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Speaker: Honourable Wade Verge, MHA

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

The hon. the Minister of Natural Resources, standing on a point of order?

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

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

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I gave an answer to a question in the House yesterday regarding the Integrated Cover System at Muskrat Falls. A little bit of ambiguity in my answer, so I just want to clarify for the House, Mr. Speaker, that government was not involved in the decision around the integrated cover system. Nalcor is the project manager for Muskrat Falls, and the onsite contractor is Astaldi. They work together obviously on the project and the operations, but, Mr. Speaker, it was Astaldi that made the decision to discontinue the use of the integrated cover system using Part I and II, but not Part III and IV.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today we will hear members' statements –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

– members' statements from the members representing the Districts of Port au Port, Trinity – Bay de Verde, Bonavista North, Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, Kilbride, and Torngat Mountains.

The hon. the Member for the District of Port au Port.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CORNETT: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House to recognize the upcoming season of the Stephenville Theatre Festival. On July 17, 2015, when this cast takes over the stage of the Arts and Culture Centre, the thirty-seventh season of delivering outstanding professional theatre to Newfoundland and Labrador will have begun.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to Thom Currie, who is joining STF as Artistic Director.

Congratulations and thank you to returning Board Chairperson, Elizabeth Brown, and all other board members for their continuous commitment and dedication to the success of this festival.

Following the spirit of the founding director, Maxim Mazumdar's vision for this festival, *Monty Python's Spamalot* will be the major stage production this year. *Mama's Country Record Collection*, which is set in Stephenville; *Looking Back in '59*, and *Tales of Ti-Jean* are just a few of the marvelous performances to be staged for the enjoyment of theatre-goers.

The incomparable entertainment the Stephenville Theatre Festival brings to its patrons will be provided by a talented and skilled professional cast.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members in this hon. House of Assembly to join with me in congratulating the Stephenville Theatre Festival on its thirty-seventh season.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize 295 Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps Baccalieu.

On April 26, family and friends gathered in Old Perlican for the thirtieth annual Ceremonial Review of 295 Baccalieu. It was an afternoon of demonstrations showcasing the cadets' drill skills, fitness and musical talents. 295 Baccalieu was also this year's Provincial Drill Champions.

The Reviewing Party included: Reviewing Officer, Lieutenant Commander Gary Parsons; Navy League representative, Clayton Bailey; Bay de Verde Branch Navy League representative, Mrs. Joy Jolliffe; Commanding Officer, Mr. Clifford Morgan; Coxswain, CPO Carissa Garland.

Some of this year's top honours included: Chief Petty Officer Second Class, Nathan Jolliffe, who received the Lord Strathcona Trust Fund Medal. This medal is the highest award a Canadian cadet can receive for excellence in physical and military training. Chief Petty Officer First Class Carissa Garland, received the Royal Canadian Legion Medal of Excellence along with the Navy League Medal of Excellence. A Navy League Medal of Excellence was also awarded to Chief Petty Officer Second Class Zachary LeShane.

I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating all who organized and participated in the thirtieth Annual Ceremonial Review of 295 Baccalieu.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to recognize a group of young female athletes from my district. The Loopers is a team of under-sixteen female volleyball players from Pearson and Gill Memorial Academies of New-Wes-Valley and Musgrave Harbour, respectively.

In May of 2014, Corporal Dale Lewis recognized potential in his volleyball squad and asked if they would like to go to nationals next year. With a positive response, a team of parents initiated a plan of action to make their little girls' dreams come true.

The team, consisting of Laura Whiteway, Brittany Kean, Brianna Kean, Kendra Bungay, Danielle Faulkner, Ocean Kean, Bridgette

Burry, Leah Lewis, Samantha Melindy, and Taylor Winter, coached by Dale Lewis and Kelly Faulkner-Kean, took to the court at the University of Calgary in May of this year. They went for enjoyment and fun, but the little team that could served and bumped an attack, competing at a level beyond their wildest dreams.

Corporal Lewis said, "We hoped to compete and make a respectable showing. Through the smiles we started winning." The Loopers played in a division of over forty teams and they volleyed their way to the semifinals, losing to the ultimate champions.

Please join me, Mr. Speaker, and all hon. members in congratulating everyone who supported Loopers's success.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order, please!

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

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize the Labrador South Health Centre Auxiliary. Formed in May 1985, by site co-ordinator Norman Cutler, with a small group of volunteers from L'Anse au Clair to Red Bay, the valuable work of the auxiliary continues to this day.

The organization's mandate is to assist the Labrador South Health Centre in Forteau in acquiring much-needed equipment and items not covered in the clinic's operating budget. Over the years, as a result of the tremendous volunteer support, their fundraising efforts have been very successful. Essential items purchased include a paediatric emergency system, rescue toboggan, CPR training mannequin, and furnishings for specialty rooms and offices.

For three decades, the auxiliary has been a key contributor to the health centre with its annual fundraiser in May and ticket draws throughout the year, including the selling of bulbs for the Christmas memory tree. The residents of the long-term care unit have also been experiencing

the kindness of the auxiliary's giving, through visits and the annual Christmas stockings.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in thanking the Labrador South Health Centre Auxiliary – most of whom are well into their senior years, I might add – for their outstanding contribution to the Forteau Health Centre.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Kilbride.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DINN: On March 21, 2015, Goulds Lions Club celebrated its thirty-eight anniversary. The Lions Club facility was full to capacity as forty-nine Lions Club members, their spouses, friends, and special guests attended, including Leo Club members.

After a delicious meal and several speeches, awards were presented. The Lion of the Year Award was given to Maureen Hynes for her hard work and dedication. The Melvin Jones Award was presented to Bob Farrell for his thirty years of service. The Rookie of the Year Award went to Ashley Abbott for her involvement with the Leo Club and Christmas events. Maureen Hynes won the Judge Brian Stevenson Award, and the late Doug Harvey was honoured for his long-time dedication to Lionism in Goulds.

Jim Linthorne won the President Award. Barb Hearn, Gord Warford, and Gerald Antle received District Governor Awards for their years of service.

The Goulds Lions Club has done and is doing great volunteer work in our community, and has provided financial help to many groups, including our schools, Goulds Arena, Bidgood Park, recreation groups, and seniors.

I ask all hon. members to join me and my colleague, the Member for Ferryland district, in commending the tremendous efforts of the Goulds Lions Club.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Torngat Mountains.

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize Erin Andersen of Makkovik, who graduated on May 9 from the Atlantic Veterinary College in Prince Edward Island with her Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine. I always feel a tremendous sense of pride when I stand in this hon. House to recognize the academic and athletic achievements of our young Aboriginal people. Erin is certainly one of those people.

After graduating from high school in 2003, Erin attended Memorial University from 2005 to 2010, graduating on the Dean's list with a Bachelor of Science in biology. She then worked on a dairy farm in Kilbride where she was introduced to the veterinary field of medicine.

After displaying tremendous interest and competency in the field, Eric was one of two people from Newfoundland and Labrador accepted into the Atlantic Veterinary College in 2011, where she once again excelled in her studies. She is presently doing a thirteen-month internship at the Veterinarian Emergency Clinic on Yonge Street in Toronto.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating Erin on this remarkable achievement and wish her every success in her field of veterinary medicine.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to rise in this hon. House today to acknowledge the official national launch of the Highly Sensitized Patient or HSP program for kidney donation and transplantation. The national launch was recognized across the country this past Friday and marked the successful implementation of the new program in all Canadian provinces and territories. Our Province has been participating in the program since October 2013.

The HSP program represents a collaborative effort between Canadian Blood Services and provincial and territorial governments around the country. The program enhances kidney donation and transplantation for those whose immune systems are more likely to reject transplants, posing difficulty in finding a match.

By participating in this new national organ sharing program, our Province gains access to a Canada-wide pool of kidney donors for patients who need a more specific donor match. Under the program to date, two highly sensitized patients in our Province have been successfully matched with transplants and three patients across Canada have received transplants from residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, a key component of the HSP program is its link to the Canadian Transplant Registry, an online registry operated by Canadian Blood Services. With direction and combined funding from provincial, territorial, and federal governments, and in collaboration with stakeholders and the organ donation and transplantation community, Canadian Blood Services developed the registry to support provincial organ programs, making organ sharing across jurisdictions more efficient.

Highly-sensitized patients wait much longer on average for a kidney transplant and have a greater chance of becoming more ill or dying while they wait. In addition, these patients often require complex chronic care while they wait for a transplant.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Canadian Blood Services for their excellent work in bringing this program online. I would also thank them for their continued dedication within the community

sector and their work to advocate for the health and well-being of all Canadians.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. This is indeed good news today. We are honoured to stand here in the House and recognize the leadership of Canadian Blood Services in establishing the national Highly Sensitized Patient program for kidney transplantation. It has been seven years since Canadian Blood Services was mandated to develop national services for organ and tissue donation and transplantation, and the launch of this program is a significant milestone.

Highly-sensitized patients represent 20 per cent of provincial waitlists, yet only receive about 1 per cent of available organs because their immune systems are more likely to reject a transplanted kidney, making them hard to match. Expanding access nationally improves the chances of these particularly vulnerable patients, most of whom are women.

According to Canadian Blood Services, 4,500 people across Canada are currently waiting for a transplant. Canada lags behind other developed nations in organ donation and transplantation. Becoming an organ donor saves lives and is therefore the most extraordinary legacy one can leave.

Anything we can do in this House to raise the awareness, as we have done on multiple occasions, is indeed a good thing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. I too congratulate everyone who is involved in the implementation of this important program. It is so important that our government has been involved in it. With an aging population, we are going to see more and more people in need of programs such as this. It is a program which is going to continue saving lives, there is no doubt about that.

Canadian Blood Services is a good example of non-profit organizations providing services to people in need. I hope here in Canada we will continue to have programs like this based on need, not on profit.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to speak about the Municipal Stewardship Program. Unique to Newfoundland and Labrador, the program is a result of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture program – a partnership of governments, conservation organizations and local residents implementing the goals and objectives of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. It encourages municipalities and local residents to recognize the value of wildlife habitat found in and near municipal planning boundaries and to implement wise use principles as outlined within a conservation plan. The initiative places the responsibility of sustainable resource management into the hands of the people who know the land best and who have demonstrated a passion for its stewardship.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CRUMMELL: The Department of Environment and Conservation, through the Wildlife Division, administers the program and provides an annual contribution of \$40,000 as well as in-kind support to Eastern Habitat Joint Venture activities. This funding also helps leverage external revenue from various sources

including Environment Canada, Wildlife Habitat Canada, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Mr. Speaker, municipalities that sign stewardship agreements have the opportunity to participate in the non-profit organization known as the Stewardship Association of Municipalities Inc. This past Saturday evening, I had the pleasure of attending the association's Annual General Meeting, hosted by the Town of Flatrock.

The Stewardship Association of Municipalities is a key driver in reinforcing municipalities' commitment to wildlife habitat conservation. Supporting the association in its work to protect wildlife habitat in this Province aligns closely with my department's mission of reducing the adverse impacts of human activities on the environment such as climate change and contributes to other overall health of our ecosystems.

The Department of Environment and Conservation was pleased to directly provide the association with approximately –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CRUMMELL: – \$28,000 in funding last fiscal year to support its important work in the area of wildlife habitat conservation.

Of this funding, \$10,000 was a contribution to the newly established Stewardship Association of Municipalities' Conservation Fund, to be used in support of annual scholarships for post-secondary students who demonstrate academic excellence and intend to pursue a career in environmental conservation.

Mr. Speaker, my department values its close relationship with the member municipalities on wildlife habitat conservation and is supportive of the association's overall conservation efforts. Currently thirty-three municipalities, Province-wide, including the Town of Flatrock, have signed stewardship agreements and I look forward to visiting a number of municipalities over the summer to announce further agreements, thereby expanding the network of

environmentally responsible towns and communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. I acknowledge the success of Eastern Habitat Joint Venture program in protecting wildlife habitat throughout Atlantic Canada and the good work the Wildlife Division personnel and municipal staff who work to get these stewardship agreements in place.

The program is an example of how environmental problems can be tackled through co-operation and collaboration between governments at the federal, provincial and municipal levels, conservation groups and local stakeholders, but it is certainly one government needs to take more action on when it comes to collaboration.

Through municipal stewardship agreements, Newfoundland and Labrador communities are doing their part to protect migratory waterfowl, which is truly an international environmental issue. I commend the municipalities that have signed agreements thus far. Many municipalities in the Province, though, are understaffed and underfunded and they do not have the ability to be able to enter into such an agreement.

I look at the cut positions at Burnt Cape in Raleigh that makes the ecological reserve more vulnerable. We see that the Town of Raleigh, with just 140 residents, it is difficult to be able to protect an area – and we have yet to see government on their natural areas system plan move to improve habitat protection there. As well as we also see again the weak stance on the *Manolis L* from this government when it comes to the Funk Islands and that ecological reserve when it comes to protecting birds and waterfowl.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement. I commend the thirty-three stewardship communities and the officials who have worked hard over the years to protect local wildlife habitats. Because habitats such as marshlands are so vulnerable to destruction from municipal development, we need more people to form these local stewardships and educate their neighbours.

I urge government to support them even more in the future, but this government also needs to do its part and honour its election promise: to create a protected area system plan and protect more than just 4 per cent of land – which is one of the lowest percentages in the country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the minister just announced that the CETA fisheries fund is now dead.

