



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FORTY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume XLVII

FOURTH SESSION

Number 16A

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Wade Verge, MHA

Tuesday

May 19, 2015
(Night Sitting)

The House resumed sitting at 7:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Littlejohn): Order, please!

It being 7:00 o'clock, I will ask the hon. Member for St. Barbe to continue the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Mr. Speaker, when we broke for supper hour, I was discussing the salaries that the government is budgeting for the CETA deal. We know that the CETA deal is a deal that did not get done. It did not get done because of the incompetence of the government in being able to negotiate a deal that somebody would sign.

They threw a big party – and, to make matters worse, it sort of looks like they alerted other provinces who might not have had such a good deal on the table because we were and are losing our Minimum Processing Requirements. There is definitely a loss to the Province. On the one hand, the government is trying to hoodwink the people by saying there is no loss to the Province, and on the other hand they are telling the feds there is a big loss.

You cannot sing one story in Ottawa and have one story down here. The problem is it looks like a windfall when, in fact, it is not a windfall whatsoever. All the government needs to do in addition to actually inking a deal, is they need to be able to show where we are losing \$280 million –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. J. BENNETT: The minimum pricing requirements must be worth at least \$28 million a year for ten years. That would be \$280 million just without any interest factor whatsoever. Mr. Speaker, I will come back to this issue when I get another chance to speak.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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.

First of all, I just simply want to say thank you to the great people of the District of Baie Verte – Springdale. It is a pleasure to stand in this House of Assembly to represent the people of the District of Baie Verte – Springdale, and it is a pleasure to speak to the amendment to Budget 2015.

Before I do, I just want to say, May and June, as we all know, around this great Province of ours are the graduation months. My wife and I had the pleasure to already attend high school graduations for Valmont Academy of King's Point, Indian River High of Springdale. In total, I have the pleasure and the honour to attend seven graduations in total, but any particular year I get to attend about five because some have some clashes, Mr. Speaker, as you would appreciate.

I just want to acknowledge all of the outstanding work of the educational community, be it the parents, teachers, students, school council, and the entire school communities. I am so amazed at the commitment and the support that parents and communities and teachers give on a daily basis to strive for excellence and provide support for our students. I just wanted to applaud and commend all stakeholders out there for their tremendous effort and stellar effort on a daily basis and also acknowledge the Budget 2015 – as you know, we have about \$3 billion in health care, we will have a \$1.4 billion in education, and we have about \$660.8 million for infrastructure to create jobs and stimulate the economy.

Getting back to education, \$1.4 billion – as a former educator, I know how important that is. That investment will strive to meet the needs of whether it is early childhood development, K-12, or post-secondary education. Any government, it does not matter who you are, it could be NDP, it could be Liberal, PC, or whoever, we know that an educated society or

educated population is an innovative society and innovative economy, or it promotes an economically vibrant, sustainable economy when you have educated people.

Getting back to education again, we know how important that is as a government. In my district alone over the years, we have had repairs and renovations made to Indian River High School, Indian River Academy. We have had Cape John Collegiate, Hillside Academy in La Scie, so we are certainly appreciative – I am speaking for all the parents and the constituents out there. We are so appreciative of the work done on roofing, windows, electrical work, shingles, or siding, you name it. We certainly do acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of this government for the investment in education of our children.

One common thread I have heard the last week or so pertaining to Budget 2015, Mr. Speaker, is economic diversification. There is a lot of debate on this topic, a lot of concern, a lot of issues, and we all know that economic diversification is very, very important to the long-term sustainability of any economy. It could be a nation, it could be a city, it could be town, or it could be a government as well.

We all know, Mr. Speaker, that Newfoundland and Labrador is heavily reliant on revenues that are generated by oil and the mining industry, which potentially could impede the economic growth of the Province because, as mentioned earlier, the volatility of oil prices and the volatility of commodity prices. We are cognizant of that, Mr. Speaker. As a government, we are cognizant of that and we would like to work in partnership, in collaboration with the business community, with private enterprises out there, that we could try to build and grow our economy as vibrant and as sustainable as possible.

I submit to you, we have used revenues from the non-renewable resources over the past ten years, such as the oil and gas and the minerals, to grow, expand, or build our industry so that our economy could be sustainable. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, critical progress has been made in maintaining services and programs; hence, the quality of life has been maintained for our residents because we all know that is the end result. We all try to improve the quality of life

for the residents we serve right across this great Province of ours. If we can work together, collaboratively, with business and private enterprise, and as a government, we can certainly do that, Mr. Speaker.

Since we are talking about economic diversification; well, what is the importance of economic diversification? Why would you ask the question in the first place? Why diversify? Why should we diversify?

I said earlier when I spoke in this House last week some time pertaining to the Budget, it is important to diversify because if a town is dependent upon one industry, and should something happen to that industry, the survivability and sustainability of that particular town could be threatened. It is the same thing with a community, the same thing with a government, the same thing with a province, the same thing with a nation.

I would liken it to a food web. A food web, in ecological terms, offers more stability because should one species be wiped out due to over-predation, disease, or whatever, there is another feeding level. So the energy would be passed on and that species in that particular ecosystem would survive; therefore, the ecosystem would be maintained and more stable. The same thing, we could liken that to an economy of a nation or a community or any particular government.

Mr. Speaker, how should we diversify the economy? There is lots of debate about that issue. We could say let's increase or grow our streams of revenue. We could expand the growth of industry or existing businesses that already exist in this great Province of ours, or we could foster good climate for businesses so that new businesses could be (inaudible) or existing businesses could be expanded.

We do that by reducing red tape. I believe we have done that by 20 per cent or 25 per cent in reduction of red tape over the years, Mr. Speaker. We could do this by adjusting rules and regulations to make businesses friendlier, to come in here and do business with the province. We have done that in the mining industry, I do believe. We are really up there in the mining industry in removing barriers, rules and

regulations to entice new mining companies to come in the Province.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, we could set fiscal policy or monetary policy to make our economy vibrant and sustainable. We have all kinds of possibilities. Research does show that critical to successful economic diversification would be like sound macroeconomic policies.

I do not pretend to be an economist, Mr. Speaker, but macroeconomics just examines the phenomena that happen over a wide range, over an economy. Such as changes in the GDP, unemployment growth rate, inflation, or whatever, as opposed to microeconomics which usually studies the patterns of individual firms or households, how they interact with firms or how they spend their money.

We could have sound macroeconomic policy, which we usually do have. We could have sound investments in infrastructure. Research has shown that, and we have done that. We have invested in infrastructure in the past ten years.

In 2003 and 2008, we experienced some turbulence in the road and we have invested heavily in public infrastructure. Again, \$660.8 million in this year's Budget so we could create jobs and stimulate the economy. The experts say that in a downturn in the economy, it is always smart, it is always wise to invest in public infrastructure.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, critical to economic diversification as well, is sound investment in strong institutions. Of course, we all know, we are certainly proud of our colleges, Memorial, Grenfell, and here in St. John's as well, first-class institutions, Mr. Speaker.

I am not saying we have reached the pinnacle and economic diversification is the panacea to all of our economic woes and problems, or challenges. No, it is a part of the solution, Mr. Speaker. Can we do more? Sure we can. We can always do more. We can always strive for excellence. We can always strive to do more for the economy of this great Province of ours, and we are doing just that. I commend the government for doing just that, Mr. Speaker.

We are to a point where we can stand on our own two feet now, Mr. Speaker, and we are proud of that as a Province. We have great pride in ourselves. Students can stay here or they can go away. Wherever they go, they are very proud to say I am from Newfoundland and Labrador. There is pride instilled in our youth. I am certainly pleased to see that, as opposed to years gone by when – I do not know, we were kind of reticent in saying yes, I am from Newfoundland and Labrador. I do not know what we had – dare I say it was an inferiority complex? I do not know, but we were sort of backward in – we always thought that somebody else could do better. I am honest with you, Mr. Speaker; that is how some of us felt. We thought somebody else would always do better.

There are companies and there are people in this great Province of ours that are world leaders, Mr. Speaker, as you know and as everybody in this House knows. There are all kinds of examples that can attest to that very fact and add the validity to what I am saying tonight.

Let me drill down at a local level and give you some examples from my District of Baie Verte – Springdale what I call economic diversification of ingenuity, creativity, or innovativeness among a person. For example, I can use – hopefully he does not mind me using his name – Mr. Dennis Young of Springdale. He is the Chairperson or he is the CEO and President of D & T Mechanical or Springdale Forest Resource.

Do you know how he started out, Mr. Speaker? He and his father worked in the woods. His father probably had a chainsaw, first of all, and he went and worked side by side with his father many year ago – hard worker. Then his father bought a harvester, one machine. Then they started out and grew the economy. Then his father passed on that little small business to Dennis Young. He was hired by Corner Brook Pulp and Paper over the years gone by. He grew the company to a point where, most likely, if I am not mistaken, he had up to 200 or 300 employees right around the region.

I say that to say this: I use him as an example because he is aggressive, he is innovative, his is a visionary, and he is a divergent thinker, as opposed to a convergent thinker. A convergent thinker is a person – it could be a government, I

suppose – that thinks there is just one solution to any problem, that is it – tunnel vision, no more, that is it. From an individual point of view, Dennis Young is a divergent thinker. He looks at a solution, and there are more options. He will not accept no for an answer, or there is always some way to do or solve a problem. You are thinking outside the box, and I like to think that is the way our government operates as well. We are divergent thinkers. We think outside the box. There is more than one way to do things, or more than one way to diversify the economy.

Another individual example is Roger Burt at King's Point, the owner of By The Sea Inn & Café. Guess what the mainstay of the local economy was in the Town of King's Point a few years back? It was boatbuilding, and rightfully so. It still is. We had two companies in the Town of King's Point – a small, quaint, little community, beautiful community and beautiful people. Do you know what? They have diversified the economy because that individual started a small business, By The Sea Inn & Café, now guess how many people he would employ now in peak season when you talk about tourism? Between eighteen and twenty people now, Mr. Speaker. He started off with one or two people.

That is an example of innovativeness, aggressiveness, ingenuity, creativity, and visionary approach, a divergent thinker, think outside the box, take risks, go out and grow his business to a point where now he is supplying more jobs to the economy.

What role did we play? We played a small part in that. We helped him out a small bit. The point I am trying to make is: It would be great if you could get all the people of this great Province of ours say to government, get out of our way, it do not matter who you are, because we are coming, we are aggressive, we are innovative thinkers. They really cannot do it on their own but we can foster a positive, good climate by reducing barriers, by taking away the red tape so that we can expedite their visionary business plans and therefore grow the economy, Mr. Speaker.

