her many years of dedicated service, and to certainly wish her a very special Merry Christmas.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I thank all members for your co-operation.

It is time to get up, the Member for St. Barbe.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** His alarm just went off.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I thank all members for your co-operation in my first term as Speaker here in my first session. I have enjoyed presiding over you and over the proceedings, and I thank you sincerely for your co-operation. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs, that the House do now adjourn and stand adjourned to the call of the Chair.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that this House do now adjourn to the call of the Chair.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

This House now stands adjourned to the call of the Chair.

On motion, the House adjourned to the call of the Chair.