Now, that we are beyond your premature party and after you went to Ottawa to get Stephen Harper to change his mind, I ask the Premier: Can you now confirm that you cannot deliver on the \$280 million that you had thought you had?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, I guess the member opposite was not listening very carefully. The fact is that the statement that we made today, to restate our position, is support

for CETA. We believe CETA is going to be good for Newfoundland and Labrador. We support CETA, and we believe, and as I have said and clearly believe, it is going to be good for business –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER DAVIS: – it is going to be good for us as a Province as well.

What we do not support, Mr. Speaker, is the relinquishing of our MPRs. The federal government came to Newfoundland and said we want to relinquish your MPRs. We reached an agreement on the terms of releasing those MPRs and subsequently changed their view. Until they live up to their obligation, the \$280 that they are going to deliver to us – it is not \$280 million we are going to deliver; it is \$280 million they are going to deliver to us. Until they live up to that agreement, we will not be giving up our MPRs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS C. BENNETT: I guess that would be a yes.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: Can you also confirm that the provincial portion – the \$120 million – that was to be leveraged with the \$280 million federal money is also off the table, and where does that leave our fishing industry that has not seen growth in over a decade?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, MPRs are our jurisdictional right. It is one of two jurisdictional rights and authorities that we have in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The federal government came to Newfoundland and Labrador and wanted us to relinquish that authority. They wanted us to relinquish our authority on MPRs so that they could secure a deal with the European Union through CETA,

Mr. Speaker. We are not going to give up our MPRs.

Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker, the minimum processing requirements rests with the authority of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. We will not give that up until the federal government lives up to the agreement that they reached with our government back in 2013.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters.

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

Mr. Speaker, it was this government, this Premier who said they had no idea what the value of MPRs were. Now this is the same government that does not know what the consequences of this action will be in relation to CETA, in relation to international trade, in relation to fines against the CETA deal.

How can you make such a statement about MPRs, about the CETA deal without knowing the details?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So the member opposite understands, there is no consequence for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. It is the Government of Canada that signs an agreement on CETA. It is the Government of Canada that negotiates an agreement on CETA on behalf of all of the country.

What we are protecting is our jurisdictional authority which the federal government asked us to give up, Mr. Speaker. What I am saying here today, and what I will reiterate to the people of the Province, is that we will not give up our minimum processing requirements unless the federal government lives up to the agreement that they reached a long time ago with this government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, it is estimated there are over 8,600 people living with dementia in our Province. That number is expected to double in the next fifteen years. Eastern Health's clinical chief has stated there are no full-on trained geriatricians in our Province.

I ask the minister: Can you confirm that there are indeed no geriatricians in this Province?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, as reported on CBC in recent days, it is true that there are no geriatricians in Newfoundland and Labrador. Recruitment does remain a real challenge in this area.

Nova Scotia does have several geriatric specialists. However, there are general practitioners in Newfoundland and Labrador who have training and who have experience in the geriatric field. They do provide general geriatric care. They are employed in areas where there are higher numbers of geriatric clients such as in continuing care, rehabilitation, and in long-term care as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear Nova Scotia has a specialist, but unfortunately here in this Province we do not have them.

We have the fastest aging population in the country and this government has had twelve years to prepare for the aging baby boom and the dementia crisis, neither are surprises. This government waited until 2012 to release the long-term care strategy and they still obviously do not have a human health resources plan.

Stakeholders are reporting that we are years behind.

I ask the minister: How do you justify your inaction to prepare for the aging baby boom and the dementia crisis that is here and now?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, I should also point out that discussions are ongoing with Memorial University's Faculty of Medicine to discuss additional training that could be offered for care of the elderly under the family medicine program. Dalhousie does have a program but we do not here, and that is something we are currently exploring.

To the member's question, Mr. Speaker, we have made significant investments in long-term care. We have made significant investments in home support. Our Close to Home strategy, and our long-term care strategy is in fact working, Mr. Speaker. We know there are challenges as the population continues to age. The public discussion about dementia is an important one, and it is one that we are happy to participate in.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the minister and the government that their promises – again, people are having a hard time relying on these promises.

For twelve years this government has held the purse strings, tens of billions in oil money, and we are not at all prepared for this crisis that is here and now. A local doctor says this crisis will bankrupt us because we focused too heavily on institutionalization rather than providing community supports. Eastern Health declined to comment on home first care.

I ask the minister: You have failed to provide the community supports needed to care for people living with dementia, what is your plan?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, our strategy for long-term care and community support services is, in fact, a very detailed ten-year plan and it is one that we have already made great progress with.

While we do not today have a specific strategy called home first, what we do have is a Close to Home strategy. It is a long-term care and community support services strategy. It launched a few years ago, and it is targeted at supporting individuals to remain in their community, remain in their homes, or to return to their community. It is working, Mr. Speaker, but we recognize, given how fast the population is aging in Newfoundland and Labrador, we certainly have more work to do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, we all know the difficult situation in Labrador West with the downturn in the mining industry. Yesterday, the United Steelworkers held a rally to show support for the 150 workers being laid off at IOC. There were hundreds of people there with serious concerns. Our leader was there.

I ask the Premier: Are you going to show your support during this tough time in Labrador West?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, absolutely. It is not the first time stating our support and our concern for the people in Labrador West. We know it has been a difficult year for citizens and residents in Labrador West.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER DAVIS: It is a difficult time for the industry, as well, Mr. Speaker. We know there are challenges between the employers and the employees in Labrador West as they try and find their way forward. We urge both sides, and all members of all parties, to work together to find a resolution that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the operation in Labrador West.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, the Premier did not even see fit to send a Minister of the Crown to the event. The Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs has been silent on the issue in Labrador West. It seems when times are good they are around, like Cabinet retreats; but in bad times, they disappear.

I ask the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs: Why didn't you attend and show your support for the people of Lab West?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, nobody is happy to see job loss in Labrador West. I tell you what, the provincial government is going to be there to support the families and the workers, just as we were when hard times were happening in Wabush.

Today and tomorrow, I believe, in conjunction with Service Canada, we have Advanced Education and Skills hosting a series of information sessions. We will be there to support people, just like we have been there in the past.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. SLADE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in a briefing on MPRs provided by the fisheries department yesterday, one truth

emerged: There is little or no transparency surrounding the approval and the monitoring of MPRs. To begin with, information and reports relating to MPRs had to be extracted from this government through ATIPPA.

I ask the minister: Why are you forcing people to go through ATIPPA to see how much unprocessed fish you are allowing to be shipped out?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, in response to questions that came on the floor of the House last week, I guess it was, with regard to MPRs in relation to Fortune and OCI and those kinds of questions that were here, we offered up to both the Opposition parties and we offered up to the media yesterday briefings on MPRs in the Province and how decisions are made on those. We provided to the Opposition and the media the kinds of information that they were asking for. We did that out of an offer that we presented to them last week.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. SLADE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

One recommendation from the last review on MPRs not implemented was the establishment of an independent panel to evaluate and approve MPR exemption applications. Instead, decisions on MPR exemptions are solely decided by the minister.

I ask the minister: Why have you refused to establish an independent panel to evaluate MPR exemption applications as recommended by your consultant's report?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of MPRs is to increase the utilization of the resource that is in our waters. It is about providing credible employment for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in the fishery. It is about getting resources out of the water that are underutilized into market like we did last year. We provided MPRs for fresh cod coming out of 3Ps to ship to the American markets. To take the consideration that the member opposite had, that is something I will take under advisement.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. SLADE: Mr. Speaker, the minister just said about creating employment in different areas. I have to say that the people over in Fortune do not feel that way today.

Mr. Speaker, Tom Rideout was the Minister of Fisheries when government last completed a review on MPRs almost a decade ago. The report recommended a further evaluation of the MPRs to be undertaken in 2010.

I ask the minister: Since your government has admitted not to know the current values of MPRs, will you commit to an updated assessment?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, MPRs are about providing the opportunities for fishers in the Province, harvesters, as well as plant workers. The situation that we are experiencing right now on the South Coast is about the fishery; it is about maintaining jobs in places like we just talked about on the South Coast.

We talked about 110 full-time jobs, Mr. Speaker. OCI owns the plant in Fortune as an example. OCI owns the quotas on the South Coast. I do not see right now – as I said

yesterday in the media, I do not see any other company coming –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. GRANTER: – behind to offer either twenty weeks' work, or twenty-two weeks' work, or twenty-five weeks' work for the people of Fortune. It is a difficult situation we find ourselves in. There is no company coming behind it to get twenty, or twenty-two, or twenty-five weeks' work. We will look forward to further weeks' work in the years to come.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Estimates the Chief Review Commissioner confirmed that the workers' comp review division has never met the legally mandated deadline of sixty days to complete a review.

I ask the minister: How can this government justify breaching its own legal responsibilities while injured workers' lives are hanging in the balance?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister Responsible for Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

It would be interesting if the member opposite continued down the road of what the Chief Review Commissioner was saying because she said while it has never been met at sixty days, it is not even a practical and a realistic time frame because a lot of times –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. S. COLLINS: If I could finish, please?

With regard to the information that has to be gathered whether it be doctors' reports, whether it has to be setting up representation, a lot of

times the clients cannot even fulfill that sixty days. What we want to do and what is going to be part of the statutory review is coming up with a time frame, recognizing of course you want to do it in the most timely manner because people's lives are waiting on it, but it has to be in practical terms as well as allowing enough time to be able to compile that information.

As I had said, the statutory review, we are working on that now and hope to release it soon and hope to correct that problem.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: Mr. Speaker, as I said we have injured workers across this Province who are waiting to have their cases heard. Yes, granted, there are some injured workers that the situation on the timelines are of their own doing, but many of them are not and we need to address that issue.

Mr. Speaker, the admission by the Chief Review Commissioner further highlights the need for changes to Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act. Government has completed the workers' comp statutory review and has it in its possession for long enough.

I ask the minister, specifically: When can we expect you to table legislation in this House of Assembly to fix this broken system?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister Responsible for Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, I have been very clear on a number of instances standing here in the House that as soon as that piece of work is ready to be released, it will be. It is a very important piece of work. There is quite a bit of work that has gone into it. When we do release it, it will be done right and correct; but I also want to clarify with regard to the application to when the cases are heard, we are looking at approximately four to six months currently.

That is a little bit somewhat as a control of the review division of course because, again, you have doctors' reports, you have clients having to seek representation. What I am happy to report is from hearing to getting a decision, that period, actually when you look at the times most recently you are within thirty days. So I think we have achieved great success with regard to that part, the part that is solely within our control. The other part will be addressed through the statutory review.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: Mr. Speaker, I would say to the minister that it is cold comfort for the injured worker and their family to know that when it finally gets heard they will get a decision in thirty-eight days, but it might take them a full year to get the case heard to begin with.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to go and I am going to ask the minister one more time: When will we see legislation brought before this House of Assembly to address Workers' Comp issues in this Province? Will it be during this session of the House of Assembly, or will it be after the election and someone else will have to bring it up?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

It is not about kicking something down the road. It is about making sure what we come out with, what we release is indeed the right piece of work. Again, I can speak to the importance of it. It is a very important piece of work. There has been much work done into it, but, again, I am not going to rush something.

Will it be brought forward in this session? I cannot say at this point. I would hope so, but what we release I want to make sure it is done

with due diligence and it is quite a piece of work to be released.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. J. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, in November, 2011, the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights published a report on the sexual exploitation of children in Canada. At the same time, this government completed a study into youth sexual exploitation in this Province but hid the results from the public.

Recommendation 8 of the Senate's national study was that the Government of Canada dedicate appropriate resources and funding for education and prevention of sexual exploitation of children and youth, including providing assistance to the provinces and territories.

I ask the minister: Has this government received any federal funds to prevent sexual exploitation of children in our Province? If so, what use has been made of these funds?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

I will say to the member opposite, I will endeavour to find out exact amounts with regard to that piece of funding that he speaks of.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. J. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, in 2006 Saskatchewan produced a fax sheet on youth sexual exploitation defining it as the use of a child under the age of eighteen for a sexual purpose in exchange for benefits such as money, drugs, food, shelter or other consideration.

Manitoba has had a sexual exploitation established since 2002, launching Phase III in 2011. Manitoba named its strategy Tracia's Trust, after fourteen-year-old Tracia Owen, who after years of sexual exploitation and drug addiction hanged herself in an abandoned garage.

I ask the minister: Given that the Government of Canada and other provinces recognize the need for public awareness of sexual exploitation and have tackled this problem head on, will the government now advocate to its colleagues that the sexual exploitation report this government commissioned be made public?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A very serious issue, not only for Newfoundland and Labrador, but for all Canadians. It is a very serious issue for members of this House. I know on both sides we take these matters very seriously and they are of very high concern for all of us.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to the report – very clearly that both police services in Newfoundland and Labrador, the chief of police has said that he is adamantly opposed to the release of this report. He feels it is a concern. He has serious concerns regarding that. We are taking the advice from the police on this matter and we will not be releasing that report.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HILLIER: Mr. Speaker, the new K-7 school in Kelligrews has been referenced in each of the last three Budgets, but to date, we still have only an empty lot and a sign. In Budget 2014, \$11 million was identified for the construction of the school.

I ask the minister: How was the \$11 million spent, and when can the people of Conception Bay South expect construction to begin on their new school?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The new school in Kelligrews is another significant project that is being funded by the provincial government and the Town of Conception Bay South, Mr. Speaker. That particular project is moving through the tender process right now, but I can tell you it is one of many other projects.