That is two real good examples, many more in my district – I could stay here all night and give you example after example after example, Mr.

Speaker. The Town of King's Point themselves, as a community, they have created, due to entrepreneurial spirit, due to the creativeness and innovativeness of the people of that community, volunteers and what have you, they have created a cluster of tourism products.

By the way, in 2015, we have included \$2 million this year in marketing for tourism, which is a \$1 billion industry. By 2020, we are going to grow that sector to \$1.6 billion. That is huge because when I grew up in Roddickton about 1975-1980, Mr. Speaker, tourism – what is tourism? We did not appreciate that tourism, Mr. Speaker, but today tourism is a vibrant, robust sector and robust industry. I tell you we have to give hats off to the department, to the minister involved and all the right people there, the stakeholders. We are doing tremendous work in that industry and communities around the Province.

Getting back to the community of King's Point and building a cluster of tourism products, for example, By The Sea Inn & Café; the craft shop, King's Point Pottery, second to none, unparalleled, won all kinds of awards; a whale pavilion; Alexander Murray Hiking Trail, built to national standards –

MR. MITCHELMORE: A heritage house.

MR. POLLARD: – and a heritage house. Thank you.

So that is a good cluster of by-products that the Town of King's Point that I can proudly say – I can stand up in this Chamber tonight, in this House of Assembly, and say kudos and give them a big shout out. It is a small community but very, very vibrant and aggressive to develop their tourism industry. So that is a good example, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. POLLARD: Now, getting back from an individual point of view and going to sort of a company point of view, let's look at Anaconda gold mines, which is a copper gold mine on the Baie Verte Peninsula, and Ramble mines. Due to our government investing, helping them to grow and expand, Anaconda grew from scratch. Present CEO Allan Cramm won the award. Him

and his staff grew that gold mine right from scratch, from nothing, zero, up to producing today. Rambler was the same thing. As a government, we are invested in that mining company as well.

Between the two of them, Mr. Speaker, do you know how many jobs they have created over the last three or four or five years, since they have been in operation? Up to 200, Mr. Speaker; that is awesome. That is 200 jobs on the Baie Verte Peninsula.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. POLLARD: Mr. Speaker, thank you. That is awesome. Thank you so much for that encouragement. That is awesome and good to know.

Again, that goes back to the aggressiveness and the innovativeness and partnering with us as a government. We are not going to take all the credit. We cannot take all of it. It would be pretty arrogant for me to get up here and take all the credit. That would be disingenuous. We do not want to do that. We can take some, an incy-wincy bit. We have helped them along, but their creativity and their hard work and the dedication of the mining companies, their staff, and their workers have made that mining industry a success and kept employment around that region, Mr. Speaker. That is awesome. I am proud to say that. It has the potential to prolong the lifespan, or double the lifespan, of both these mine: Anaconda and Rambler.

I cannot say enough from a provincial – now, I want to start off individual. Do you see my pattern, Mr. Speaker? As a former educator, this is a little bit of organization. The teacher aspect is coming out in me now. We started off individual, and then we go to a community. Now I want to go from a region – and I do not have enough time left, but I want to go to a provincial level to see what kind of investments and see how we did as a government to diversify the economy.

I am going to be honest with you, Mr. Speaker, I heard over on the other side, and even through the media, always diversify the economy. Sometimes it is rhetoric. We have heard that phrase over and over and over: create jobs,

stimulate the economy, diversify the economy. Over the last hundred years we have heard – any government would say that, what is it all about? We have all diversified the economy to a certain degree, Mr. Speaker, no matter who gets in, and we have done quite well.

We can point out many, many examples, in aquaculture, agrifoods, tourism, ocean technology, research and development, and our information technology. We have grown leaps and bounds. We have laid a solid foundation, rather than two or three strings we have relied on. Traditional sectors over the last few years like mining, forestry, and fishing, which are so important, and still are. They have carved our culture and our heritage, Mr. Speaker.

I am not minimizing their importance. They are still very important, but, Mr. Speaker, we have additional revenues now, nine or ten more additional revenues. If one sector falls apart, or challenging and cripples the economy a bit, we can still diversify the economy. We can still grow and sustain our programs and services.

MR. SPEAKER: I have to remind the hon. member his time has expired.

MR. POLLARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me say what a pleasure it is to rise and speak once again on the Budget. Mr. Speaker, I have to say I am looking forward to having twenty more minutes to speak on the Budget. I certainly intend on taking every minute and speaking again when time permits.

I am a little disappointed, I have to be honest with you, because I was planning on spending three full hours with the Minister of Service NL in Estimates, and I am glad we will have an opportunity to do it. I certainly intend on taking every last minute of that three hours to ask questions to the Minister of Service NL.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LANE: I know he is a little disappointed. I can see he is a little disappointed, but we will get to that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are speaking to an amendment to the Budget this evening. Of course, this particular amendment is the non-confidence amendment. Basically, for anyone who is watching, what that means is, certainly as an Opposition, we do not have any confidence in this Budget and we do not have any confidence in the people who are presenting the Budget. We do not have any confidence when we look at, for example – and it covers all departments.

We look at the fisheries. We look at the lip service that has been paid to the fisheries and we are saying we have no confidence in this government when it comes to dealing with the fisheries.

We look at the Department of Education. We are building schools too small. We are building schools, and before they are even built we are already talking about putting on portable classrooms. We are saying we have no confidence in this government through this Budget to deliver on education.

We are also looking at other departments as well, Mr. Speaker, and we are saying the same thing. We are looking at, for example, Transportation and Works. We have seen where there are people on some roads who are actually, literally, canoeing in the potholes. They are in a canoe in the pothole; two men with a fishing rod in a pothole. We are saying we have no confidence in this government to deliver on Transportation and Works in this Budget.

We look at the ferry situation. It is the same thing, we have no confidence. Just so we are clear, and everyone is clear, we are basically saying we have no confidence, and that is what we are debating here tonight.

Mr. Speaker, what I wanted to speak about, and this is my third attempt because I actually had a couple of notes scratched down here when we talked about the Address in Reply. I stood up and started speaking, and there were so many issues I never got to it. Of course, then in the sub amendment to this Budget, I got up with the intention of speaking on this, of course there

were so many issues that I ended up not getting to speak again.

So I am going to try now for the third time to speak about what I view as being the root cause, certainly one of the root causes and perhaps a major cause, as to why we are in the situation we are in as it relates to the Budget, as it relates to decisions that have been made, decisions that are being made. Of course, when we talk about all of the things that have gone wrong, when we talk about schools, for example, that are scheduled for demolition but we are still paying the heat and light; we talk about the Department of Transportation where all of these vehicles are unaccounted for, and we are buying diesel gas for gasoline engine cars. We see all of these issues.

What is the root cause? Mr. Speaker, what I believe the root cause to be, or certainly much of it, relates to the revolving door of ministers. We have a revolving door of ministers. As I said the last time I spoke, because I started to touch on this, a lot of people have said to me that they feel government has been on autopilot for quite some time. They are on autopilot, because besides the whole leadership issues that we have seen with the government – we had two leadership races, we had one fellow who was thrown out, one fellow quit, and then we had another contested race and so on. We had three Premiers, or three-and-a-half Premiers now in the last couple of years.

In addition to that, we have seen a revolving door of ministers in the various departments. The question becomes one, if you are going to have ministers in place to manage departments, how are they supposed to do it when by the time they get in there and learn the ropes, or not learn the ropes, they are yanked out and put into a different department, or the department changes, or the name of the department changes, and the makeup of the department changes?

We even seen during the last shake up where – I used this example before, and I will again – the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services is responsible for Workers' Comp. Now, I am not suggesting he is not capable of dealing with Workers' Comp, but when you look at the priorities with such an important department – and, of course, we heard from the Minister of

Child, Youth and Family Services before supper and he spoke about all the important issues in his department.

When we look at that department, Mr. Speaker, now we are going to add in Workers' Compensation. So you have to ask yourself, if you are an injured worker, how do you feel your issues are going to be dealt with? Are you going to have that steady hand on the tiller? Where will the minister's priorities be?

Like I said, we have the Minister of Justice, Tourism, Business and Rural Development, House Leader and everything else. As I said before, I am amazed how the man does it all, and I mean that in a complimentary way, I really do. He is a very competent individual, but I do not know how he juggles all the balls, I have to say.

We see all of these mix-ups in the departments and so on. Now, when we look at some of the departments, just to look at the history of it, Service Newfoundland and Labrador. Service Newfoundland and Labrador is the department that on the Opposition side I am responsible for following, shadowing, critiquing, whatever you want to call it. Again, the commentary I am making here now has nothing to do with the individuals. It is not personal, it is not about the individuals. It is just about the turnover. I want to make that clear.

Service NL; since 2003, when this current government came into place, there have been nine Ministers of Service NL. Six since 2011. Think about that, six since 2011. That means we only get six in four years, which means we are getting an average of what? Nine months, eight or nine months or whatever it is for a minister.

As I said, under the current setup, Service NL, before the last change, was responsible for Workers' Comp. Now the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services is responsible for Workers' Comp. The Minister of Finance is responsible for the Office of the Chief Information Officer, which was part of Service NL. The Minister of Education is responsible for the Government Purchasing Agency. We have talked about all of the issues the Auditor General has pointed out, issues with purchasing.

I know the Premier, in his mandate letter, wants to have new procurement legislation. That was in the mandate letter. Of course, that died on the Order Paper three or four years ago, whenever it was. It was the Premier –

AN HON. MEMBER: The Premier seconded it.

MR. LANE: The Premier, when he was minister, actually seconded it. Now since he is the Premier, he put it in the mandate letter but we have seen nothing on procurement legislation. Like I said, the Government Purchasing Agency is now with the Minister of Education.

When you look at the fact that the Minister of Education has all of these issues to deal with in terms of trying to fit students into schools that are being built too small and all of that stuff, when we look at those issues and trying to come up with the savings from amalgamating all the school boards that was supposed to save money is actually costing us more money. So while the minister is trying to deal with all of those issues, that minister is also responsible for the Government Purchasing Agency. Is it any wonder that we have all of these issues identified by the Auditor General when it comes to procurement?

Now, Mr. Speaker, we look at another department: Advanced Education and Skills. Advanced Education and Skills is a new department; it was formerly HRLE, Human Resources Labour and Employment. Since 2003, that former department, HRLE, now AES, we have had eight ministers; four ministers since 2011. So that is a minister per year or a minister in less than a year for Advanced Education and Skills.