The new arena that is being built in Conception Bay South is funded by the government. There is a new fire hall being built in Conception Bay South. There is also a new town hall being built in Conception Bay South. A new bypass road just opened last year, Mr. Speaker. We have made significant investments in the Town of Conception Bay South, and the new school in Kelligrews will be the next one.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HILLIER: Mr. Speaker, I am assuming the poor people of Conception Bay South will only be too glad to thank government for their philanthropy in sending out a few bucks –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. HILLIER: – for us to build those facilities. Mr. Speaker, it is only what the people of Conception Bay South deserve.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HILLIER: Mr. Speaker, the site was approved by council in May of 2014 and site work, tenders for concrete footings and foundations was supposed to be issued last summer. However, we have not seen any construction whatsoever.

Given that tenders have not yet closed and the school is due to open in fifteen months, I ask the minister: Can you guarantee the parents of

Conception Bay South that their children will not have to return to overcrowded classrooms in September of 2016?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What I can tell the member opposite is that I can guarantee him that the process is underway, Mr. Speaker. There will be a new school that the Town of Conception Bay South will be very, very proud of and will serve the residents of that growing community for years and years to come. That is what I can tell the member opposite.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER DAVIS: I can also tell him and the people and citizens of Conception Bay South, it is not philanthropy, Mr. Speaker, it is investments. It is investments in a community, a growing thriving community that is full of hard-working people, hard-working women and men who want to grow and raise their families there.

I can tell you we are very proud of the representation they have had in the past by the former Member for Conception Bay South. They are very proud of the representation provided to them by the Member for Harbour Main, and I can tell you, I for one am very proud to represent Conception Bay South as the Premier of the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, last year government revealed that some schools would deliver full-day kindergarten using a team teaching model that is not consistent with the standard classroom setting. In some cases, two teachers, with two classes of kindergartens will be using the same space where now there is only one class of kindergartens taught.

I ask the Minister of Education: Why are you refusing to release the list of schools expected to use team teaching for full-day kindergarten in 2016?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Acting Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I answered the question last night in Estimates for the member opposite, planning is underway for full-day kindergarten, Mr. Speaker. Our government is very proud of this initiative to bring full-day kindergarten into the Province. We are on track to do so. A part of that planning process, there is much evaluation, as there are some 189 schools that offer kindergarten in the Province. We have to look at their capacity, particularly around capital investments that may need to be made.

As we go through that and we identify what space is available, there is a process in how we are actually going to deliver full-day kindergarten in the classrooms. When we get further along in that process, we are able to define our numbers a little better, Mr. Speaker, we are glad to make that information available.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

There are currently 2,400 outstanding grievances from the Steelworkers local 5975 that IOC is ignoring, thereby creating a toxic work environment at the mine in Labrador City.

I ask the Premier: How can he sit by and let this multinational company ignore the positive labour relations culture that these 1,400 workers have been used to in our Province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, the resolutions and handling of grievances is a matter between members of the union representatives, employees, and also their employer. We know the relationship between the employers and the employees in the Labrador West region right now, and IOC, are strained significantly. It is a concern for us. This has a potential for a significant impact on so many families, and the actual region itself. We have already seen the impacts of the challenges that exist in the industry itself.

We have had a mediator assigned for several months now. I am very glad to report, the latest information I have is that through this mediator assigned by the government, that both parties are now meeting on a more regular basis and are trying to work through their issues together.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier is hearing stuff that I am not hearing for sure.

A labour management committee, as recommended by the Voisey's Bay Industrial Inquiry, would have been a useful tool before relations got as bad as they are in Labrador City.

I ask the Premier: Will he amend the Labour Relations Act to require that parties to a collective agreement establish a labour management committee where one of the parties makes a written request?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Labour Relations Agency.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, over the last number of months, as the Premier has indicated, senior staff at the Labour Relations Agency has been engaged with the employer and the union, working through various issues, making options available in how they find a resolution in regard to issues that

have been defined between the two groups, as is indicated by the Premier as well.

Hearing back from the Labour Relations Agency, there is some progress being made. We are certainly pleased with that, but we emphasize that a relationship between the groups cannot be mandated. They need to work together collectively to find a resolution to the issues they have at hand. We will provide the service to do that. That has been done now. We look forward to greater resolution to some of the issues that are outstanding right now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, psychiatrists, nurses, social workers, community groups are all telling us loud and clear that people cannot get better if they do not have a safe, affordable house to live. People are stuck in the Waterford, or go to emergency rooms, or return to jail because they cannot find housing.

I ask the minister again: Will he instruct NL Housing to halt the sale of all assets until a housing plan and strategy is completed reflecting consultation and incorporating the recommendations of the OrgCode report?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, we recognize the challenges that some people face in finding suitable accommodations. The work that Newfoundland and Labrador Housing carries out, they are to be commended for it.

The OrgCode report, the work continues, Mr. Speaker. The committee has reported back and we will act on that.

In terms of the sale of units, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing are not selling any social housing units.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing is receiving \$20 million less in Budget 2015.

I ask the minister: What assets exactly is NL Housing selling to make up for this Budget cut to social housing?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, there has been some land sold, or it will be put on the market to be sold.

Mr. Speaker, the member and I have had several conversations about this. We know the challenges that are faced by individuals seeking houses, but I want to say to her again, there is going to be no sale of social housing units. The units that Newfoundland and Labrador Housing has now will remain. We expect, Mr. Speaker, that working together we will find housing that will accommodate the individuals she is talking about.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre has time for a quick question.

MS ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister again: Where is the long promised, home ownership assistance program designed to help young working families?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation has time for a quick reply.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Work is underway, and we expect to roll out that strategy very shortly.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A petition to pave Route 434 in Conche.

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

WHEREAS Route 434 Conche Road is 17.6 kilometres of unpaved road; and

WHEREAS the current road conditions are deplorable; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Automobile Association ranked Route 434 as the sixth worse road in Atlantic Canada; and

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

WHEREAS an improved paved road would enhance local business, fish processing operations and tourism, which is vital to the health and communities affected;

We the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge the government to allocate funds in the Provincial Roads Program to pave Route 434.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by residents of Roddickton, Conche, Bide Arm, and Englee. All communities on the Northern Peninsula East. The Town of Conche, on many occasions, have been advocating for a paved road network. They were promised verbally. That is what they have in writing, that the current Administration had verbally promised that this road would be paved.

There has been a \$6 million investment, rebuilding and realigning this route. There is a lot of activity in this community. It is a strong, viable, vibrant town. It has 800 commercial trucks travelling over this highway with the crab and pelagics processing plant. They do whelk there. They employ regionally people on the West Coast and on the Northern Peninsula. They also have a tourism economy that is quite strong with thousands of tourists, cruise ship visits, a good business community that is there. It is a town that has a lot of opportunity, but government is limiting because they are not providing the basic infrastructure.

Current conditions are deplorable. Requests have been made to the minister to come drive this road, to visit the community, and to make allocations. We need to see where the politics comes out of road paving –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MITCHELMORE: – and we actually see where roads have a priority. I think a gravel road such as this with so much activity in a community certainly deserves a higher rank in priority when it comes to how roads are currently being budgeted and we see where value is going out.

I will keep presenting this petition on behalf of my constituents in the region as long as I am the Member of the House of Assembly and as long as this road is not paved.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

WHEREAS the residents of Winterton feel that the condition of Main Road, Route 80, located in the Town of Winterton, is deplorable; and

WHEREAS residents of Winterton are frustrated with the condition of the road; and

WHEREAS government has failed to address this problem;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to make the necessary repairs to Main Road, Route 80, in Winterton.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand here this afternoon and enter this petition on behalf of the residents of Winterton. Route 80, which is the main road through Winterton, in the summer months is a very busy route for tractor trailers servicing the three large fish processors in the district. The wear and tear from the heavy loads is quite evident on this road.

This portion of road in Winterton needs to be resurfaced. Cold patch is just not any longer working. The department did do some work there back a few weeks ago, but it has already deteriorated back to a condition similar to where it was before. It is also, Mr. Speaker, causing a safety issue. The safety issue comes where we have vehicles swerving to avoid these large potholes in the road and going sometimes into oncoming traffic.

Mr. Speaker, I did have the opportunity this morning to meet with the Minister of Transportation's officials and address this issue. They were willing to listen to the issue, but I

was not overly assured that it was going to be fixed in this construction season.

Mr. Speaker, again on behalf of the residents of Winterton and the people using that road on a daily basis to get to the three large fish processors and the tourism industry in the District of Trinity – Bay de Verde, I would urge government to address this issue during the 2015 construction season.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have presented this petition so many times I am sure you can quote it back to me verbatim by now, but the issue continues to persist. It is a very pressing issue in the district.

I am not exaggerating when I say every single day I get an email or I get something posted –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS DEMPSTER: – in social media. There are many, many frustrations around the broadband issue.

When you live in a technological age and sometimes you can send and receive emails and almost never do more than that – and we are not talking one community, Mr. Speaker. We are talking about all of the communities in Southeast Labrador. It is extremely frustrating.

I would ask the minister to give the people of the area an update. I know there is updated proposal gone into the system. I have met with the MP on this issue. The MP is lobbying federally for some funds. We have a great partnership proposal here where if we could receive money from the feds and the Province would be willing to do their share, the service provider is willing to put funds into this and to maintain it. Mr. Speaker, they are not able to do this without a partnership.

People are being crippled every single day. The tourists who are coming in are not able to use the broadband service. Businesses are being hindered, schools, and working professionals. We are maxed out in most of the communities. We have been closed to sales for a couple of years.

It is a very pressing issue and we are looking for an update. I would ask the government to pursue this matter to bring the residents of Southeast Labrador online with the rest of the Province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a petition from people in the St. George's area related to health care. The petition reads:

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

WHEREAS there is not a permanent doctor in the Town of St. George's; and

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I have presented petitions on this topic many times before, and I am going to continue to present petitions on this topic until the situation is resolved because it is a very serious matter. We have had a community here in St. George's without a doctor for about half a year now. They look to their neighbours in the Heatherton to Highlands area and they look at the clinic in Jeffrey's and they see a situation there where they have not had a doctor for a year-and-a-half.

People are wondering what is going on, people are wondering when they are going to get a doctor. This situation is causing serious problems. It is a crisis situation in the hospital in Stephenville. People, because they do not have a doctor, have to go to the emergency services in Stephenville. What happens is people are left waiting at the emergency outpatients there in Stephenville and have to wait hours. Some people have told me they have waited all day until late at night to get in to see a doctor there, Mr. Speaker.

It is causing serious problems. Elderly people are having to travel long distances to get to the health care they need. There are delays in getting their medical test results back. People with cancer have told me they have had to wait – they have not been able to get their tests back in a timely manner, so they have had to get a doctor in other communities such as Port aux Basques or Corner Brook in order to get their test results in a timely manner.

It is a serious issue, Mr. Speaker, and it is causing people lots of problems and government has to take action to address this and to see that it does not happen again.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I am happy to present this petition to the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the petition of the undersigned residents humbly sheweth:

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

WHEREAS there is no cellphone coverage on Route 480; and

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

WHEREAS the residents and users of Route 480 feel that the provincial government should invest in cellphone coverage for rural Newfoundland and Labrador;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to

partner with the private sector to extend cellphone coverage along Route 480.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to stand here and present this petition on behalf of my constituents, and, in fact, on behalf of the constituents of other districts in the House who are not presenting petitions on this need.

I find it very interesting – again, I have done this on a number of occasions. We were actually criticized yesterday by a member opposite who stood up during debate on the Budget and said you stand over there and you ask for things like cellphone coverage. To that, I say that is our job to ask for things for the people of our districts. This is something that is not just a pie in the sky. This is a life or death situation. So we will continue to stand and ask for things like cellphone coverage. In fact, we are happy to do it for those out there on the other side whose members are afraid to stand up and enter petitions on their behalf.

Now, you might say: well, how can you ask for money and then ask for something else and then complain about the Budget? Well, I would say this, there are other ways. This is what we continue to say, is the management and the wastage has been an issue. For the million dollars you spent on the Bill 29 review, you could have covered cellphone coverage in a bunch of areas in this Province. That is wastage.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. A. PARSONS: In fact, I remember this big song and dance you had for this thing called CETA. They had a big announcement on that. Again, we had a big party on it. We could have taken that money and put it into something like cellphone coverage.

In fact, I remember all the songs and dances, the big tea party they had out in the lobby to talk about Muskrat Falls. Well, these are things you could have – we are not even going to get into the other wastage that has gone on, the money that has been wasted in other endeavours that have shown nothing to fruition.

So, we are going to continue to ask for this. We are going to continue to represent the people who put us here and until we do not have that opportunity, we will continue to stand up here in this House and ask for things like cellphone coverage.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

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

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At this time I would like to call from the Order Paper, Motion 1, that the House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, the Budget Speech.

MR. SPEAKER: Resuming debate on the Budget Speech, debating the amendment.

I recognize the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is an honour to rise and speak to the Budget.

Mr. Speaker, it is always good to review Hansard sometimes and see what your colleagues have to say and what members across the way have to say. I would just like to reference comments by the Member for Lake Melville on cellphones. I have brought it up in petitions in the past. We are led to feel like we should not be asking for cellphone service because what, we are too small? We are in Northern Labrador, we are not important? This is from a minister, Mr. Speaker?

I will tell you something, Mr. Speaker, a cellphone tower has a range of sixty miles. If you had put a cell tower in every community from Rigolet to Nain, Burton Winters would still be alive today.

Now I say to the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, you think twice before you

stand up and criticize us on what we are fighting for. It is not a pleasure to be in Opposition when you look at the things he has done. He outlined them in his district yesterday. We would love to have some of that, Mr. Speaker. We will stand up and we will fight for the people we represent.

Mr. Speaker, if we were not doing that, then we would not be doing our jobs, would we? We would not be doing our jobs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, we do not want these things because they are a novelty. We want things because everyone else has them, why can't we? Are we substandard people? We do not get to have what other people take for granted in this Province? I do not think so. I do not believe it. That is why I am here, to work on that.

Mr. Speaker, I will give credit where credit is due. In last year's Budget I saw the then minister, the Member for Gander, announce a \$350,000 housing repair program. I give credit to the Member for Gander. As a matter of fact, the AngajukKâk from Makkovik told me to pass on his gratitude to the Member for Gander. I think the members in this government from Labrador ought to take a lesson from the Member for Gander because he has done more for Labrador than our own Labrador ministers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. EDMUNDS: When I hear our own ministers criticizing us for standing up for the people we represent, yes, Mr. Speaker, I take offence to it.

Mr. Speaker, we talked about the housing program. I would like to go back there. When you have substandard housing or lack of housing, it causes a long list of issues wherever you are in the Province in different capacities but the problems are real. The problems are very real, Mr. Speaker. It leads to overcrowding and it leads to a whole bunch of social and health issues that we have seen.

Since 2011, since I became a member, Mr. Speaker, I have questioned the effectiveness of the food subsidy. I have also questioned the

Nutrition North program to the point where we question if they actually benefit the people in the regions they are designed to.

The Member for Labrador West, when he was a minister, Mr. Speaker, actually questioned me. It is not the kind of an answer you want when you are looking at a consumer who is paying outrageous prices compared to a nearby region with a Nutrition North subsidy and Air Foodlift Subsidy program in place, two different programs.

It has been acknowledged that the Nutrition North program is not working. It has been acknowledged, but the previous member responsible for Labrador actually asked me if the airlift subsidy was working, and my quick answer was, no. We are still paying outrageous prices when compared to retailers in Lake Melville. As a matter of fact, it is 50 per cent to 100 per cent difference in the prices, and in some cases more.

When you are looking at revisiting programs that are set up to assist the people in Labrador, things like the Air Foodlift Subsidy, the question that comes out, is it being monitored? The quick answer to that is no, it is not. If the former minister is going to ask me if it is working, then I would submit that it is not working or it is not being monitored.

The nutrition component of healthy living that most of us in this Province take for granted, Mr. Speaker, in some areas in the Province, like Northern Labrador, it is more of a barrier. It is more of a barrier than a right, and this is all due to overpricing. It is certainly something that – it is not going to go away. It is not going to go away as long as I am here.

All you have to do is walk around the stores. Being in Labrador and then coming out to St. John's and taking a dart down to the stores here, you very quickly compare prices. It is quite staggering; the same items on the shelves here in St. John's or on the shelf in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and on the shelf in Hopedale, Rigolet, or Nain is totally different prices. You cannot help but wonder if there are programs in place, how effective they are when you are paying 300 per cent, as much as 500 per cent, difference in prices.

Then you go on and look at services to get those goods to where you live. The government has stood up and taken great pride in its new strategy for replacement of vessels – great announcements. We look on that and say yes, we are going somewhere, but also we are part of this Province too and questions have arisen regarding the Request for Proposals in Labrador.

My colleague, the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, has been very vocal on this issue. Our leader has been vocal on this issue. I have been vocal on this issue. What did the government do, Mr. Speaker? They pulled it off the table. I think it is stall tactic myself. I have never heard the Minister Responsible for Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs stand up. I have not heard anything.

We talk about the vessels that came out. A lot of them were mentioned in the Throne Speech. The *Hazel McIsaac* was built to replace the *Island Joiner* and I think it was the *MV Sound of Islay*. Then you had the *Grace Sparkes*, she replaced the *Hamilton Sound*.

You are looking at two new vessels coming online, the *MV Veteran*, which is to replace the *Captain Earl W. Winsor* and finally, the *Legionnaire*, which is coming out to replace the *Beaumont Hamel*. Do you notice I said finally? The *Legionnaire* is the final vessel.

The Member for Lake Melville had his chance. I am sure he will have his chance again. When it comes to the last part of the vessel replacement strategy for Labrador, the announcement was made in 2013 – the same time as the *Legionnaire*, the same time as the *Veteran* – but that one went backwards. Not only did they withdraw the announcement, they took the RFP off the table. Not only that, they violated the land claims agreement, which was signed by three governments: the Nunatsiavut Government, the provincial government, and the federal government. That is just one of a whole number of violations of the land claims agreement that I will get into.

An agreement that is signed between levels of government is not an agreement of circumstance. It is not an agreement for interpretation, and this government ought to see the difference – but no. It is their way and no

one else has anything to say about it. Then they have the audacity to stand up and say they are committed to Labrador, they are committed to the Province – it makes you wonder.

Again, I would like to talk about the RFP, Mr. Speaker. A former minister, the Member for Labrador West, talked about how complicated the process was for the Request for Proposals. It was very, very complicated; but, at the same time, he was saying this, the RFPs for the other vessels were rolling out in front of us. I do not think it was that much more complicated.

You talk about how time consuming was this process? It took three ministers to do it, yet the Humber Valley Paving contract took seven hours.

AN HON. MEMBER: What?

MR. EDMUNDS: Seven hours, yes. So, again, a matter of circumstance, that is all it was, and the Humber Valley Paving contract is cancelled, and now the RFP contract is also cancelled.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. EDMUNDS: I would like to go back to the Muskrat Falls Project, Mr. Speaker. I hear the Member for Lake Melville standing up. I listen to him every year talk about how supportive he is of the Muskrat Falls Project.

Mr. Speaker, just over four years ago the same member in a different capacity stood up against the Muskrat Falls Project. If he wants to stand up and start throwing blame –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. EDMUNDS: I guess whatever line you are toeing, you toe –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. EDMUNDS: – is where you stand, I say to the hon. member.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask members for their co-operation.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The former Minister of Transportation when I talked to him about new ferries, he mentioned infrastructure.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. EDMUNDS: He said we are not touching infrastructure. All we are going to do is build you two new vessels, one for the South Coast and –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I ask the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs for his co-operation.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains, to continue.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Not that I need any protection. Mr. Speaker, again we talk about infrastructure.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. EDMUNDS: The former minister said that there will be no infrastructure but we are going to give you two new vessels. Mr. Speaker, in this year's Budget under Project Highlights, I think it was, under New Ferries, if I could quote from that document, "Bell Island, Fogo Island and Change Islands Project cost: \$140 million for vessels and new wharf infrastructure."

Mr. Speaker, I am glad that Bell Island, Fogo Island-Change Islands got their vessels and I am glad they got their infrastructure, because there are other parts in this Province that never got it. As a matter of fact, like I said, under this government's watch our people were taken off the table, and no, Mr. Speaker, they are not going to hear the end of it.

In Northern Labrador, Mr. Speaker, you look at storage facilities. The sheds are sixteen feet by sixteen feet, which cannot hold one-one-hundred of the freight that comes off. Last fall, and I will say it again, Mr. Speaker, 300 pallets of food was dropped off in Hopedale in sub-zero temperatures. That is okay? There is nothing wrong with that? If that happened anywhere else, I wonder what the outcome would be.

I hear the Minister of Labrador Affairs standing up. Now, Mr. Speaker, it is too bad he cannot do it when he is supposed to.

So let's put it all into perspective. We are looking at, as I talked about: shortages, overcrowding, high food prices, nutrition impacts, substandard services –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (Littlejohn): Order, please!

I ask members to confine their comments to somewhere else in the Chamber.

The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains, please.

MR. EDMUNDS: Mr. Speaker, in the Budget, and I have said this before, it was good to see the announcements in the Budget on social programming, but my statement is your throwing revenue, or you are throwing programming in for social programming but we are not seeing anything done to address the issues that cause social programs.

I think if you look at addressing the social issues – yes, they are very important, but when you get the social impacts like overcrowding, high cost of living, then you are getting into mould issues, you are getting into tuberculosis and it spawns to social programs that many regions in our Province are experiencing, Mr. Speaker. So you

have to look at where you are putting your resources.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. EDMUNDS: If you address the causes of social programs, Mr. Speaker, you eliminate social programs. If you put money on social programs, you put another band-aid on the problem. I think it is just another case of mismanagement, of failure to address the issues.

I will have another twenty minutes also to address the Budget. Hansard from yesterday, I say to the Member for Lake Melville, is a wonderful thing.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is certainly an honour and a privilege for me to rise here in the House today and speak to the amendment to the motion, Mr. Speaker. I would like to start out today again by thanking my constituents for the great privilege and opportunity to be here today and representing the fine people of Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

It is quite an impressive district. I like to boast about my district as often as I can. In my previous Budget speech, Mr. Speaker, I spoke a lot about the aquaculture and the advances it has made in my rural, remote area.

Because of aquaculture, Mr. Speaker, we have the ability to sustain a viable future. We have the opportunity to at least offer choice for those who decide they may want to stay living in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. That is not the choice for everyone, but at one time there was no choice at all. You had no choice but to go.

Today, that has changed. It has changed in large part because of the strong support and initiative

of the innovative entrepreneurs in the Coast of Bays region, and the strong support of our government which has over the last ten years invested very heavily in the sector. We recognize the importance and value that it brings not just to the Coast of Bays, but to the Province as a whole.

So in thinking about what I would get up and speak about today – and I have been listening to a lot of the Budget speeches, some very, very interesting ones, some very informative ones where you actually learn a lot, and some that have a lot of rhetoric and pandering, Mr. Speaker. I am going to focus today, when I speak, primarily on Budget 2015 and actually speak to the Budget itself.

With budget bills and money bills, of course, we have the latitude to speak freely, and we can talk about any number of issues. I thought today I would focus on the Budget and, in particular, the fact that we have a plan, a very concrete, accountable and measurable plan, Mr. Speaker.

The question I would pose to the Official Opposition Party, and I am sure we are going to hear more from the Third Party in the months ahead. The question I would pose, and that has been posed by many here in the House, is: what is your plan? Is it the borrow, borrow, borrow of the Leader of the Opposition, or is it the cut, cut, cut of the Member for Virginia Waters?

We do not really know, Mr. Speaker, and it causes me to ask myself the question: Can we trust the Opposition with any policy that they bring forward? Because they do seem to change their mind on a rapid basis. The plan to plan the plan has been a long time coming. I sit back sometimes and scratch my head.

Over the years growing up you hear a lot of talk about politicians and what politicians are and are not. I have to say now here in the House, being a politician I do have great respect for each and every member of this House and a great appreciation and understanding of the amount of vast work that goes into the job we do by each and every one of us.

That being said, when it comes to policy, I have to scratch my head. I ask myself the question: Can I trust anything that is being promised or

promoted from across the way? Because I have seen nothing that gives me confidence that trust exists. Can you trust the Progressive Conservatives, Mr. Speaker? Absolutely, because we have laid out our plan. We have laid out our plan in more detail than any plan has ever been laid out in this House of Assembly. In fact, we have actually mapped out clearly the next five years.

Many of us talk about how we go back to our districts and we talk to residents and people on the ground in our various communities about what Budget 2015 actually means. Someone who I have great respect for, great admiration for, a strong leader in our community, Mr. Speaker, made a point of talking to me one evening about the Budget. His comment was, anybody can get up and promise to pave the world. It takes a strong person to get up and tell it like it is.

This person said he has great confidence in Premier Davis and will definitely be supporting Premier Davis in the upcoming election, and in large part because of his confidence in the Premier. He knows he can trust the Premier and the man will tell us the truth.

It is not always something we are going to like, but it is reality, and truth is something that we all have to deal with. If we are going to serve the people of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and the best interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, they deserve nothing but the truth and for their politicians to be honest and upfront with them.

So Budget 2015 is a plan that takes a measured, balanced approach to deal with the fiscal realities that are facing Newfoundland and Labrador. As I said in previous speeches, it is not just a fiscal reality for Newfoundland and Labrador; it is a fiscal reality for the entire globe, as we have seen the unprecedented fall in oil prices. We have to manage our way through this.

A lot of my colleagues, they all enjoy a good game of hockey – me, not so much – and a phrase that is often used is you stick handle your way through rough times. We are going through a rough patch right now, but our team, our Premier, our Cabinet, our caucus, does have the

experience. We have been down this road before in 2008, we have popped out of the decline faster than any other jurisdiction, and I have every confidence we will do so again.

This year, in particular, the Premier of the Province has a new approach to fiscal management. We are on a new watch now with a new leader at the helm, and he has a fresh approach to doing business. I, for one, have to say I thoroughly enjoy being a politician, and I thoroughly enjoy working under the leadership of Premier Davis.

This is not always an easy job. At times, it can be very challenging. When you have a leader like Premier Davis, who is so very engaging of each and every member of his caucus, who is willing to listen to each and every member of his caucus and to the people as a whole, then it is easy to spring out of bed in the morning and come to work and feel really good about the work you are doing. So, I have the greatest of confidence. Probably one of the greatest times since I have been here in the House of Assembly – I have really enjoyed the last year or so in particular.