Now, that is the department that is responsible for all the skilled trades, trying to deal with apprentice issues, match up the labour demands with the training and so on. It also deals with people on Income Support and so on. All of those serious issues and we cannot even manage to keep a minister there for a full year.

Here is another one, Mr. Speaker. Since 2009, in Child, Youth and Family Services – and we all know the seriousness of Child, Youth and

Family Services. We have seen all the reports of all the tragedies that have happened to young people. We have had five ministers since 2009. So that is a minister a year.

AN HON. MEMBER: Which department?

MR. LANE: Child, Youth and Family Services, five ministers since 2009. That is one per year.

The minister certainly had a lot of say about his department when he spoke there a little earlier and people can certainly go back and view that I am sure.

We look at the Department of Education, six changeovers since 2003 in Education; three since 2011. So we did a little better. On average, we got the minister there for about a year and three months. So we got about fifteen months, roughly, in the Department of Education.

When we look at the fact that our students are failing in terms of math, in particular, it is a big issue. We look at all the issues – I know I had in my district kids who are doing gym class in the cafeteria and no resource centre and no library. We look at all the schools being built too small that my colleague here that my colleague, the Member for St. John's North, has outlined. Is it any wonder we are having all those issues in the Department of Education when we can only manage to keep a minister there for about fifteen months on average?

Now, moving on, Environment and Conservation – and of course when we talk about the Department and Conservation that is where we get into issues like the expropriated Abitibi, we get into issues around Come by Chance which we expropriated – we did not expropriate; we took on the environmental liabilities, this government did, took on the environmental liabilities for Come by Chance and said we will take it on and then we will do an environmental assessment next year to see what we took on. We do not know if it is going to be one million, ten million, one hundred million, but we will take it on. We are going to roll the dice.

In that particular department, nine ministers since 2003 and six since 2011; that means six to

seven months per minister. That is all we have. That is how steady she is at the helm in that particular department. Again, this is not a personal thing on the individuals, it is just their circumstance.

Now this is good one: Finance, which we are here to talk about really – it was the Minister of Finance who brought in the Budget. Controlling the finances for our Province and everything we do and that is all the revenues coming in, the expenses going out and we see where the Budget is to – we have gone in the whole over a billion dollars last year and we are going to borrow another \$2 billion this year. The Minister of Finance, since 2003, we have had eight. It gets better, though. Since 2013, four Ministers of Finance – four.

MR. JOYCE: One cannot do math.

MR. LANE: My colleague says the present one cannot do math; that is not his strong suit – but four since 2013.

Fisheries and Aquaculture – although the minister now is responsible for agriculture as well as fisheries, and forestry – since 2003 we have had eight ministers; since 2011, four ministers. So again he is there for about a year or less than a year and then they are gone again.

IBRD, this is a good one, which is Innovation, Business and Rural Development, that particular department, since 2003 we have had ten ministers – ten; since 2011, we have had six. Get this, it is getting better; since 2014 – a year ago – three ministers since 2014. We are into our third minister. This, of course, is the department responsible for attracting investment into the Province, dealing with business, trying to grow businesses, creating climates to grow businesses and economic development, all of that kind of stuff – three ministers in 2014. Is it any wonder, Mr. Speaker, that we are getting the results or the non-results we are getting?

Health and Community Services – think about this one now: The Department of Health, the number one priority of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador is health; it really is. We know that. Again, nothing about the individuals, certainly nothing about the current member, he is a colleague of mine in Mount

Pearl and I have nothing bad to say about him. I am not going to. It is not about that. Again, since 2003, fourteen ministers.

AN HON. MEMBER: What?

MR. LANE: Fourteen Ministers of Health since 2003; five since 2011; four in 2014 alone. Unbelievable!

Justice, since 2003 – now we all know about our justice system, justice and public safety, or public safety and justice, I know it was justice and then it was public safety. We know we had the issues with the Crown attorneys. There were issues there. There were issues with the Sheriff's Office, the family court, and all of these things. Ten ministers since 2003; five Ministers of Justice since 2011 – and let me add this – four of which were elected.

AN HON. MEMBER: Say that again.

MR. LANE: Five Ministers of Justice since 2011, so that is less than about eight months per minister.

AN HON. MEMBER: How many were elected?

MR. LANE: Four of the five were elected; one was not elected.

Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs affects all of our municipalities. There is a good minister there now, a good minister, a good man, I am not knocking it. Since 2003, ten ministers; since 2011, five; 2014 alone, three ministers.

AN HON. MEMBER: Where do you get the contract to print business card?

MR. LANE: Well, that is a good question. My colleague asked who gets the contract to print all the business cards, because it is constantly changing.

Natural Resources, which was formerly Mines and Energy – this is a better one – seven since 2003; three since 2011.

MR. RUSSELL: (Inaudible).

MR. LANE: I would say to the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs who is over there chirping at me, I have lots to say about my – the people in my district do not have to worry where I stand when it comes to my district. They do not have to worry about me when it comes to mine.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LANE: Now, I appreciate his concern, I really appreciate his concern about my district, but the people of Mount Pearl do not have to worry where I stand when it comes to me and my district – and he should worry about his own.

Tourism, Culture and Recreation: nine ministers since 200; five since 2011; and once again, three in 2014 alone. Transportation and Works: ten since 2003; and four since 2011. In Lab and Aboriginal Affairs, who we just talked to, there was about ten since 2003; four since 2011.

AN HON. MEMBER: What is their budget (inaudible).

MR. LANE: I am not sure what his budget is, but it is not a lot. I do not hold it against him because, as I said, none of these comments I am making here – they are all factual, and people can check it out if they like. The numbers are what the numbers are; the numbers do not lie. Again, it is not a personal slight, because I do not believe in personal attacks. I do not believe in that. It is about talking about the facts and debating the issues. That is an issue.

Now, people can judge for themselves whether they believe that is a legitimate issue, a legitimate concern or not. When we look at all the departments, we look at all the things that the ministers are responsible for in those departments, we look at the magnitude of the decisions made, and then when you look at some of the issues we have – we have so many of them, and we have a Budget which a lot of people would view as being a total disaster, and touching all departments, you have to ask yourself: Where is the steady hand at the helm in all of these departments to make sure things are going right?

When you hear about things that are not going right, is it any wonder when as soon as

somebody gets in there they are only there for a few months, and then they are yanked out and we start all over again, start from scratch – how can any initiative be started and completed? There is no continuity, and I believe it is quite a legitimate issue.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I am down to the last thirty seconds, so I will end like I started, this amendment that we are debating here is a non-confidence motion. We do not have any confidence in this Budget, we do not have any confidence in this government to deliver on the Budget, and we believe that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador do not have any confidence either.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As my colleagues alluded to earlier when you can get up and represent the people of your district, it is always privilege, and certainly a pleasure to represent the District of Exploits.

Mr. Speaker, I think we are talking about the Budget. Over here we are talking about the Budget anyway and the way we are going forward in the Province. I never listened to so much gibberish in my life as I just listened to. I do not know what the people of the Province got out of how many ministers was in one department or how many ministers was in another department, but I think it is all in the planning.

I want to get into some results. I also want to get into some innovations, the things that we are doing as a government. Because what I have heard so far is this minister and that minister has been in nine months and six months and a year, and then I hear somebody else getting up and they are talking about measure twice and cut once, so I guess I know what they are planning on doing when they get in. I guess they plan on

cutting; that is the only thing that we have heard from them lately.

Mr. Speaker, the people out there in the Province are listening to this and they are wondering: Is this what the Opposition has planned? Is that what they are going to do is cut? In the beginning they had a plan. The media have been after the Official Opposition: Well, what is it? What are you going to do? Well, we do not want to release it yet. We have a plan. We do not want to release it yet. We do not want to release it.

Mr. Speaker, what they decided to do now is have a plan to get a plan, where they can measure twice and cut once – and look out if they get that opportunity, because there is going to be a lot of slashing. When they get up there on the other side, there is a lot of negativity. I am sure we are all in this House to do what we can for the people of the Province. I am sure we all have the same intentions, good intentions.

I listened to my colleagues today on this side, the Member for Terra Nova, the Member for Lake Melville, and the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale who all spoke very eloquently and very passionately about their districts and about what we are doing as a Province and as a government. We are doing what needs to be done. We are taking a balanced approach.

I will say another thing, Mr. Speaker. Under the leadership of this Premier, we are taking a different approach. We are making choices. Another thing about our Premier we have right now is that he is willing to get out there as well and listen to the people. That is why when he listened to the Third Party and they brought in an all-party committee on mental health he said yes, we should do this.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: That is the kind of stuff that when somebody said we need to put more emphasis on seniors – I tell you, I think we all have a lot of respect for seniors and a soft spot for seniors, and we do what we can and we will always do what we can.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: We can speak to it on a personal basis, and that is why our Premier brought in the department for seniors. We are certainly not cutting anything there. As a matter of fact, we are carrying on with the investments that we have made into our seniors.

Before I get into some of the – I know we do not get much time. I think somebody said today first when you came into the House of Assembly, you thought twenty minutes was a full week and now when you are here for a while twenty minutes is more like two minutes. That is just the way it is, unfortunately. When you get up and you are talking about your Province and you are talking about your district and how passionate you are about it and wanting to do the right things – and I have seen a lot of right things done in this Province since I was elected for the past ten years. I have seen a lot more good things than I have seen bad, I can tell you that right now.

I can remember getting into the District of Exploits and I walked into the Dr. Hugh Twomey Health Centre and the roof was just about caving in (inaudible). They closed down one of my schools. There was a bunch of mould in it and the windows were leaking that the school had to be tore down – the same year I was elected. I do not know who caused it, but they have the ideas now. I do not know what you did with the money. Well, that is what we did with the money; we put it where it needed to be put.

That is why when you look at some of these comments here lately – it was only a couple of days ago there was a real estate representative and he said March month sales were up 9 per cent. In April, they were up 20 per cent – unprecedented in the past five years, real estate sales.

Now, he said it is balancing out. Of course it is going to balance out because that is the way it is. It has to balance out. Then you listen to some of the people with the Budget and the plan that was there. The Mayor of Corner Brook came on and he said it was a good plan. The Minister of Municipal Affairs was over there last week and spoke to the Chamber. He explained and talked about what we were doing in the Budget, the initiatives and the balanced approach that we

were taking, and very well because he received some very good comments.

The President of the Chamber of Commerce came on and said it was a good plan. I guess the President of the Chamber of Commerce does not know very much about it because the Opposition says this is poor. I guess the President of the Chamber of Commerce does not know much about it. Maybe the Mayor of Corner Brook does not know much about it. Maybe the Mayor of Bishop's Falls does not know anything about it because he said the same thing. So I guess they do not know very much. They say this is a very good plan, but the Opposition are saying it is no good, it is incompetency. We have these people out there saying different.

I am so glad you guys have all the answers. Well, you will after you do your second plan. When you get your second plan done you might have all the answers. Whether they will be the right ones, we do not know.

I would also like to get into – oh, by the way, a representative of the firefighters association also said unprecedented investments in fire and emergency services again this year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: Because we believe in our volunteer firefighters. We believe in how much hard work, and when they are called twenty-four hours a day.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: That is why when we can get them a fire truck, when we can get them bunker suits and we can get them anything else, that is what we are here for, that is what we are going to give them.

I know the people out in the District of Exploits appreciate it. They do not mind pulling the buzzer on that new fire siren when they are going up the street, going to a call that is, hopefully, not too dangerous. They do not mind getting up 4:00 o'clock in the morning and responding to emergency calls. They need that, and they need the right equipment. The firefighter's association of Newfoundland and

Labrador says this was a good Budget. We did not cut them either, Mr. Speaker.

Then you get into education, you get into the university. Everybody says we are turning them away. My goodness, where are they going to go? Where are students going to go? It is terrible because they may have to increase some of the fees for some of the foreign students 30 per cent.

Well, if anybody was listening to the Vice-President of MUN this morning, what did she say? She said even with that we are thousands and thousands of dollars below the rest of Canada in tuition, and half of Dal in Nova Scotia. Less than half of Dalhousie, which is of course a very good institution, but MUN also has a very good record for its education that is there, and the courses and subjects that are studied there. The educators themselves are very good. I was looking across the way because I think there was one over there who was at MUN, or taught at MUN.

Mr. Speaker, where is the increase that is going to drive these people and students away? Where are they going to go? Going to Alberta? Are they going to British Columbia? They are going to pay twice the cost. So where are they going to go? They are going to pay twice the cost.

MR. MURPHY: That is fear-mongering, I think.

MR. FORSEY: Sure it is.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there have been a few things on the go this past year. I listened to the members across the way, and I think they mentioned the Minister of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, forestry and agriculture and agrifoods. It is a big title, it is a lot of departments, and I am fortunate enough to be working with him. He is doing a very good job, I must say. There are a lot of initiatives in the agriculture and aquaculture industry. I tell you, it was just the other day when the announcement was made by the minister, and the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune in the aquaculture industry on the south coast.

Well, that is innovation in the finest, and they are leading the way. They are leading the way

in Canada, actually. They are leading the way in Atlantic Canada in their sales and what they are doing in their markets.

Do you know in Bishop's Falls we have a company called Newfoundland Styro that depend a lot on the aquaculture industry. That particular company – talking about innovation and diversification – is the only company in the Province that makes these Styrofoam products, and they supply the aquaculture industry. Did they stop there? No, they did not stop there.

They also introduced and now manufacture ice blocks for concrete foundations, and they are supplying all the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. They have forty to fifty people at peak times employed at that facility. It is all because of the government's investments of other industries that are overflowing and spin-offs that is giving extra industry and jobs to other people in the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: That is the kind of stuff we are doing. We have investments in the cranberry industry. We have investments in the agriculture industry.

Mr. Speaker, just in the District of Exploits, we have in Point Leamington the Superior Glove factory. The only one in the Province, the only one in Atlantic Canada making these types of safety gloves and sleeves, with over 100 people working there. They are not in the forestry. They are not in the fishery. They are not in the mining, but they have over 100 people working there.

Hi-Point Industries in Bishop's Falls, they make containment booms for oil spills. They got the export award three or four years ago, and do all the peat moss for absorbance. They have twenty-five people employed there. That is not the forest industry. That is not the agriculture industry. That is not the fishery. It is unique to the district and it is also unique to the Province.

AN HON. MEMBER: What an example of diversification.

MR. FORSEY: Of course it is.

Blanchard's Woodworking, again, another twenty-five or thirty people there working in that industry in the district, Mr. Speaker.

They have all these ideas but they do not seem to come out with them. They will, I suppose, after they do their next plan of the plan that they are doing. The next plan of the plan, measure twice and cut once. They will be cutting a lot if they ever get the opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, in the agriculture and agrifoods industry, there are 6,500 people employed in the agrifoods industry with total sales of \$500 million. There was \$12 million invested this year in Budget 2015.

AN HON. MEMBER: Industry, agrifoods.

MR. FORSEY: In the industry. Mr. Speaker, for the people who are heckling over there and do not understand the agriculture and agrifoods industry, that would be like cranberries, root crops, dairy – \$47 million in dairy alone.

AN HON. MEMBER: Poultry.

MR. FORSEY: I have not gotten there yet. Our crowd is so excited that what I cannot get out fast enough they are there pushing it at me. Yes, we are doing very well with the poultry and the chicken industry. Of course we are. We are self-sufficient.

The Member for Kilbride there, the farmer we call him, he cannot even wait to get it out of his mouth what we are doing in agriculture because he loves it. The egg industry again, the same thing, we are self-sufficient; the dairy industry, self-sufficient.

I am trying to bring this out, Mr. Speaker, so the people across the way will understand what the agriculture and agrifoods industry is. I think when you say it, they think about potatoes or something, but there is more to it – although potatoes are a very big part of it. Out in my district in Wooddale – or it was my district, and it might be my district again – they have very good farming out there in the root crops. As a matter of fact, we have farmers out there the same as we have in here. We have Lester's Farms in here. We have Oram's in Wooddale.

They are teaching Agriculture in the Classroom, Mr. Speaker. That is what they are doing.

Mr. Speaker, the investment – I have to pick up a little bit of info for me when I start talking about actual figures because I would not want to be stating the wrong figures. The Growing Forward 2 program: \$6.2 million per year for five years. This is a 60-40 federal, provincial cost-shared program. It goes towards innovation, sustainability, agriculture opportunities.

We have the Agriculture and Agrifoods Development Fund: \$2.55 million per year. This fund is established to encourage the development and diversification and expansion of large-scale agriculture projects. The total project cost from the sources must exceed \$1 million. Well, coming from the industry that I came from, twenty-one years in the dairy industry – some people across the way might say do you want something else, but the dairy industry is worth \$47 million.

The company that I worked for had 260 employees in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I was very pleased and proud to be one of their managers in one of their areas out in Central Newfoundland, and the Northern Peninsula – I travelled up the Northern Peninsula more than once, and over in Southern Labrador as well as Lake Melville –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: I travelled all those districts.

The Provincial Agrifoods Assistance Program: \$2.25 million per year. This provides financial assistance to eligible applicants involved in primary or secondary processing activities, which will improve the economic viability of the agricultural and agrifoods industry.

Mr. Speaker, the cranberry industry is fairly new to us. I know we had a farm that started down in Deadman's Bay actually in Bonavista North by the department of agriculture back a few years ago. They started a cranberry farm to see how the cranberries would adapt to the type of climate we have here. Apparently, in Central Newfoundland and most of the Island, the

climate is very, very good for growing cranberries.

Seven million dollars over five years – this program is also cost-shared with ACOA, and 75 per cent is a non-repayable contribution. Eligible applicants can receive a maximum funding of \$30,000 per acre to an annual maximum of ten acres per year.

Mr. Speaker, we have a number of farms out there that have already developed their ten acres, and going at it to develop more, because what we want to do is –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. FORSEY: Yes, it is all a joke for them over there, Mr. Speaker. When I get up and talk I talk about the Province and I talk about the investments, and these people appreciate the investment. These people out in Central Newfoundland appreciate the investments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FORSEY: When I get up and speak, I am like the rest of the members over here – we speak passionately about the district and the Province because we want to do the best for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. When we come to a point where we do not want to do that, then we should not be here anyway – none of us should.

Mr. Speaker, the Land Consolidation Program has been a great, great investment of this government to help acquire land from farmers who are retiring or non-farm landowners – investment of \$2.2 million per year. I mentioned the Member for Kilbride – like I said, I think his nickname is Farmer – he knows the agricultural industry and he knows how important it is to acquire land for farming. This is a great investment and a great initiative by this government.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to get into Agriculture in the Classroom, but my time is just about up. I know I can go all night on it. Anyway, I thank you for the opportunity, and I thank the people

of the District of Exploits for sending me here. I am sure I will get another opportunity.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HILLIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is indeed a pleasure to rise again to speak on this part of the Budget debate. I am pleased to hear the Member for Exploits speak so passionately and on topic with the Budget, and the Member for Baie Verte – Springdale do the same. I do not agree with everything they say, but they are speaking passionately about what they believe. Unfortunately, not all members of this House speak that way.

I just want to quote. It says, “Thank you for joining me in service to the province ...

“Together we will foster a responsive and open culture within government in service to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Our conduct will be in accordance with the highest standards of professionalism, deportment and ethics. Ours will be a government that is forward moving and future thinking, building on the solid social and economic foundation that is already in place.”

Mr. Speaker, that is the second paragraph in the mandate letter that all of our members of the Crown received back in December.

Mr. Speaker, when we had the ATIPP debate some weeks ago, the Member for Exploits stood and spoke passionately about ATIPP and its role, and Bill 29 and where we have come from here. Other members did the same. We had a member of the Crown go down in the gutter and spoke for twenty minutes on nothing to do with ATIPP, nothing to do with his portfolio, but just went down in the gutter – professionalism, deportment, and ethics.

Mr. Speaker, before we broke this afternoon, we saw a minister of the Crown go down in the gutter, the same as he did when he debated –

MR. KING: A point of order.

AN HON. MEMBER: Code of conduct.

MR. KING: The code of conduct for behaviour. The member's behaviour in this House clearly articulates that you debate policy but you do not challenge the credibility or the integrity of another member of this House. I would ask the member to refrain and withdraw the remarks.

MR. SPEAKER (Cross): The hon. the Member for Burgeo – La Poile on the point of order.

MR. A. PARSONS: The Member for CBS can certainly speak for himself here, but I am unaware of anything that was just said by the member that would constitute any sort of point of order whatsoever.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I was about to stand when the point of order was drawn, to ask the member that the idea of being in the gutter, I would think, would have been unparliamentary. I would hope that we would keep the decorum a little higher than that tonight.

MR. HILLIER: I apologize, Mr. Speaker, for saying anything unparliamentary. Hopefully, we can move on.