Now, back to our Budget. The unpredictable in oil prices, it has placed great strain on the revenues of the Province, Mr. Speaker, and we need to adjust our course to meet this reality head-on. That is exactly what has been mapped out for us through the Budget in 2015. So, because the revenue circumstances have changed, of course, we are looking at our overall long-term fiscal plan, and we have precise targets laid out over the next five years. We have the ability to measure those targets, measure our outputs, and see how we are actually performing, and we can adapt accordingly as we go through the plan.

I want to be very clear about this. The situation we find ourselves in now is a temporary one, and we are going to manage our way through it, but prudent fiscal management demands gradual change to avoid harming the Provinces economy. Mr. Speaker, I do not hear as much of it in the House now that there is a larger Opposition and they seem to be performing as most typical political parties do; but if you look back to Hansard, a few years back, you heard about so, who is writing their speeches and this,

that, and the other thing. I have noticed a definite theme in the speech writers for the Opposition now. They have a theme of mismanagement is the word that they are using. You will notice every speaker uses it, so I firmly believe the speech writer is at work.

The reality, Mr. Speaker, is that our Province is in the best possible hands that it can be at this point in time in particular to manage our way through a rough patch. We have been through the rough times. We have been through a lot of the rhetoric that we hear coming from the other side. We know what works and what does not from the school of hard knocks often in a lot of cases.

I want to speak in particular to Muskrat Falls in that regard. Muskrat Falls is something that the Opposition – we still are not clear if the Opposition is going to suspend the project, are they going to put it on hold and put it under review, in which case it would drive the cost up by hundreds of millions of dollars. That, to me, is a very scary prospect, Mr. Speaker, to see something like that happen just for the sake of politics.

We do not know if they would plan to squash it, but I know that Muskrat Falls is one of the smartest things that has ever happened to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in terms of our ability to be self-sufficient and have a reliable, sustainable source of revenue for generations to come, centuries to come, because it is a renewable resource. As long as the water runs, Mr. Speaker, there will be electricity and as long as there is electricity for us to sell, we will be a Province that makes money.

Instead of looking to Quebec and comparing ourselves to Quebec and all the great hospitals and all the great road networks that they building with the money of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians from the Upper Churchill, I might add, we will be the ones in that position, we will be the ones reaping those benefits, and our people will finally see the benefits of the great Churchill.

I was reading on Twitter last week some comments about Muskrat Falls. I kind of said to myself this person really does not have a good handle on the Muskrat Falls – the Upper

Churchill, I should say, and the history of what it means to Newfoundlanders and how it burns deep in many of us. I know I was just a very young girl sitting around the table watching the news with my dad after supper. He would talk about the Upper Churchill and be so angry about the great injustice that had happened to us as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Premier Danny Williams, when he came into office, was absolutely determined that he was going to right that wrong. He was going to find a way to ensure that the vast resources of the great Churchill River would once again be restored properly to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

He did it, Mr. Speaker. He found the solution in Muskrat Falls because we are no longer beholden to Quebec for a corridor to sell our power. We now have two routes off the Island to sell our power. Those two routes will ensure that we have revenue, as I said earlier, for decades and generations and generations to come. It is a fabulous project for Newfoundland and Labrador.

If we have the certainty that our children and our grandchildren will not have to live in poverty and they will not have to be subjected to the decline in infrastructure, like we have, because they have a very profitable enterprise in Nalcor of all of its citizens, then that is something that makes me sleep very well at night. I have great confidence that the future for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will continue to get better and better and better. Muskrat Falls is the very key to our profitability and our sustainability. I am a strong supporter of it.

I truly hope as we move towards the next election when voters think about things, they ask themselves: (a) do they trust what they hear in promises from the Opposition; and (b) what will happen to Muskrat Falls? At this juncture for anything to happen to Muskrat Falls, to stall it or shut it down, in my opinion, would be disastrous for the people of the Province. I think, at the very least, they deserve some straight answers as to what anyone else who is proposing to govern would offer on that regard.

One thing we are absolutely confident of is we will continue to offer excellent leadership on

Muskrat Falls. We will have the project up and running and be very happy to flick the switch in the next two or three years. It is going to be an absolutely memorable day for the entire Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

It will not have a history as the Upper Churchill does, leaving quite a negative taste in our mouth as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. I have every confidence in seeing it as the solution that brought back the Upper Churchill and gave us new assets in addition through Muskrat Falls and Gull Island. I truly believe it is a fabulous project.

Now, in terms of the choices our government has faced this year in terms of Budget 2015, and that is what it is, Mr. Speaker, it is clearly a Budget about choices. We chose a balanced, measured approach that puts people first versus the slash and cut that was suggested by the Finance critic in the Opposition, or the borrow more and borrow often that was suggested by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to see how there are so many different policies coming out of just one group, but our people and our team are very committed, very focused, very jelled. We are all pulling our oars in the same direction, and that direction is the betterment of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Now, I am going to talk a little bit in my remaining time about some of the strategic investments in particular that are in Budget 2015. I want to talk a little bit about early childhood development and education. In terms of early childhood learning, this is the plan of the Progressive Conservatives.

Budget 2015 allocates \$45.7 million to continue the implementation of our Caring for Our Future strategy. That represents a \$3.2 million increase over last year's Budget, Mr. Speaker, and it is the third consecutive year of funding increases. It really points to our recognition that early childhood development is very much a priority for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

More than \$10.5 million has been allocated in this year's Budget to continue with the implementation of full-day kindergarten to start next year in 2016. That, again, is an investment

we are very committed to. It is an investment in the early development of our children that we firmly believe is going to lead to a better society in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We continue to strengthen the K-12 school infrastructure. This year over \$8.2 million has been allocated for planning for new schools. Over \$65.2 million for the ongoing school construction projects, and nearly \$22 million will be spent this year for repairs and maintenance.

In terms of post-secondary education, what great initiatives have been brought forward by the Progressive Conservative Government. I am one of those people, I like to keep a scrapbook of things that are very meaningful to me. One of my scrapbooks has my very first tuition bill that I ever had. My first year of university, and I will not tell you what year that was because I will date myself, but my tuition was \$500 a semester, Mr. Speaker, and at that –

AN HON. MEMBER: It sure has gone up.

MS PERRY: It has gone up a bit, and at the time it was quite a challenge. My father had passed away; it was just me and my mom. I was going through school on student loans and it was tight. It was a challenge, Mr. Speaker. We did not have a lot of money. That is probably why I kept that first tuition receipt, because I was so proud of myself. I did pay it from odd jobs and things that I did when I was in high school, like many kids do these days.

We did not have a franchise as such, but I used to work at a place called Golden Fried Chicken. I would work until 6:00 o'clock in the morning and then get up at 9:00 to go play in Mass. So that was my life in Grade 10, 11, and 12 and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I was able to save money for my tuition which meant so much to me.

Today, Mr. Speaker, many of our rural residents in particular, and certainly even the residents here in St. John's who live at home, tuition is still one of the biggest impediments to the ability to be able to go and avail of a post-secondary education. In terms of some of the measures we have taken here as a government, we have frozen tuition year after year after year, making it possible for thousands of more young people

to be able to go to school and avail of a university or trade degree.

In terms of loans to grants – and this I started talking about when I started out. Loans to grants; boy, did that ever make a difference to me. At the end of my time in university, I was able to go straight to the bank when I graduated. The very first thing I did was I went and took my grant paper and I went straight to the bank and paid down on my student loan. So all of a sudden what was a massive student loan became a very small, manageable student loan, Mr. Speaker, that I was able to pay off within two or three years as opposed to nine, because of the grants that were in place. We have brought those grants back.

In terms of apprenticeship renewal, there is approximately \$20 million in Budget 2015 to go towards skilled trade development and a variety of initiatives to revitalize the apprenticeship system, Mr. Speaker, which gives our people the opportunity for work experience. The provincial government will also continue to support, like I said, the tuition freeze this year for Canadian undergraduate students and the tuition freeze for the College of the North Atlantic.

In terms of the Population Growth Strategy, \$500,000 has been implemented this year as well for the Population Growth Strategy, Mr. Speaker. I am very quickly running out of time here. I am getting a feeling that for some reason I am getting leave today.

I want to talk a little bit now actually about our business investment. One of the things, Mr. Speaker, that really upsets me when I hear it coming from the Opposition is how they talk about we do not have innovators in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. SPEAKER: I remind the hon. member her time has expired.

AN HON. MEMBER: By leave.

MR. SPEAKER: By leave, the hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS PERRY: How could you say that we have no innovators in Newfoundland and Labrador?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS PERRY: We have a very innovative population. I will venture to say that from the very first settlers that came to Newfoundland and Labrador we have been innovators, Mr. Speaker.

The Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development is encouraging a very diverse business climate, and we encourage diversification of the economy. We have a lot of programs in place to support that. For example, if you look at the business and regional development program, Budget 2015 maintains funding of approximately \$44.4 million to support start-up businesses, emerging growth sectors, and regional development activities. This investment is a continuation of robust business support programs from pre-commercial phase, to new start-up, to growth and expansion.

We have tax breaks for certain businesses. We have special investments into fisheries, driving tourism, heritage assets, research and development, work in forestry, aquaculture, and the new interactive digital media tax credit. Mr. Speaker, that is innovation.

There is so much more here, Mr. Speaker, that I would love to be able to talk about, but I am out of time. Thank you so much for granting me leave, and I look forward to my final Budget speech when we actually get to the main motion.

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JOYCE: I thank the member. I was a bit late, Mr. Speaker, coming into the House because I was just on Open Line talking about the increased cost of waste management for Western Newfoundland. So, I am sorry I was late, but I had to express my concerns and my thoughts to the people of the Province about the cancellation of the waste management.

Once again, Mr. Speaker – and I will tell you the flabbergasting part about this, and my caucus members heard me here today. Don Downer, who is chair, who I do not think was qualified. He was a political appointee.

Here is the Mayor of the City of Corner Brook, and I have been preaching to the City of Corner Brook for a long time about this, about the increase in fees, that it has been delayed. There has been nothing said about it, but today, give the Mayor of Corner Brook credit. He stood up for the people of Corner Brook in Western Newfoundland, not for the government.

Don Downer: it could have been worse, they have a billion dollar deficit. Why doesn't Don Downer either move himself aside or defend the people of Western Newfoundland, which he is supposed to, and stop defending the political people who appointed him there, which I do not think he is qualified to be there?

So anyway, I am sorry for being late, but that is where I was. Once again, I just said on Pete Soucy, and to anybody who is listening out in Western Newfoundland, in their own report, in the government's own report, Mr. Speaker, to ship the garbage from Western Newfoundland to Norris Arm out in Central, there is a \$1.8 million cost over and above. Who is going to pay for that?

AN HON. MEMBER: The people of Western Newfoundland.

MR. JOYCE: The people of Western Newfoundland are going to pay for that, Mr. Speaker. That is what I have been saying. I have been preaching in this House – I asked questions to three or four different ministers. It is very obvious – now this minister is just taking in the problem but if you go back the last two or three years and look at the questions I asked in this House, what I have been saying, what I have been hearing, and what I have been preaching in this House and Western Newfoundland finally came true. Sadly, it is finally coming true that the Waste Management Strategy has been delayed. It is going to cost more.

I know the minister is listening very intently, and I think the minister inherited this problem. I think this minister is going to try his best to get

it straightened out; but the other three or four prior, I have asked them questions upon questions upon questions and there is just no way in the world would they stand up and be honest and say no, this is going to be delayed. This is going to cost the people of Western Newfoundland more money. It is absolutely shocking.

Mr. Speaker, what is the reason given? We have a billion-dollar deficit. Here they are now – this government is standing up saying to the people of Western Newfoundland we are going to charge you more when we get the waste management site set up outside Gander, in Norris Arm. We are going to charge you more. We are not going to have it done for another ten years. In ten years we will finally have it all done, yet they want these to be happy – because you put yourself in a financial mess, now who is going to suffer are the people in Western Newfoundland and the environment. Because of this government's mismanagement now our environment and the people of Western Newfoundland are another casualty.

It is sad, Mr. Speaker. Do you want to know why myself and the caucus here cannot support the Budget? Here is another example.

AN HON. MEMBER: So many reasons.

MR. JOYCE: So many reasons. So many reasons, it is so true that we cannot support – here is another one, and this is just gradually coming out, Mr. Speaker. Bit by bit, this is gradually coming out about what is in the Budget and I should say what is not in the Budget.

Do you know the sad part about this, Mr. Speaker, just about the waste management? The federal gas tax that was coming to the Province, there was 1 per cent taken out that was supposed to go to municipalities to pay for this waste management and Western Newfoundland is being punished.

Here is the other point. When I did a tour of the site in Norris Arm – now, I may be off a few percentage points, but I am sure I am not off too much. You want to talk about mismanagement. The reason why they are going to take the garbage with an extra cost of \$1.8 million, plus

the extra cost incurred, plus the liabilities all going across and the trucks going across, the footprints going across daily – do you know why the government now is pushing this and why Don Downer, the big political appointee, is pushing this? The Norris Arm site is up to about 33 per cent capacity. That is it. The Norris Arm site, which is up and running – it may be 35 percent –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible) talking about not full.