Mr. Speaker, I will not use those terms, but I guess the term I will use is that the minister of the Crown would certainly not be parliamentary in his tone. The call to service for a minister of the Crown says, "professionalism, deportment and ethics." It was certainly not parliamentary the way it was said here this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, we have youth dying in care –

MR. KING: A point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Government House Leader on a point of order.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Conception Bay South is throwing allegations that a member on this side of the House has been unparliamentary. I believe he has a right to either withdraw the remarks or name the member and name the actions, and then let the Speaker deal with it.

MR. SPEAKER: I would like to take a moment to think about the point of order, unless you want to speak to it or someone else.

I would just like to recess for a moment to consult. We will come back in a few moments.

Thank you.

Recess

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

In giving a decision, I would refer you to O'Brien and Bosc which discusses unparliamentary language at page 618, where it states, "... the use of offensive, provocative or threatening language in the House is strictly forbidden. Personal attacks, insults and obscenities are not in order." It also states, "The proceedings of the House are based on a long-standing tradition of respect"

I consider the language used by the member to be provocative and disrespectful at this point; further, in continuing to refer to instances of unparliamentary language possibly used in this House in earlier debate other than at the time of speaking is a form of challenge to the Chair.

I ask the member to withdraw his earlier remarks with respect to references to the gutter and to refrain from further provocative language that would lead to disorder in this House.

MR. HILLIER: Mr. Speaker, at no time would I want to bring this House in any form of disrespect.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. HILLIER: I want to withdraw.

MR. SPEAKER: Withdrawn.

I recognize the hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. HILLIER: Mr. Speaker, \$142 million in a Budget, the Minister of Youth Services did not speak once to that Budget when he spoke twice in this House. Children are dying in care, and at no time did he speak once about those issues in twice he spoke in debate in this House. Youth homes are being asked to be removed from communities, and at no time did this minister speak to that in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I go back to the mandate letter where it talks to, "Our conduct will be in accordance with the highest standards of professionalism, deportment and ethics." I will leave it to this House to determine if this minister has lived up to this letter. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I had intended to talk, as most people here have talked about the portfolio or department with which they are associated. As you are aware, I have been asked to be the Opposition lead for Seniors, Wellness and Social Development. In past weeks, past months, I have spent a lot of time speaking with the people in that department, speaking with the minister, talking with interest groups that are associated with seniors' wellness. It is a small department, forty people, and a \$22 million budget.

Mr. Speaker, one of the areas I have been vocal with in the past weeks has been our attempt to have government institute a seniors' advocate to be an independent voice for seniors in this Province. We know currently that 18 per cent of our population, over 93,000 people are age sixty-five or over. By 2025, one in four. That is 25 per cent of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will be over sixty-five. We have the most rapidly aging population in the county.

Mr. Speaker, I have met with seniors. My caucus members have met with seniors throughout the Province in the last months and invariably they are asking for someone to speak on their behalf.

We go back to October 2014, last fall, when we first called for the institution of a seniors' advocate. We came up to our private member's resolution some weeks back. We debated here

how important it would be for our seniors to have an independent seniors' advocate.

We have two characteristics that currently does not exist in any group that represents seniors in our Province. One is that this seniors' advocate would be legislated. That means it would be compulsory, it would be necessary. It would exist because of legislation passed here. Also, it would be independent of government.

Mr. Speaker, we go back to the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development. On several occasions, when we brought up this topic in the House, he has talked about the fact that there are other agencies in the community that could do this work for seniors. Our stand is, yes, there are other agencies in the community that could do this for seniors; however, either they are not independent of government or they are not legislated. Take 50 Plus Clubs, for instance, they are volunteers. God bless them, they do a great deal of work. They may be here today, not here tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, this is a piece that we as a caucus are committed to, and we will bring it forward as often as we have to until this government sees the need for an independent legislated advocate to work on behalf of the seniors in our Province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about an issue that I put to the minister last week, and that was the issue of swimming fees for seniors in some of our pools. Mr. Speaker, I had an email from my friend Bob earlier this week –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. HILLIER: Bob's dad lives in Gander, and he emailed me. He was not very happy. Bob's dad is a senior citizen and he swims a fair bit in the Gander pool. Bob's concern was that the price of swimming passes in provincial pools has increased to the point where his dad can no longer go to swim.

I had a look at it. It is something we have debated here, and I have asked the minister on several occasions. Mr. Speaker, provincial pools increased their fees from \$20 to \$55 in one fell swoop. That is for a month's swim pass. That

is for a month's fitness. We talk about how important fitness is to our seniors, in one fell swoop these people were forced to pay \$55 a month.

The minister talks about how this is comparable to other pools in the Province. I have gone through here, I spent more time on it than it was worth I guess on the other issues, so I will not get into the numbers. It is just to say that I have those numbers here. They are nowhere close to what the Province is charging in terms of monthly swims for seniors. Seniors are being taken advantage of, and on top of the increase, it is going to be an extra 2 per cent HST because it is a service, Mr. Speaker.

MR. REID: That is something the advocate could take up if we had one.

MR. HILLIER: That is something the advocate could take up if we had one.

Mr. Speaker, another area in this department is the wellness piece, Seniors, Wellness and Social Development. When we first started with this – and we still do, my colleague for Burgeo – La Poile is responsible for health. We keep stepping on each other's toes and bumping into each other because we are not sure where wellness ends and health begins.

We went and sat down with the staff from the department. They explained it this way, that is, that wellness is upstream and health is downstream. Let me read, it says, "A passer-by sees a body floating down a river, and calls 911. Firemen arrive and haul the body out, and paramedics start resuscitation and rush the victim to the ER where the hospital PR director proudly announces that the highest quality care is being delivered to deal with the situation. By contrast, health promotion would focus upstream to figure out what is causing people to fall into the water ... " in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, this government has provided \$22 million to prevent people from falling into the river and \$2.9 billion to pull them out. My thinking is we need to move some more money upstream to put up some signs, to put up some fences to educate people to stay away from the edge of the river so that they do not fall in, in the first place.

All of this money, Mr. Speaker, and we are still scoring the lowest in the country on health and disease. If we go back to last winter, the Conference Board of Canada in a study on Canadian health says, "Newfoundland and Labrador is the lowest-ranking province and scores a 'D-' on the overall health report card. Newfoundland and Labrador has poorer health outcomes than the United States, the worst performing peer country. The province earns its lowest grades on infant mortality, and mortality due to cancer and diabetes."

Mr. Speaker, we go back to the mid-2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, there are a whole bunch of reports that were done. One of them was a Wellness Plan. That Wellness Plan dealt with tobacco, obesity, and activity. The issues that the Conference Board of Canada are dealing with here are the result of exactly those things that were supposed to have been fixed as a result of this health plan in 2006-2008. My question is, with all of the resources put into this, why are we still scoring lowest in the country on these?

Mr. Speaker, we had a Norwegian journalist come by last winter and stir things up, because he wrote about obese people in a particular community. Just prior to that, Don Cherry talked about us eating seal meat. The Premier got all upset and could not believe that anybody would make statements such as this, but when a Norwegian journalist comes by and makes a comment about obesity, there was no sign of the Premier. There was no sign of the Premier.

We are hiding the fact that we are the unhealthiest group in this country. We need to be talking about that. We have people in this room tonight who understand health, fitness, nutrition. We have educators, we have former athletes. We need to be out in front of this before this epidemic goes any further. We need to be the people to set the example to the children of Newfoundland and Labrador, to the adults of Newfoundland and Labrador, that we have a real problem here.

We knew fifty years ago we were going to have a problem, or going to have a large number of seniors in our Province. We knew that fifty years ago, we did nothing about it. We know now that we have a problem with obesity. We cannot afford to make that same mistake.

We are all out in our districts. We are all talking to youth groups. We are all talking to sports groups. That should be one of the pieces that each and every one of us takes with us when we go to speak, the importance of activity, the importance of nutrition. Because those groups that we speak to, those minor athletes, they are the people who got the message. They are active, they are eating properly, they are not smoking. They are the people who need to be the role models for the next group coming through. They are the people who need to be the role models for their peers, Mr. Speaker, so that we can stop this particular epidemic in its tracks.

Mr. Speaker, like I said, I sort of got carried away, and we will probably pick it up at another time. One of the areas I want to talk a little bit about tonight is something that is near, indeed dear to me, that is, the whole area of amateur sport. I have sort of stayed away from it over the last months because sometimes you do not want people to think that you are a one-trick pony, but it is something that is near and dear to my heart. My concern, however, is it has all but disappeared in this government. Reference to it has all but disappeared in this government. When Cabinet was selected and items were put into Cabinet in October, everybody said, where did sport and fitness go?

Mr. Speaker, since 1970, there has always been a sport or a fitness reference in a department. Youth and recreation, health, fitness, what have you, every Cabinet, every portfolio working through since 1970 until 2014, when nobody knows where sport and fitness is.

Mr. Speaker, I go to the mandate letter, and I would think, I am not sure, I would think that somewhere in the mandate letter there would be some reference to sport and fitness. In the mandate letter we have: Seniors, Poverty Reduction, Wellness, Inclusion, Affordable and Accessible Housing, Down-Payment Assistance. I would think that amateur sport and recreation would be listed in Wellness.

Let me again quote you, "The plan should also enhance promotion and support for physical activity for children and youth." Mr. Speaker, that is as close as this government deals with amateur sport and fitness. It shows in our obesity rates, it shows in the inactivity of our

children. There is no commitment here to amateur sport.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Before I recognize the next speaker, after the ruling after I came back, I was sitting in the Chair and I realize that obviously everyone in this House probably understands the ruling that was made but maybe there are people at home who probably do not realize the ruling that was made.

The Speaker took a recess to sort of calm the waters. Debate was to a point, it was becoming personal as opposed to issue oriented, and at that point with the recess, I came back and made a ruling. I do not know if this is precedent setting or not, but I respect the member. He came right back to the issues and stuck with them through his debate.

Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista South.

MR. LITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At this time I would like to thank the constituents of Bonavista South for giving me the opportunity to speak in this House of Assembly on behalf of the people of Bonavista South and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I took some time to listen to some of the comments that are being made by some of the MHAs opposite and I have certainly changed my thought process in what I am about to say, based on some of the previous comments. Listening to the previous speaker from Conception Bay South, I listened very closely to some comments. Any government – we are the government of the day and we can put mechanisms in place to resolve many issues in our society. This is what this government has done over and over through partnerships, through leadership organizations in the communities, through educators, through different organizations in each community in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We have a responsibility as a government to show leadership. Also, the people in the communities, the leaders in the communities, need to connect and form partnerships to try to bring about change. Government cannot do it all alone. I have been listening to the Opposition and I have not heard very much constructive solutions being put forward, mostly criticisms.

I have listened to the name Bob, and in my community there is a person that I call Negative Bob – Negative Bob for a certain reason, because Bob actually is negative. He never ever finds a solution, never ever comes across with a constructive reason why we should do something different, only criticize. I hear a fair amount of criticism coming from the Opposition on a number of occasions.

I try to disassociate myself with the Negative Bob in my community for a number of reasons because it can actually tear you down, it can actually put you in a frame of mind that you never ever find solutions to issues; but, on this side of the House, the MHAs on this side of the House, the leaders, the Cabinet ministers who I have discussions with, always try to assist in finding solutions to problems that help out the community leaders in my district, and help me out as the MHA.

I am delighted to be able to stand with the government on this side of the House and listen to some of the comments that the leaders make in constructive solutions, Mr. Speaker. There is a fair amount of difference. When you are in a governing party, you need to be optimistic; you need to be able to find solutions, Mr. Speaker. That is what I have noticed on this side of the House: a fair amount of finding solutions to issues, working with community leaders, working with partnerships, with community councils. We will continue to govern in that fashion. We will stick to the positive.

I can definitely talk about positivity that came from Budget 2015, and that is what I am about to do again here tonight, Mr. Speaker. Our government is taking a fair, measured approach to protecting the significant progress Newfoundland and Labrador made over the last decade, and I will explain why.

Through Budget 2015, our provincial government is allocating a total of approximately \$8.1 billion in expenditures. That is a substantial amount of investments that are going out to communities all around Newfoundland and Labrador. We, as a Province, are no longer dependent on mainland Canada and other provinces. We are an independent Province. For the most part, we are doing it on our own. It is because of where we were and what investments we made and some of the major investments that were made in offshore oil and other big projects, and funding that is coming from those projects that is being reinvested out into the infrastructure of Newfoundland and Labrador – all over Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Minister Responsible for Transportation and Works outlined how this government spreads the wealth evenly right across each district in Newfoundland and Labrador. He did an excellent job in outlining how that funding was delivered, in one particular department, to all the districts in Newfoundland and Labrador. That is what this government is all about: being fair, being open minded, and trying to deliver in a good fashion, trying to do a good job as a government. We will continue to do that. We will continually work hard on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Each and every member on this side of the House I can say, without doubt, it is a long day, it is a day that you get up in the morning early – and like here tonight, we are here tonight in the House of Assembly debating an amendment to this bill, the Budget 2015, and we are committed to the work that we do on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. That is very important, Mr. Speaker.

It takes a high level of energy to be able to do that. From some mornings, daylight – and the Cabinet ministers on this side of the House I can say, without doubt, their workload, sometimes their weekends, their long hours of days' work is continual and they take their job very serious and they deliver on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and every district in Newfoundland and Labrador as well, Mr. Speaker, I can say, without doubt.

As a government, we have done a good job. I can hold my head up high – when I go back to my district and I talk to the constituents in the District of Bonavista South, I can say, without doubt, that this government have done great work on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LITTLE: In Budget 2015, it outlines a five-year fiscal recovery plan. We do have a plan leading into the future, which is very important. You need to have a plan. We went through somewhat of a bump based on the global economy and we had to change direction as a government – as any government would do, any fiscally responsible government would do, you change your course based on what is in front of you. If you do not change course, you could make major mistakes leading into the future.

Under that five-year fiscal recovery plan, the Province in 2020-2021 will actually receive a surplus, Mr. Speaker. This will be achieved through a series of measures. We have outlined the measures: attrition management plan, necessary expenditure reductions, and revenue generation through a number of avenues.

Budget 2015 includes nearly \$3 billion for health and well-being of families, so we do care. We do care, Mr. Speaker, as a government. It is proven time after time. As a government, we are partnering with leaders in the community, like I said earlier. We will continue to partner. The Budget backs up what I am saying: \$3 billion for health and well-being of families; \$1.4 billion for K-12 post-secondary education; and more than \$660 million for infrastructure projects that will support economic activity and job creation.

AN HON. MEMBER: How much?

MR. LITTLE: It is \$660 million for major infrastructure projects throughout Newfoundland and Labrador that will keep the economy rolling along in the future, Mr. Speaker.

Newfoundland and Labrador will maintain a competitive and overall tax regime with the lowest personal income tax rates in Atlantic Canada, and the third lowest top marginal rate in Canada, behind Alberta and Saskatchewan.

We had ten years of significant growth, Mr. Speaker, growth that this Province has not seen ever in the history of the Province. Economic conditions in Newfoundland and Labrador have improved substantially. Through Budget 2015 this government, under its plan and making balanced choices for a promising future, will allow the Province to continually grow through infrastructure projects that I talked about and the amount of investment that I talked about earlier.

Ten years of significant growth, that is a major, major accomplishment, an accomplishment that this government on this side of the House worked very hard on for years and years. It took planning; it did not just happen on its own. It took partnerships – partnerships with businesses, partnerships with municipalities, partnerships with the private sector, partnerships with volunteers in all parts of Newfoundland and Labrador.

There is tremendous potential here in this Province – major, major, major potential in our offshore oil resources. I would like to touch base on that, because I have heard some negative comments coming from the other side on a number of occasions in relation to Nalcor.

Nalcor is a company – that is our own people, Mr. Speaker. They are our own people, just like everyone in the House of Assembly here today, each and every one of us, we are all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We are in a position to do better, to see the Province move ahead in a prosperous manner. Our own people sitting and working hard in Nalcor are actually doing the same thing.

The investments in Nalcor will be paid back to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador by 2025. The Province will continue to receive annual cash dividends. Investments in infrastructure will result in continued improvements to education, health, municipal infrastructure, and transportation for generations and generations to come, Mr. Speaker. My children, your children, and their children will benefit from the major projects that Nalcor actually deals with on a regular basis.

The future prospects of Newfoundland and Labrador are strong. They are strong. I am very optimistic, as an MHA standing in this House

here this evening. I am very optimistic – based on a large part on the strength of our oil and gas industry offshore. After ten years of significant growth economic conditions in Newfoundland and Labrador have slowed due to weaker commodity markets, but are expected to rebound by 2019. Major economic indicators continue to show strong results compared to 2005, and this Province continues to boast the highest income levels in its history – comparatively high employment levels, Mr. Speaker.

The tremendous potential – and this is what we should be talking about as a government – to attract further business and investments in this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LITTLE: That is what I have listened to on this side of the House, over and over, from each Cabinet minister who stands up in an optimistic way, promoting and delivering what this Province is all about, Mr. Speaker. Through that type of venture investments will continue to come, business will continue to set up in Newfoundland and Labrador to create more employment for our people.

That is what we should be doing as a government: promoting ourselves as a Province, promoting the positivity of companies like Nalcor that is doing great work on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The tremendous potential of Newfoundland and Labrador's offshore oil resources bodes well for the economic future of this Province, bodes very well for the economic future of this Province. We will continue to grow as a Province.

Every time I get and speak, I try to include my district, somewhat, and Budget 2015 and how it relates to my district. I have no other choice but to talk about the tourism industry here this evening, Mr. Speaker, and how that industry has grown on the Bonavista Peninsula –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LITTLE: – and continually grows through major investments made by this government, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Can we do it alone, Mr. Speaker? The answer is no. We realize that as a government.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible) Bobs either.

MR. LITTLE: No one listens to the Negative Bobs anymore out in my community, the Negative Bob, because Negative Bob do not make constructive arguments to find solutions to problems, Mr. Speaker. That is why I have decided to turn my back, walk away, and talk to people who are very optimistic, positive, and trying to do good for the well-being of the communities where I live.

I will be the first one to say that I am an optimist. Because I am an optimist, I am standing right here representing the people of Bonavista South. That is why I am standing here because of positivity and optimism. I believe in the people of Bonavista South and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. I believe in them. I know, as the representative of Bonavista South, that I cannot do it alone as the MHA for Bonavista South. This government realizes that we cannot do it alone without the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LITTLE: I say we have worked hard, community leaders and community councils on the Bonavista Peninsula. We have partnered with departments of the provincial government and with the federal government as well, Mr. Speaker.

We showed leadership, Mr. Speaker. Any time you go to the Bonavista Peninsula you will see first-hand that we are a tourism model to be looked at by other jurisdictions, not only in this Province but all over this country. You can tell by the remarks and the comments that come from people who visit the Bonavista Peninsula how they feel. They feel great about our people and what we have done.

We went through some hard times, Mr. Speaker, but in reality, we found a way through. I can give you an example with less than a minute left. The Town of Elliston with their many volunteers and organizations got together and made a difference. If you go to that town now, you will see Home from the Sea, the Sealers Memorial. You will see the root cellar capital of the world. You will see people coming from all over the

world to visit Elliston. You will see the Roots, Rants and Roars that happen on an annual basis. People from all over the Island, I say hundreds of people, flock into that community on an annual basis. It is a wonderful experience. When they leave, they come back again.

I can tell you hundreds and hundreds of people visit the Town of Elliston from all over the world during the summer – I would say thousands of people, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: Tens of thousands?

MR. LITTLE: I will not say tens of thousands, no. I will just say it the way it is. Thousands of people, Mr. Speaker, visit the Town of Elliston and leave with a great impression.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. LITTLE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am delighted to speak.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SLADE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to say how proud I am to stand here tonight and speak to this motion to represent the people of my District of Carbonear – Harbour Grace.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start about the district – first of all, things that are going on in my district.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. SLADE: I would like to start, Mr. Speaker, with Victoria. Victoria has about 2,200 people. It is a bustling community, it is a growing community. Over the last number of years they have enjoyed residential growth. I will tell you if there is one thing the mayor and councillors in

Victoria need is support from this government at all points in time for infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say, the mayor and the council there work very hard. In a lot of cases those people give of their time freely. So certainly they want to see their community grow. That is the Town of Victoria. I would encourage municipal affairs and other departments here to work with the Town of Victoria to see them growing and prospering because it needs to happen.

Mr. Speaker, the next community I would like to speak about is Freshwater. Now, of course, you know what I am going to talk about in Freshwater. The arsenic situation in Freshwater is not going away on its own. This non-consumption order has been on that town since 2005. As I spoke here the other day on the parts of the Budget, I reminded people in this House that non-consumption order has been on since 2005. Not only has it been on since 2005, up to this point in time nothing has been done with it.

When I was on council in Carbonear, I remember going out to many of those water seminars that the Department of Municipal Affairs used to put off. At that point in time, I have to be honest with you, the government at that point in time – water was a big issue all over this Province. Government, at that point in time, was paying a bit of attention to it and trying to deal with the issues at hand.