MR. JOYCE: Not full, 33 per cent. So they built this huge infrastructure out in Norris Arm – oh my God, we are too big now.

MR. LANE: They do not need. It is too big. The opposite of the schools, building them too big and schools too small.

MR. JOYCE: Yes, the Member for Mount Pearl South just said, the opposite of schools, building them too big and not filling them. Not like the schools, building them too small, not big enough. It is a very good point.

That is the reason why. Then you wonder why I cannot support the Budget. I have to stand up in this Legislature here and this government is going to say how about the few things you are going to get for the district. Yes, I will acknowledge that. I make no bones about it. I will acknowledge that. I will stand up here and say yes, that is what government is supposed to do. Any minister who helped out the Bay of Islands, I will acknowledge that, but how can I acknowledge – I have been saying for three or four years that the waste management has been put behind. The waste management is going to cost the people of Western Newfoundland more money.

Yesterday, it was proven to me. Even Mayor Charles Pender is out today saying the government never spent the money on it. I have to give the mayor credit. Not very often he stands up against this government, but I have to give him credit. He came out today and he said the government has not been spending the money in the district, in the area.

Get this, Mr. Speaker. The Wild Cove dump site got to go until 2025. I have been saying it.

That mayor confirmed it today. He is not even sure if this site has the capacity to keep going until 2025. Yet, the decision is made. Do you see why we need consultations out there?

How the decision was made – again, I do not want to talk about how someone was pushing the government agenda through, but this decision was made probably about three years ago. It was made in June or July – I think in July, the summer. I think there were eight, nine people at the meeting, just barely made the quorum, one or two, and they made the decision. They did not even have a big roundtable discussion. The municipalities had very little say into it. That is how the decision was made.

Mr. Speaker, I will leave that alone for now. I just want to say to the minister that we need to have consultations out in Western Newfoundland to ensure that if we need to change this, we need to change it. Let's do the right thing. I will stand with you. I will go out; I will sit in the meetings with you. I will offer my support. I will offer my help. I will offer my assistance like I did for the hospital in Corner Brook, like I did for radiation. Our leader, the Leader of the Opposition, will stand shoulder to shoulder with you because we need to do it right.

The decision that you are going to make, please God it will not be a bad decision. Please God we will have time to consult – please God on that. We need to go out together. The municipalities need to come together. You have my commitment here today. I spoke to all of the Opposition members here on the West Coast; they are willing to go out with the minister. They are willing to go out. Let's have public meetings.

Let's see what the best thing is to do for Western Newfoundland. Let's not just take it and ram it down their throats because you are in a financial mess. Let's go sit down, listen to the people who are going to be mostly affected, the municipalities of Western Newfoundland, the Northern Peninsula. I am not even getting into Labrador today, Mr. Speaker. That is a different topic because they have their own issues up there, as we know, about waste management. There are some difficult issues up that way.

Mr. Speaker, we will have a commitment here today from the Opposition that, Minister, I will go with you to any meeting out in Western Newfoundland and discuss waste management. We will try to work this together. We did it on the hospital. We did it on Kruger. We need now to do this on waste management because this is going to affect every municipality on the West Coast, long after all of us in this House is out of this place. We have to do it right.

Minister, I thank you again that we are going to have those meetings. I hope we are going to go out together, shoulder to shoulder and all the members here, Mr. Speaker. I just think it is a great idea that we will work together to get this done. We will meet with all the mayors and municipalities. We will meet with all the joint councils. That is how we are going to get it done is have consultations, but we need to come together on consensus.

Consensus, Mr. Speaker, is what we need to do. That is how we need to solve this problem together as a group. Let's not fight over it. Let's go out and have public consultations. Let's go out and meet with the people. Let's go have meetings with all the municipalities that are affected and we will come up with the right solution.

Mr. Speaker, I have a few minutes left. I am going to speak about a few other issues in the Bay of Islands. The Member for Gander – I know the Member for Gander is sitting there and I just want to acknowledge that June 5 the fire truck that was desperately needed in Cox's Cove is going to be delivered. I know the Member for Gander was a part a big part of that because he seen the need when he went out and seen the truck, so I just want to acknowledge that.

The fire chief told me to personally invite you to come out, because he knows that you went out, you looked at that area, you saw the need, and you saw the problems with it. I just want to say thank you very much for that and the fire chief is very pleased with that truck. It is going to save lives because of that. So I just want to acknowledge that from the Member for Gander.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, also I will just go through district – and I know the Minister of Municipal Affairs, we are going to have a meeting. I just want to thank him for helping out with some of the amalgamation with York Harbour- Lark Harbour. I do not know if it is going to work. I do not know, there are some issues there, but I know the previous two ministers would not even meet with the people. One promised to show up and never even showed up to the meeting, so this minister I just want to acknowledge that.

Mr. Speaker, that is how we solve things; we have to work together. Fine, we have differences of opinions, absolutely, we have different approaches on how to solve problems, but when we come down to an issue, we have to work together. I know the people in York Harbour and Lark Harbour are excited that hopefully they are going to amalgamate. I know there is a meeting tomorrow night, and I thank the minister again for that because he has been very accommodating to them.

Mr. Speaker, the people of York Harbour and Lark Harbour recognize that, unlike the previous minister, the Member for St. John's West, who never even showed up. I just want to acknowledge how people are treated differently from the opposite side, and how when you treat people with respect, with dignity, you get results. I am willing to work with any member over there, any minister, or the Premier, to get results for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Also, part of that, they are going to get a fire truck. If we all remember, there was a fire back probably seven or eight months ago. What happened, they went to the fire and the truck actually broke down. I know the minister there went down and he looked at the need, did an evaluation, and once again, they did the right thing for the people of York Harbour-Lark Harbour and I just want to acknowledge that also.

Mr. Speaker, I move on up now into Humber Arm South. There are a few issues there in Humber Arm South that we are dealing with. When we look at the whole issue and I know the Acting Minister of Education – how can I vote for a Budget, even though there are some things

there for the Bay of Islands, when you walk out to the school, go to the graduation, twelve kids – I think there might have been two students left, maybe two, by the time people add in last year it was the same number when they started and they got two units taken out of the school. Two units gone. No one can explain to them why.

What I am going to do here again is write the school board – they will not meet with them – and say will you send someone out there to meet with the school council, which this government appointed to help out in the schools but they will not meet with them, will you go out and meet with them and explain to them – Mr. Speaker, even the special needs services in the schools, it is just unbelievable.

Then, as you come up and you see the cuts in the school out in Lark Harbour and York Harbour, and they cannot get any proper evaluation of why, and I am supposed to vote for that Budget, Mr. Speaker. I am supposed to stand up now and vote for that Budget.

Mr. Speaker, look at another school, Sacred Heart; they are being cut units this year. The last I heard it was three. I cannot get it confirmed yet from the school, but I will tomorrow. There are a lot of underlining issues out there because of this Budget.

I know the minister has agreed to sit down with me sometime and go through the 911. I said it before and I will say it again; this is going to cost people's lives and safety. I gave some examples in this House and I say to the minister that I know he is going to inherit this mess. There are cases that we already brought up where the fire departments of rural Newfoundland – Mr. Speaker, you know; you were part of a municipal council. Who is the first one to respond in a rural Newfoundland setting? The fire department; 80 to 85 per cent, up to 90 per cent of the calls right now are for medical.

What is going to happen now, Mr. Speaker, because of this 911 system – and it does not cost any extra money. No one could sit down and explain to me – I know the former minister could not, and I know the Member for Gander, he brought in 911. If he stood up on his feet, ask him is this what he thought it was going to be. I

can tell you, Mr. Speaker, this is not what he thought he was bringing in. This was changed. By the time that POMAX study started, by the time this minister left the department, it changed.

I gave the minister the page; it is page 9 on the report. When the minister stands up – and the other one stood up here before and said we are going to be like Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia is not like Newfoundland. Nova Scotia has dispatch, page 9; read it. That is their report. When that report came out the ones that they were looking at keeping it in, it was the constabulary in Corner Brook, the same thing up in Lab West, and St. John's Regional Fire Department. It changed – it actually changed. There has been no one yet explain to me why the change.

Mr. Speaker, here is what is happening. I will just use the member right here. Here are two of us – and I want the people of the Province to understand this. I know the government puts out this big cloud, oh we have 911. It is good to have 911, absolutely no doubt.

There are two dispatchers, Mr. Speaker, sitting down. A call comes in. If you pay your \$2,500 through the City of Corner Brook, they take that hat on, put it on, and they will dispatch to you. If you do not pay the City of Corner Brook that \$2,500 minimum, the call comes in you did not pay, they say oh, we will put you through to the pager of the fire department. The same two people, it is just that if you pay the City of Corner Brook, the city allows you to dispatch and for me not to dispatch.

The same two people who are paid by the seventy-five cents that every phone in this Province is paying for – everything is paid for. All the capital cost is paid for by the seventy-five cents. The workers sitting at your table are all paid for by – and guess what, Mr. Speaker? There is \$180,000 surplus that if you need an extra worker you can pay for it. Not an extra cent – not one extra cent.

I cannot, Mr. Speaker, I tried. I challenge anybody here who wants to discuss this, go out and speak to people like Colin Tucker. Go speak to Colin Tucker. We are in this House; we are going to talk about volunteers. We are

talking about volunteers. Mr. Speaker, you know a lot about volunteers.

We hear the government out going to support volunteerism. The Towns of York Harbour-Lark Harbour has a volunteer fire department. Last year, starting now with the 911 they had two calls for a fire; the other eleven or twelve were medical. They have to pay \$2,500 if they want two calls dispatched from the City of Corner Brooks. Isn't that shocking, Mr. Speaker? Yet now they are out, oh yes, we want all these volunteers coming in. Not only are they putting their lives on the line for us, now we are saying to them, listen, we want you to go out and raise more money to pay the City of Corner Brook.

I do not blame the city. The city is trying to make money, I do not blame them. It is the government that allowed them to do it. The two people sitting down dispatching are already paid. They are paid, 100 per cent.

So I look forward to the meeting. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, if someone gets injured, or if a life is lost because of this 911, I can assure you this government was well-warned.

Mr. Speaker, I will have my opportunity again to speak on the Budget.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Is the House ready to vote the amendment? Call the question?

All those in favour of the amendment, 'aye'?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: The nays have it.

On motion, amendment defeated.

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

MR. HILLIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Speaking to the –?

MR. HILLIER: Main motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Main motion.

MR. HILLIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just for the sake of the people who are watching at home, we have just voted down the amendment to the main motion. I want to point out that we are moving through this fairly quickly, because government has not taken their opportunity to speak at every time they get that opportunity; whereas, every time we get an opportunity to speak on the Budget, we have taken that opportunity to speak on the Budget, whereas government cannot stand up and defend what they do not believe in.

Mr. Speaker, this is my third time speaking on the Budget. The first time I spoke I talked about the Budget in general, the Budget document in general. The second time I spoke about the area that I am responsible for in Opposition, Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, and some of my concerns in that department in terms of where that fits in the Budget.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take some time today to talk a bit about some of the things that are going on in my district and how that is affected by the Budget. To start off, I would like to talk a little bit about an event that some of us, as MHAs, had the opportunity to attend on Thursday, which was the Gold Award presentation for the Duke of Edinburgh.

The Right Hon. David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, was in town, and of course, as we know, the Gold Medals, the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards are presented by – it is a special award, it is an important award. Anyone who has had the opportunity to achieve that level, we know how hard they have worked, and this particular award is presented by either the Queen's representative or a member of the Royal Family. So, hence, the Governor General, in town this week, presented these awards to ninety-eight of the top youngsters, I would suggest, in this Province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to identify those from Conception Bay South. I do not always read out names, but I think this is important enough that I will recognize and have it written into the record of Hansard, these eleven names who received Gold Awards of Achievement from the Duke of Edinburgh. They are: Heather Andrews, Meghan Arnott, Allura Bartlett, Raquel Bugden, Samantha Duff, Emily Greenslade, Kelsey Noseworthy, Evan Slaney, Samantha Taylor, Glendon Walters, and Emily White. As I said, Mr. Speaker, these are young people we can all be proud of, as we can of all those who received the awards on that day.

Mr. Speaker, moving along, the Premier today in Question Period talked a little bit about how well represented the Town of Conception Bay South has been in this House by current members and those in the immediate past. I was on council when we had the last provincial election in 2011, and we had three members elected to government from Conception Bay South.

All three districts in Conception Bay South: Topsail, Conception Bay South itself, and Harbour Main, all were represented in government. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, we had three Cabinet ministers. I believe, starting off, it would have been Minister of Transportation, Minister of Environment, and Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation.

Mr. Speaker, how lucky can a council be to have three Cabinet ministers in the government of this Province? Then they disappeared. Try to find them to sit down and meet with you. Try to find them to come into council chambers and sit down and have a chat.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I will give you this –

AN HON. MEMBER: It was only three of them.

MR. HILLIER: Well, we had three. I guess they could not get their schedules together and they were watching each other's back.