Mr. Speaker, somewhere along the way this government dropped the ball on it. Of course, that is the reason why the community of Freshwater is down there in the situation they are in. I am hoping, by what the minister had told them, that somewhere in that Budget this year that situation will get corrected so that the people – there are eighteen families on that well. Hopefully, those families can get something done so they can have a drop of decent drinking water.

Mr. Speaker, the next community I would like to talk about is Carbonear. Of course Carbonear has grown in many ways, certainly residential, and there are a number of businesses now wishing to come in there. Carbonear is considered to be the hub of the bay out in that area. It is the commercial part of – it

encompasses 50,000 people on the Baccalieu Trail. The Town of Carbonear and the mayor and the councillors down there are also looking for support from this government for infrastructure and many things that they need down there. So, I would just like to mention that.

In Carbonear, of course, and I spoke about it the other day, I did take note over the weekend, it looks like they are getting ready now to put the lines on down by the mall. I hope this year, for the people's sake in Carbonear, and the people that Carbonear brings inside of it, hopefully the directional arrows will get put on this year. Anyway, that is Carbonear.

Mr. Speaker, the next place I would like to speak about is Bristol's Hope. Bristol's Hope is not a local service district. It is a group of people up there trying to more or less fudge for on their own and bring things to the community. Of course when you are not a local service district, and I was in talking to the minister about this, along with some people from Bristol's Hope. There are 300 people there. When you are not a local service district, what happens is you are not eligible for any funding. You are not eligible for any recreational grants. You are not eligible for any of this.

Given the circumstances that are in Bristol's Hope, I think this government should at least, if they are not going to allow them – because I think the last time, if I am not mistaken, that a local service district was considered was back in 2010. Those people are taxpayers in Newfoundland and Labrador, the same as all the rest of us, and they should be given some due consideration.

Mr. Speaker, the next place is the community of Harbour Grace. Harbour Grace is a wonderful spot. It is a growing area. Harbour Grace, right now they are in the process of getting some things along the waterfront there. Big business, and of course they are going to need the infrastructure to do what they need to do there. I will say to government, somewhere along the way – I do not know what happened there, I cannot answer it.

I am just going to talk about Harvey Street in Harbour Grace. Harvey Street in Harbour Grace

is in a terrible mess. Say from the riverhead down, it is in terrible shape. From what I can understand, that road belongs to the Department of Transportation. That road was supposed to be done two years ago, and still no effort, still no headway on it. Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable that road is in that condition. It is absolutely unbelievable, considering it is a Department of Transportation road.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if it is on the agenda for this year, but it certainly should be. After all, it was promised to them two years ago. It is not done yet and it needs to get done. The issue needs to get done.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak on something else here now, and I have not heard too much activity on it here lately. I want to talk about the stadium in Harbour Grace. Something that was promised to them the same time CBS was announced, the same time Paradise was announced. Harbour Grace was announced the same time. It is not done yet. There is nothing done. There is not a sod turned on it or anything. I am hoping government – and I think they have been in contact with Harbour Grace and that is going to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I will say this: I certainly hope that they do not make a political football out of that stadium. The people in Harbour Grace deserve that stadium. It was promised to them by this government and I certainly hope they do not play politics with that. It is time for that to stop too.

I go to Riverhead now because I told you the other day here when I spoke on it that there was some work done in Riverhead by the Department of Transportation. The drain was on one side of the road. The road was elevated opposite to where the drain was to. There are six houses along that road there. I know one gentleman up there, for sure – and I know all the rest of them have problems up there with water, six houses. The man has to get out and sandbag it to keep the water from running through his front door out through his back door.

Mr. Speaker, that is not good enough. That is absolutely not good enough. He contacts the Department of Transportation. We are not responsible. Well, there comes a point in time,

guys, where somebody needs to take responsibility for this. This is not right. You guys fixed the road, or so you thought you fixed it, and you created problems for the householders down there. That definitely has to stop. It is not right and people deserve to be treated better.

Mr. Speaker, in Bryants Cove – again, I am just going to go back to it. The town up there, the mayor and councillors up there are working for nothing. They do not get anything for being on council. They are volunteers in their community. For the last three years, the Town of Bryants Cove has applied to get Point Road done. Of course, each time they have been turned down. They have their 10 per cent to put into it, so there is no reason why they should not get it done.

The bus is refusing to go out over that road now to pick up school children because it is too much bouncing on the bus. It is just simply too dangerous. When I brought that here last year in a petition, they had an opportunity here. This government had an opportunity to go out there and tack coat that road and they would have saved it; but, after the winter, forget about it. It is not going to happen. You are not going to tack coat is now. Now you have to go out and do a full paving job on it.

Again, I hear the group across the way say how wonderful they are to people. Mr. Speaker, they are not wonderful to people. These people have been there asking government, begging government – at what point in time do we in his hon. House start talking about people? When do people matter, Mr. Speaker? They need to matter. People need to have their voice heard here, and it is just simply not right. It is treating people in a very disrespectful way. That is what my thought is on that.

Mr. Speaker, the Tilton-Spaniard's Bay area – Spaniard's Bay is an area that has been growing pretty good. I look at the other member across the House there for the District of Port de Grave and he knows that Spaniard's Bay residentially is growing pretty good. It is growing at a good pace.

Accordingly, as they grow, they will need more infrastructure and help from government to grow

their communities. That is what it is all about. It is all about us growing a community to its full potential and when we do that, we have happy communities and we have happy people who live in those communities. It is not about me here or any member sitting around this hon. House; it is about what we can do for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. That is what it is about, Mr. Speaker. I believe, for the life of me, when we get beyond that, none of us should be sitting here. That is my thought.

Mr. Speaker, in the Tilton area, of course, Tilton is the same thing. Tilton is growing there. It is a part of Spaniard's Bay. It is growing. Thicket Road is something to be desired, I say to the Speaker. Ticket Road needs to be resurfaced. I think the minister had said something like \$53 million in paving work this year for the roads. I certainly hope that part of the district gets a little bit of that money to offset their problems and their concerns. At all points in time, we have to think about our children and the safety of our children on those school buses. That is the reason I will go back to Bryants Cove again. The safety of our children is foremost. When we get beyond that, like I said, if we cannot turn around and stand up here and speak for our children and make sure that they are at all points in time safe, I think we have a serious issue going on here.

For the next little while I will just go clear of the district for a little bit. Like I just said to you in the first of it, I am certainly very pleased as the MHA for Carbonear – Harbour Grace to stand up here and speak for that district. I am very honoured to be here indeed.

Mr. Speaker, the next thing I want to talk about is some numbers here now what came out in the Seafood Industry Year in Review. It is really quite telling. We have a government over here – and we are going to talk about it a little bit – and yes, I will say to this government you have done a wonderful job in regard to putting infrastructure in place for the aquaculture industry; but I will say something in the same breath: You never did that for the wild fishery. I am going to say that: You have not done it for the wild fishery.

I just want to touch on one issue and we will talk about the *Celtic Explorer*. When I was fishing, I

did survey work from 1996 till 2013 for the federal government. I did the sentinel, Mr. Speaker. So I know how ever important it is to have science. What I will say to you guys over there, it is not the money that you are spending on the science part of it; it is the opposition to it. What they are actually doing – since 1949, it is a federal responsibility to do the science. What we are doing by going out there and getting Dr. George Rose and doing this science work, we are actually letting the feds off the hook. They have a responsibility to us and we are letting them off the hook, and that is the reason why that part of it I do not understand.

Now, if the federal government wants to cost share that with you guys, well at least they are doing something, but right now they are doing nothing and they are getting off the hook. We should be after the federal government. We should be doing better by this.

Mr. Speaker, the value of the fishery last year – in 2014 it dropped from \$1.1 billion down to \$954 million. That is very telling. Just that there alone is very telling. That is a 13.1 per cent decline.

Mr. Speaker, if the government across the way had to think about it, if they had to put a little bit of thought into it – it is absolutely unbelievable that this government let the marketing arm of FPI go. It is unbelievable, because the gentleman who has that up there now, he is up boasting about billions of dollars in profits – billions of dollars. It is absolutely unbelievable, Mr. Speaker. I cannot believe we did that.

While I say that, I have fish harvesters – we, us in here as politicians, we have fish harvesters over in 3Ps who leave millions of pounds of fish in the water every year because they cannot sell it. The fish harvesters in 3Ps – I am not sure on this now, Mr. Speaker, and I am going to quote the number but I stand to be corrected. I think the inshore fish harvesters over there got 9,000 pounds of crab. I am talking about the in-the-bay fishermen. They are having problems catching it. They cannot find it. They cannot get it, and 90 per cent of them probably will not get their quota this year.

While they have lots of fish over there, we do not have a government that is prepared to help

out in the marketing of it. Mr. Speaker, it is shameful what is going on here. It is a matter of marketing. We have processors out in Newfoundland and Labrador and their fridges are filled up, full of shrimp and crab. In a lot of cases, they do not want demand with this fish. Certainly there is some vision on the other side that we are able to market this fish.

One time, my God, Mr. Speaker, salt fish was going out of Newfoundland hand over fist. Now we cannot sell a pound. We cannot sell a pound of fish. Why? Because nobody over there is concentrating on the wild fishery. That is absolutely true. Nobody is concentrating on it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if members in this hon. House recognize it, Nova Scotia is now using Newfoundland's trademark for salt fish. It was called Baccalieu; that was the brand name. Nova Scotia is using it up there now, shipping off salt fish hand over fist while we are here – and we talk about what we are doing for our wild fishery. You guys have not done anything for the wild fishery.

I have fishermen; I have plant workers out there crying to this government to help out where they can. It is not happening, Mr. Speaker. It is just simply not happening. I never saw it when I was fishing. All I seen them do was try to bring in RMS. They tried to do that, and that did not go over too good.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line here is there is more than oil. If we had to emphasize a little bit more on our natural resources, our renewable resources, which one is the fishery and another one is the forestry. If we had to be concentrating on those areas, Mr. Speaker, we would not be in the position we are in today. We would not be in the position because the \$1.1 billion could have probably been \$2.1 billion. I think we can do it, and I think we can do it better than anybody else.

Mr. Speaker, for the gentlemen on the other side, I would just like to say, guys, it is time to get on with it. We need to do it, Mr. Speaker. We need to think outside that box and we need to put a face on the fishing industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SLADE: We need to put a face on the fishing industry of Newfoundland and Labrador, and you guys have failed. I am sorry to say it, but you guys have failed. That is very unfortunate, because those are renewable resources and we can do so much better.

Mr. Speaker, I take note my time is out.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCGRATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Like every other speaker who stood here in the House today, I have listened diligently to most all of the speakers. I am very pleased to be able to stand and speak on this Budget. I also would like to, as I have heard many other members say, thank my constituents for the opportunity to represent them here in the House of Assembly. It is something I am very humbled to be able to do, and I take it very seriously.

Like most members in the House over the last couple of weeks, we are in a time of the year now where things are starting to wrap up in the districts. We are getting invitations to be out to closing banquets, graduations. I know this Saturday I have a graduation in my district for Menihek High. I am really looking forward to it, to be a part of that special occasion with the graduates as they move on to the next period in their life.

I have heard other members talk about how they have been to different graduations. I am fortunate, I only have the one graduation as I only have one high school. We have a very large graduating class, and I am looking forward to the weekend.

This past weekend I had several events on each day as I was there. I am sure like every other member, I took the opportunity to get out and mingle with my constituents and listen to what

they have to say. I am getting asked a lot of questions, as I am sure every member is. That is what we are here for. We are here to represent and we are here to try and clarify for people when they are wondering exactly what is happening.

Interestingly, last night when I was flying in we were not sure if we were going to get into St. John's or not because the weather was so low, the ceiling. I had a gentleman from one of the municipalities on the South Coast of Labrador, who is a municipal politician, sat next to me. I do not mind saying that he was a big, brawly fisherman. When he sat down next to me he gave me an elbow in the ribs, then he grabbed me by the knee, introduced himself to me, and we had a very engaging conversation for about an hour and a half. I must say it was a great conversation, but the conversation was all about the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador.

He made one comment to me, and the comment that really stood out to me was, he said: Can you clarify for me exactly where we are with this Budget because I am hearing nothing but doom and gloom? Everything that I am hearing, and I will be quite honest with you, he said the Opposition have us frightened to death. He said as a small volunteer – and I just heard the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace comment on how a lot of these small municipalities, the councillors there are volunteers. I certainly applaud them for that, because a lot of them get paid absolutely nothing. In actual fact, it costs them money to be municipal leaders.

This gentleman said to me, we are nervous, because we are being told that everything is doom and gloom. Like I said, we were an hour and a half. We had a great chat. We talked about different things in the Budget. I realize the Opposition have a job to do. As does government, the Opposition also has a job to do. Especially in an election year, the Opposition, I guess part of their job is to try and make government look as ineffective as they possibly can. I understand that.

This gentleman made the comment to me, and I said to him, at the end of the day when you go behind that little cardboard box, you decide who you are going to vote for. You have to make

that decision. We talked about some of the things we have done as a government over the last decade. Some of the things he did not agree with, many of the things he did.

The reason I want to talk about this is because I was really pleased that he brought up Muskrat Falls. He said to me: I really need to talk to you about Muskrat Falls. Because what we are hearing is that this project that is called Muskrat Falls is going to kill the Province. It is going to bankrupt the Province and we are done.

So I had a chat with him – we talked for probably half an hour about Muskrat Falls. I think at the end of the conversation – he did shake my hand. He wished me well in the next election. He said: I have a different perspective now on Muskrat Falls. He said: I realize that I am not going to get rich in 2017; but, from what you are telling me, the way you have explained it to me, I do see a hope for our generation as we get older, and certainly for the next generations to come, that Muskrat Falls is definitely the best thing can happen.

He talked about oil and gas being non-renewable. From the conversation that I had with him – he worked on the water. I think he said for thirty-eight years he has been a skipper on a ship. You could tell he was a skipper, I guarantee you. He was –

AN HON. MEMBER: Is he named Bob?

MR. MCGRATH: No, his name was not Bob, but I tell you what, he was full – after the hour-and-a-half conversation with him, I felt good. I have to say, I felt good. He felt, after our conversation, that Muskrat Falls is not such a bad thing. He feels and he made the comment that it is an investment in our future. He said to me: Muskrat Falls, from what I have heard now, is an investment in our future. That was nice to hear from someone who started the conversation in a very pessimistic tone. I was not ready to argue with him, because he was three times the size of me and it was all muscle.

I just want to get that out that it was great to have the conversation with him. I do not know the man from Adam. He recognized me from the House of Assembly. I guarantee you it was – and he also made comment. He was very fair

in his comments. He said as part of his municipal council – and he did let me know his political stripe, but he also let me know that within his municipal council there are many political stripes. He said: We have to learn to agree to disagree, but we also have to learn to work together. That was part of the conversation. I tell you what, it was a great conversation to have.

So I want to get back to the Budget. In my district, I stood up here last week and I spoke for twenty minutes and I talked 100 per cent on my district. Like any other member, you like to boast about your district. Unfortunately when I stood up last week, I was not boasting; I was talking about the economic downturn in my district. I had a text this afternoon from a Liberal, might I add, who is a very good friend of mine and said: What is the announcement tomorrow? What is the announcement on Wabush Mines and Bloom Lake?

I did not get back to him, but to me that text that I received is a glimmer of hope. That is a glimmer of hope that I talked about last week in this House. The Town of Wabush, Wabush Mines, has gone through an extremely difficult year and a half. That little comment alone from a Liberal friend of mine is a glimmer of hope that something is happening. There is a positive announcement tomorrow; what is it?

Now, I am not sure what the announcement is because there is no big announcement about to happen, but what is happening is there is movement. There is movement in the mining industry. They are watching it very closely.

I had a meeting on Friday afternoon and it was an impromptu meeting with the leader of the union. Mr. Thomas stopped me, we had a great conversation – we usually meet at least once a month, just to update what is happening. Of course, when I meet with the union, the union wants the company to fix everything. You meet with the company; the company feels the union needs to do things.

I say to both of them – I had a meeting, like I said; on this Friday, I have another meeting now, a scheduled meeting with the president of the union and we will sit down. I say to him I am neither anti nor pro union. I was in business all

my life. I never had unions, but I do understand the importance of unions, especially in large industrial companies such as the Iron Ore Company of Canada or Wabush Mines. I understand how important unions are, but I also understand that the union and the industry need to work together. If they cannot come together and work as a team, then you have a problem.

One of my biggest concerns right now – and I have said this to the company and I have said it to the union. My role is to represent the people. My role as the MHA is to represent the people, and I will do that to the best of my ability without trying to interfere with either the union or the industry itself.

I tell you, at times, it is a very thin line to try to walk on. It is not my role as a politician to interfere with the day-to-day administrations of the company itself or of the union. The union is there to protect the workers. That is their main mandate. So I have to be careful I do not interfere with that.

The economy in Labrador West, we are starting to see where there is a little bit of movement. The company is trying its best to cut down on costs. They are going to have certain austerity measures where they will try to cut back. The union, on the other hand, is trying to protect what they have worked so hard for to build for their employees.

I know she will not mind, I am not going to use any names, but my next door neighbour in Labrador City has twenty-six years' service with the company. She is being affected now by a decision being made by the company. I will tell you it is very, very difficult as an MHA, number one, but as a personal friend to come out of my door and see this lady who has devoted twenty-six years of her life, raised two twins who are graduating on Saturday; and besides that, as a single mother, takes care of her mother. To see that she is losing her job after twenty-six years' service and devoted service, that is a big pill to swallow.

These are the types of things that I try to work with my constituents on, realizing that changes have to be made there. The company is there trying to do one thing and the union is trying to protect what they have. It does put you in

difficult situations at times. When it comes to your representation in your district that is what we stepped up for.

I heard the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace talk about – he listed out and I listened very carefully actually – every one of the communities in his district. I thought to myself, my God, there are still more? I am very fortunate that I have two communities in my district. Although I have almost 10,000 people in my district, I can encompass my district very quickly. It is only six kilometres apart. I am almost proud to say I can go to Mass on Sunday and who I do not meet in Mass, I will meet in the mall, the district is so confined.

I listened to him talk about the volunteers, the municipal governments there. They are volunteers and I have the utmost respect for them; but like us, as provincial politicians, although we are paid, and paid well, they put their names forward to do that job. If you look in the municipalities – and as a former President of the Combined Councils of Labrador and working very closely with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador, many of the municipalities that I went into, if you look at the municipal leaders they are also the leaders in most of the organizations in their communities also. They are volunteers within the rest of their community. They are very important people within their communities.

This government has not forgotten about that when we put this Budget together. We realized we have to tighten the strings in certain places, but one of the more difficult things when you are working with a Budget like we have put together this year is that you also have to continue investments within your Province to keep moving forward. You cannot just say we are going to stop everything. I think this government has done that well.

Over the last twelve years, we have made major investments in replacing infrastructure, in building new infrastructure, and investments in the people. We have done that. Now that things are a little tighter – I have heard the Opposition Party talk that we said it five years ago that the prices were going to drop in oil, but I have to say to the people who are listening, nobody seen it happen as rapidly as it did and such a major

decline. Nobody saw that happening, all the professionals out there – we knew there were going to be declines. If you go back, that is why since 2011 we have been pushing for Muskrat Falls. We knew there were going to be drops, but nobody knew how drastic it would be and how rapid it would be. That is the difference in those changes. That change happened so quickly.

The same with the iron ore, I remember in 2008 when the bottom fell out of the iron ore, and we knew it was going to happen, but it rebounded really quickly. For iron ore to go from \$180 a ton to \$44.60 a ton overnight, with no warning, that is a huge impact. It is an impact that we did not see happening. The difference is we are not getting the rebound as quickly as we wanted that rebound. That is what we have had to deal with.

In dealing with all of that, from an economic perspective, this government is continuing to invest. The investments in the infrastructure that we are still making in this Budget, huge investments in the infrastructure – because we realize you just cannot leave it go; you have to continue to improve on what you have and build upon what you have.

One of the ways that we are building upon what we have is full-day kindergarten. We realized how important full-day kindergarten is in the next decade coming up, and we are getting ready for it. We are going to be ready for that. That is why we have put a plan together – we have a five-year plan, realizing that we are in for some tough times, and that is why you put a plan together. This government has put that plan together. We have tabled our plan. We have let people know where we are and where we need to go. We have also laid on the table how we are going to do that. To me, that is what good governance is about.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that I think we have done a good job. We realize where we are economically and we are dealing with that. Hopefully, when it comes to the election, people will make the decision who they want to lead them into the future.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for Cape St. Francis, that we do now adjourn the House for the evening.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

This House now stands adjourned until 2:00 p.m. tomorrow, Wednesday, Private Members' Day.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 2:00 p.m.