Mr. Speaker, the mayor this week talked about what a great meeting he had with our current Minister of Transportation. The best meeting he had ever had with the Minister of

Transportation. Mr. Speaker, he did not have a whole lot to compare it too, because we could not find the three Cabinet ministers to come in and sit with us. All you need to do is go through the minutes of the council of Conception Bay South, they will tell the story.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, we did not miss them in all functions. Whenever the Premier could not come to Conception Bay South, I will give you this, one of those Cabinet ministers represented the Premier. I know the Member for Harbour Main is here today. We have sat down and had a whole lot of meals together, as he has come into the town and represented government, represented the Premier at those events.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned my buddy, Bob, at some times. Bob has a daughter involved with the cadet program in Conception Bay South, and this past Saturday the cadets held their annual inspection. Of course, Bob was there as a parent. I went along as the MHA, and, Mr. Speaker, Senator Elizabeth Marshall was there as she is very diligent in attending these events as well.

AN HON. MEMBER: Representative of the Canadian Government.

MR. HILLIER: Representative of the Canadian Government.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Premier could not be there on that day, and we understand how busy the Premier is. We understand he has significant duties in other parts of the Province. I believe he was probably out in Central with the Acting Minister of Education in his district doing some events. He could not come to our event. Mr. Speaker, I would have expected him to send one of the Cabinet ministers, or ask one of the Cabinet ministers to come – I do not like to use that word send.

Mr. Speaker, we have two Cabinet ministers actually living in our community. The Minister of Seniors, Wellness lives in our community, and the Minister of Justice lives in our community. I know the Minister of Transportation would have had residents from his community in the cadets. I would have thought he might have been able to come.

Mr. Speaker, we have thirteen-and-a-half Cabinet ministers and not one of them was available to represent the Premier on Saturday. So I would have thought that the next person in line would have been his Parliamentary Assistant but, again, everybody is busy. The Parliamentary Assistant, she probably had work in her own district, so she could not be there as well.

I would not want to say if I were Premier, because that is not something I am sure I want, but I would have thought my next step would have gone to the back and went looking for one of the three Parliamentary Secretaries, one of the three highly paid Parliamentary Secretaries to go and represent the Premier at a cadet inspection in Conception Bay South on Saturday. Mr. Speaker, they also slighted us. Neither one of them would come.

Mr. Speaker, the next step, I guess, would have gone to the backbenchers. I can see the Premier saying: Now boys, I need somebody to go to Conception Bay South on Saturday morning. You know how busy we all are. We cannot make it. I need one of you guys to step up and go to Conception Bay South on Saturday morning to attend cadet inspection; none of them available.

Mr. Speaker, I think if we work it out, if we take the Speaker out, take the Premier out, on my thinking we have twenty-six people; none of them would go and represent the Premier in Conception Bay South on Saturday morning. Not one. Bob, was not happy, let me tell you.

Mr. Speaker, I guess then we have to go to staff in the Premier's Office. If we have twenty-six MHAs, twenty-six people in government and none of them would come and represent them, then I would think we would go to the Premier's Office. We have EAs and CAs and so on, people who understand the Premier's work, but no, not one of them would come and represent them, represent government, represent the Premier in the Town of Conception Bay South on Saturday morning.

Mr. Speaker, where do you go next? I will tell you where the Premier had to go – and the people of Conception Bay South should be insulted that nobody here chose to come to

represent the Premier. I think the Premier should be insulted that nobody would come and represent him on Saturday morning at the cadet inspection.

Where did he have to go? He had to go to Transportation and Works and bring in a political appointee, a defeated candidate from last fall to sit in the gym and represent the Premier. Mr. Speaker, that is a long way from the Premier. That is a long way down the chain from the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, if a person that far down the line can represent the Premier, then what really is the Premier doing that somebody down in Transportation and Works can represent him? As a citizen of the Town of Conception Bay South I was insulted. Bob was insulted. He had a right to be insulted.

Mr. Speaker, I will leave it at that, but the next time the Premier has a function in the Town of Conception Bay South I would think he would be there himself. For instance, the cadets were slighted on that day. The next day the Premier was at another function where he talked about what a great group the cadets were. Where do we go? Like I said, I was insulted, but we will leave it at that.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier's job, the Cabinet ministers' job, the assistant to the Premier's job, the Parliamentary Secretaries' job, the backbenchers' job, and the Premier's Office's job, not one of them chose to come. We do not understand all those jobs, no, but we understand protocol.

Mr. Speaker, I want to get to some issues that are taking place in our district. The Minister of Environment and Conservation earlier this week talked about illegal dumping and efforts that are being taken –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. HILLIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services is so adept at doing; read the hand. Check the video.

Mr. Speaker, Environment and Conservation talked last week about the project from MMSB and the Town of Conception Bay South in combating illegal dumping in the town. My colleague from the Northern Peninsula stood and again recognized the Town of Conception Bay South for its work in preventing illegal dumping. It is just another example of how government has jumped in and taken advantage of somebody else's ideas.

Mr. Speaker, the Town of Conception Bay South was working at this for over a year when the MMSB finally said, well this might be something we can do somewhere else very successfully. This is something that perhaps we can do somewhere else. So they came to the Town of Conception Bay South and the town was only too pleased to help them out with the whole concept of using cameras to fight illegal dumping.

Mr. Speaker, two projects ongoing in our town which were affected by the Budget: one is the school that we talked about today in Question Period, and the other one is the library that we are trying to get set up in our town. I will talk a little bit about the school first of all. It is a K-7 school in Kelligrews that is just next to RONA. The problem we have there is that St. Edward's Elementary and Upper Gullies Elementary are just chockablock full. That is the next growth area in the town so we know there are going to be large, large numbers of students. This school is hopefully going to alleviate the crowding problem in our town.

Mr. Speaker, in the 2012-2013 Budget, \$27,000 was spent on planning for this school. In Budget 2013, \$3 million was budgeted for the school. In Budget 2014, \$11 million was budgeted for the school, and there was an area of land cleared and they put up a sign. Of course, the local MHA, who was one of those elusive Cabinet ministers that I referred to earlier, went up and had his picture taken. So we know that there is a sign there and there is a flat piece of ground.

Mr. Speaker, in 2015, \$8 million was set aside for this project. To date, tenders still have not closed, that was three years ago. The school is due to open in 2016, fifteen months from now. I challenge government to see that school built in fifteen months. I may be surprised. I hope I am

surprised because the people in that part of our town need school space. They do not need to go back to the overcrowding of the two schools. Actually, they are not in my district, one is in the district of Harbour Main, which is represented by one of my colleagues across the House. Like I said, I am hoping that this process will move along quickly and that it is not being slowed down on purpose, but it does seem to be taking its time working its way through the processes.

Mr. Speaker, the second project that has slowed down significantly is our library. The old library in Conception Bay South was built forty years ago for 10,000 people. We now have 25,000 people. The building is very much outdated. The more important piece is that the town is building a new town hall from money it has cobbled together on its own through very, very sound fiscal management, not the philanthropy that the Premier stood on his soapbox today and announced. The town has put together a package to see that this library is done.

Mr. Speaker, but what is done is that it is gone to – no, to see that its town hall is done. I am sorry, Mr. Speaker; I am ahead of myself. To build this town hall, it has put together its own package to build this town hall. In building a new town hall – I do not know if you are familiar now with where we are; the old town hall and the library are on the same piece of land. So part of paying for that new town hall, which the Premier today talked about spending coming from government, part of paying for that town hall is the selling of the property that belongs to the town that the current town hall is on, and that old library. All right, so is everybody with me? We are okay there now?

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we cannot get a new library moved forward. We have a group – a very strong lobby. They have been working for ten years to replace this old library. It has come down now to almost emergency status because the town wants to move the old library out of it.

Mr. Speaker, last February the lobby group for the library had enough. They called a public meeting; 150 people went to the meeting. The thing that got the most groans was when the President of the Library Board said we have 5,000 people, 5,000 active members at our

library. That is not just 5,000 people who have cards, perhaps like you and I who have cards and have not used them in a long time. These are 5,000 active people.

They said it several occasions – 150 people around. Then, that representative, the great representative that the Premier talked about today, finally came to the microphone. The President of the Library said: Terry, what would you do if we showed up with a petition of 5,000 names? He said: It would not make any difference. The arrogance, the arrogance – 5,000 people signing a petition and he says it would not make any difference.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it did make a difference. The petition did not make a difference.

AN HON. MEMBER: What happened?

MR. HILLIER: Well, here is what happened. That was in early February. We went through Dark NL; Dunderdale said there was no crisis –

AN HON. MEMBER: Who?

MR. HILLIER: Exactly, who? That is right, who?

Dunderdale – oh, I have to get this quickly, tell the story.

Anyway, here is what happened, Mr. Speaker, the bottom fell out of the polling for government, and all of a sudden the minister found, yes, we are going to build you your library. I will leave the rest for another time.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just to let everyone know at home where we are with regard to the Budget speeches and speaking order, we are now at the main event I guess. The Budget was brought in a few weeks ago

and, as normal, we go through a non-confidence motion and a sub-amendment. Everybody gets a chance to speak their part through each of these. We voted down the sub-amendment, we voted down the non-confidence motion, and now we are back to the main event.

Like everyone else as we stand to our feet, out of respect for the people of our district and showing gratitude for the fact that we are one of less than fifty people to get the opportunity to represent people in this hon. House, we all thank everyone from our district for their confidence in us and our ability to speak on their behalf. There are times when we stand like this we need to recognize, just for a moment or two, some of the most recent events that have happened.

We all know what season this is. This is high school graduation season. It is also the cadet inspection season. So I would like to recognize the two cadet inspections that I have attended in recent weeks. In both cases I was the ceremonial officer for them. It was the RCACC 2910 Royal Canadian Army Cadets in New-Wes-Valley and the Air Cadet Squadron 840 in Indian Bay Squadron of the air cadet movement. I would just like to recognize the awards and the achievements that these young individuals, young great leaders who are going to be around in our Province in the future.

Also, this past weekend I had the privilege, I suppose, to attend Pearson Academy's graduation. A couple of weeks before that I was at Riverwood. How these get scheduled, you do not always get to all of the schools in your district. You like to mention the other schools because all of them are now going through the same motions with their ceremonial graduations. They have a month left in their final year in school to pull up their socks and get the work done to graduate. They cannot lose sight of what happens with the final exams as they are coming to them in the next four to five weeks, Mr. Speaker.

The graduation, to get it underway, the ceremonial part of it, May month is the time that it happens. This past Friday night I stood at Pearson Academy and that school has had forty-one graduations; I have been to thirty-one of them. I was the first emcee in Grade 10 of the very first graduation of that school, and the

school is still thriving. It has gone and metamorphosed from Lester Pearson Memorial High to Pearson Academy it is today, a K-12 system. I was there as a teacher, as a student, and I guess life after teaching, you found a job where you might get an invite back to the graduation, so I have had four of them. I had to let them know because it might be my last, Mr. Speaker. It may be.

If the district changes, there are two more schools going to be metamorphosed in. Some of the students now from Bonavista North also attend Jane Collins Academy in Hare Bay and there is also a very prominent school on Fogo Island, Fogo Island Central High. So when the boundaries are redone, the district, as it is proposed, would have six magnificent high schools that are offering graduation.

The other thing I would like to mention and it is something that is going to come up in the next couple of weeks is I am going to be visiting the Town of Greenspond. As the Member for Bay of Islands alluded, we will be delivering a commitment made by the minister, the current Member for Gander, the triple R we are calling it in Greenspond, the rural rapid response unit, the new smaller streamline fire truck for smaller rural places. It has a smaller cost, it is affordable, and it still gives great pumping and foam activity for the residents and the safety in that community. The people of Greenspond in the next week or so will see their new fire truck roll into town, and we will be a part of that.

This past weekend again – and maybe it is where I am going to take the central focus from my few comments about the Budget. This past weekend was a very, very emotional time in our family. On Sunday morning Claire Beth Ivey-Cross was baptized, our first grandchild.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: I want to really talk about this Budget and how I think it is going to impact Claire. That is sort of the focus, if I can think about that for the next ten to fifteen minutes and just imagine what choices are made, the balanced choices that are going to be made in this document and how it is going to have some impact.

I am sure there are people from the other side who will argue that some of the things I am going to say are not their opinion or their point of view. We all have our own point of view as to how this is and how this plan can work if given the opportunity for our precious commodities. It is only now that I realize the preciousness of all of that, when you are able to talk about it along the lines of a grandchild and how this Budget, a few of the past Budgets, and how the Budgets into the future are probably going to impact them.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, we talk about what happens when you get together to try to put together this plan for the Budget in a year. Every year is different. Every year is unique. Every year has its own peculiar axis that the world is spinning on. This year that axis – if we refer to it – we know what happened as it spun, as the world moved around and how it impacted on world commodities. The need for ore, the need for oil. The prices are lower than they have ever been in recent memory.

Mr. Speaker, we have to take that feature and mould it around on how we plan for the next few years. In this case, for the first time, it was important not to think about this year but to think five years ahead. So we take this through the activity and we think five years ahead.

Just thinking about Claire, where is Claire going to be in five years? She is going to be in full-day kindergarten, which is implementing now as we go through. If we look at early childhood education and daycare, Claire is living in St. John's right now, Mr. Speaker, but in a couple of months she will be living in the Town of Torbay. She is going to have a great MHA looking after her interests in that area.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: But if Claire were to live in New-Wes-Valley or many other places around the Province, Claire would be able to avail of opportunities that we are creating in early childhood education and daycare with expenditures and plans, the like have never been known before.

In the last month, Mr. Speaker, I toured a little facility. It used to be the Lions Club in Pound

Cove, New-Wes-Valley, or Cabot Lions Club the building was, but the development association have taken it over from the Lions Club and they have turned it into their development association building. They have obtained funding to operate a not-for-profit daycare. They have received money in the last eighteen months, and monies into the next eighteen months, so that by the time there are two rooms and an office that will be renovated and complete, there is an ability in a small rural community to handle twenty-nine children.

They just hired – one of the recent graduates from eight or nine years ago is coming back home to New-Wes-Valley to live and is so enthusiastic about it, Mr. Speaker. They have their early childhood diplomas and their credentials, now they are moving back home to help operate this. There is going to be seven to nine full-time, part-time, permanent positions in this little enterprise, which is going to be a daycare, run by not-for-profit, but it gives the ability for the parents and the children to be nourished, to be enriched, and to have a better future starting from that.

What else are we looking at in this Budget that is going to impact our youth and our young people as they grow? How are we going to have an impact on them, Mr. Speaker?

Not only is there going to be full-day kindergarten, but in the plans, as we look at it in the next little while, there is still protection of cap sizes for the primary grades and the younger grades in the schools as they go through. Also, there is protection for inclusiveness in the classes, Mr. Speaker, and the plans for that.

No one needs to speak to anybody to talk to them about how inclusive, how someone with a disability is included in a program that would want you to feel how important that is, but that is protected, Mr. Speaker, the attitude towards that.

We are also protecting our safe and caring schools, Mr. Speaker. Not only are they safe and caring schools, but they are healthy and well maintained. If I pick up the document that – first when I saw this I looked through it and I was just amazed at the many explanations that is through it, this highlights document. I referred

to it when I first saw it as Budget 2015 for dummies. It is just the nickname of that, Mr. Speaker, that you can easily understand. I can pick out a lot of the Budget documents in this that I can interpret in a much better way through all the graphs and the colours and the things.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

AN HON. MEMBER: It is a brand of a book.

MR. CROSS: It is a brand. The brand of this is a brand of commitment, of vision, of foresight, Mr. Speaker, that leads us into and through the next five years.

We go with this, Mr. Speaker, to talk about how it impacts our children. I just wanted to look in these graphs for what is happening in schools in the next few years, and even this year into the next Budget, and into the future plans.

There is \$9.2 million listed here for extensions and renovations this year, Mr. Speaker. It is only three to four years ago the school I referred to, Pearson Academy, underwent extensive renovations to mould into the school that it is, a state-of-the-art school. The forty-year-old school, Mr. Speaker, is vibrant, fresh, and brand new and has the ability to move on.

This year, Mr. Speaker, some of the repairs and renovations – the Lumsden school in my district is going to receive roofing contracts to help with that. There are many other schools as need be as it goes through. So we are protecting the schools and the education system.

If you also look through Budget 2015, it lists here one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine new schools, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: How many?

MR. CROSS: Nine new schools. Into the future there is a list of eight or nine more schools, Mr. Speaker, that are still in the plans. That is fifteen schools. So the physical plans for these children are going to be well maintained with the plan and the vision of this document.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the last three or four years we have heard about municipalities, sustainability, and the need for a new plan. That

new plan, the Community Sustainability Plan, for individuals like my darling Claire, that is preparing the future, making the small towns and the larger towns, every town in this Province going to have more income, more resources with which to do the projects they need throughout their towns, which means that as Claire would move up through school, as we have been talking, she graduates. She has a choice then that there are far more sustainable locations around this Province that she can choose to go live in by plans that are supported and maintained in this document.

Most rural communities in Bonavista North, in most every other district in this Province, most rural communities applaud the extra infusion of dollars to help meet their needs. That is making our towns more sustainable, Mr. Speaker, through the future for individuals.

Mr. Speaker, no matter how much you plan to use your time wisely here, you do see that the twenty minutes goes through far too quickly. The other thing I want to talk about and I want to allude to is what Muskrat Falls means for Claire and for the children who are here today. Over the last few years we have been spending some money making an investment towards the future of our children and our grandchildren. At this point we have spent billions of dollars.

AN HON. MEMBER: How many billions?

MR. CROSS: Yes, we have spent billions of dollars. We are going to spend and borrow a few more billion, Mr. Speaker, over the next two or three years such that by the time 2018 rolls around we will have invested into Muskrat Falls. For what, so we can diversify and have a different form of income into the future. In 2025, my Claire will be ten years old and all of the investment in Muskrat Falls will be paid back.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: It will be returned, Mr. Speaker. After 2025, we are going to start reaping the benefits of the vision and of the plan that was created with this clean energy for us into the future. You hear talk of the Hoover Dam that was built eighty years ago; you talk of the last dams that we built with –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. CROSS: Is dam not parliamentary, Mr. Speaker?

If you talk about the dam we built in Churchill Falls, Mr. Speaker, well, once we are finished in Labrador with the development of the Lower Churchill, the complete Churchill, we will probably have the best dam energy program in the world.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: Mr. Speaker, we will reap the benefits, billions and billions of dollars into the future. A hundred years from now we may not have oil, but we will have water. The water will still be flowing through and around the dam. We will be environmentally clean, our economy will benefit, and we will have lots of energy. A triple-E credit rating: environmentally friendly, economically friendly, and lots of energy.

Mr. Speaker, I had planned to talk about the targets of the things that would happen. In the colourful graphics of my magazine, I look at the plan for borrowing and repayment. I just wanted to sort of highlight here, there is a graph that shows us since 1988 the amount of borrowing we have been doing and where we need to go.

Mr. Speaker, one phenomenon is every year up to 2006, from 1988, our governments of both political colours borrowed. Since 2006 to today with 2015, it is the third time in the last ten years that we have needed to borrow. We have not needed to borrow. In the borrowing we are doing this year, it is only one year out of the four years that we will be borrowing and we are actually borrowing for program expenses. This is the only current year. We are also going to be borrowing for Nalcor, for infrastructure, and for pensions. We have made a commitment with this that through all of this to maintain the direction we need to go, we have maximized the amount of borrowing we would need.

My time is just about going. In the thirty seconds I have left I just want to say one thing: Claire, granddad is voting for this Budget. He is not going to let you down. Budget 2015 is a balanced choice for Claire's future and for the future of our Province, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. FLYNN: Mr. Speaker, over the past few days I have noted how many ministers got up and actually would say that the other side of the House would not support some of this. I would like to correct some of the comments on that. In actual fact, in my last speech on this Budget I did actually support some initiatives that were in this Budget. The problem I have with this Budget is that they are planning for five years out.

If we go back twelve months – and it is important to know where we came from. If we go back just twelve months when they were projecting a \$500 million deficit, in actual fact it ran close to a billion-dollar deficit. So do not pretend that we are planning for five years out because we really did a very poor job in planning for six months, let alone twelve.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just read a letter into the record that I had forwarded to me over the past week or so. Right now people are saying this is the Opposition's chance; there is nothing they support in this Budget. I would like to read into the records, just for the information of those people who are out there watching this today. I would like to read into the Hansard here today a letter that was sent to the Member for Humber West. I am going to read it because it is important.

There are other people who are having some very serious concerns about this Budget: I am following up to your response to my email on May 8, 2015, regarding the increases to the provincial training facility recently announced in the provincial Budget. As a group of volunteers trying to run the swimming organization dedicated solely to the benefit of children in sport, it is important that we be fully aware of the impeding costs to run the particular program.

We are about to embark on planning for the next season and we will need to know where the decisions on the increase in fees in the provincial pools rests. In your response you

indicated that you were following up. I ask at this point if there has been any new information regarding your follow up. I think it is clear the impacts these increases are having, or at least what they will make.

Since my last email I can report that as a direct result of this increase our club has had to refrain from bidding on, or accepting any swim meets in the coming season due to the cost. It will be too high and the club would lose money. This means at least two weekends of hotels, meals, and general positive economic activity to the City of Corner Brook area is simply gone. This is the first of many anticipated downturns resulting from the fee increases.

We ask for your assistance in reversing these changes. A response at your earliest convenience will be greatly appreciated to the aid of our planning process.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is not the only letter that is here, but I thought it was important to read it into the record because it goes to show that people are concerned in the communities.

The last time I spoke with respect to some of these increases, I spoke about the issue of the big game licence and the 50 per cent raise that you gave to the big game hunters. Immediately after I spoke and after I complimented government of the good work that they did, the Minister of Environment at the time got up and criticized the position that I took, the position that the operators took, and basically said suck it up; you can absorb this cost.

Unfortunately the minister said that he had been into business – well, many of these businesses, not all of them, but the majority of them are small business people. They have an income gross a year of about \$200,000, and the Minister of Environment would actually stand on his feet for twenty minutes and defend the decision that I am going to take 10 per cent of your money and claw it back to government without these operators having the ability to be able to claim or to recover that cost for at least a year – and in some cases, two and three. That is irresponsible of government to really go down that road. They have no respect, no understanding for how government operates. I really feel sorry for the operators in that field.

I question if that information had actually gone over to the Department of Tourism, who is out promoting the great product that we have in this Province. I would think and I would surely hope so that that decision was made by Environment certainly without consulting the industry. They certainly did not consult the outfitters at the time.

So, Mr. Speaker, I spoke on some of the waste in government because I think it is important. My wife points out to me all the time the money that I waste out of my own account. So I can only imagine that the waste when you are talking \$8 billion or \$9 billion, the opportunity for waste or for mistakes.

In the case of the Corner Brook area, I have to really hammer home the fact that we have spent \$40 billion and we are nowhere near to calling a tender for a long-term care facility to serve the people of the West Coast. We are nowhere near putting down the footing of the hospital to service the West Coast. In my view, that is just not good enough.

Last week I stood, Mr. Speaker, in this House and I asked about the Corner Brook Intermediate school. We are hearing on the West Coast – and I have to bring this back again, we are hearing on the West Coast that school, quite possibly, will not open in September.

I know the Member for Humber West is an ex-teacher and principal. I really think that we need to clarify so that there is no frustration with the people on the West Coast. Will the school open or not? There are rumours that they are into a legal battle with the government over problems that they have had with the renovation. There are rumours that the second firewall that was put up is actually going to have to be taken down again.

Listen, these mistakes happen, but at least we can be straightforward and honest with the people. Are these problems existing and will the school open in September or not? It is a simple answer.

MR. GRANTER: Yes.

MR. FLYNN: Well, I thank the Member for Humber West for shouting across the floor that

it will open. He is guaranteeing that because when I asked a question of the minister responsible for that a few weeks ago, that was not the response that I got – so congratulations.

My colleague for Bay of Islands spoke on the 911 service earlier. Why is it that once you move outside of the City of St. John's – is it because as a government we have lost contact with the rural parts of this Province? I have nothing against the City of St. John's. The mayor of the City of St. John's is a good friend of mine and I have known him for a number of years. Why is it costing \$2 in here for a phone call and \$2,500 on the West Coast?

Mr. Speaker, you dial up a 911 service, it would seem apparent that you are asking for consistency across the board, and a program that the people on the West Coast are paying the same as the people on the East Coast, or the same as the people in Labrador are paying. We are paying seventy-five cents per telephone per month. It would seem that there would be some unanimity in the programs that we offer across the Province. I know the Member for Bay of Islands has suggested to the minister to come out and sit down and work this thing out, because what is happening today is wrong. The people, because you live in Corner Brook, because you live in St. Anthony or because you live in Wabush, should not expect some basic service like 911 to be any different there than it is here.

I have had a great working relationship with the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The people in Steady Brook are quite frustrated. I met with the mayor; I met with residents there a few weeks ago, some of the residents. The water wells that they have on the hill because the colour of the water basically in the town is so gross, no one would drink it. So a few years ago they drilled a few wells upon the hill, got some good water, a design went in and through government red tape, it has been delay after delay after delay.

I have had the fortunate opportunity to chat with the Minister Responsible for Municipal Affairs. I am happy to learn today that project is moving ahead and hopefully, by this year, it will happen. It just goes to show that I would like to be able to offer to any member on the other side or this side if we are doing something good, do you know what? Raise the flag; if there is a

problem, let's work it out. Because there is no hill that we cannot climb if we work together to do it.

Back months ago I met with the Mayor of the City of Corner Brook. I had some questions prepared to bring to the House here for the Minister of Tourism at the time. The city, the hotels, and the destination marketing organization for the city had a deal worked out. They had an MOU signed and they wanted this government to enact a law similar to what is done here in Corner Brook, which would give the people in Corner Brook, the hotels in Corner Brook, the ability to collect 4 per cent room levy. Unfortunately, I guess with the 2 per cent raise in HST that is off the table for this year.

Certainly, I am encouraging the Minister of Tourism to work with the city to see if we can have that in place for 2016. There have been strides made but I think in some ways we have been late in doing it.

I had a call just before entering the House today, and I never had an opportunity to really have a long discussion, but the announcement of \$300 million-plus today from Ottawa for the purchase of two Marine Atlantic vessels. Hopefully, that will stabilize the rate for businesses bringing produce and products into the Province. Hopefully, it will increase tourism to this Province, as the rates getting to this Province is the biggest deterrent we have in getting here.

So, the ability for Marine Atlantic to be able to purchase two of these vessels, and actually take it off the operating cost of the vessels should mean for the people of this Province, for businesses in this Province that depend on that traffic, some stabilization in the rates in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The tourism product we have in this Province, again, Mr. Speaker, is second to none. We have to work long and hard to ensure that our product is the best there is as we move forward.

I want to just point out something here, Mr. Speaker, very quickly. From Communiqué sent out by the industry association. It says, "Ensure equal-playing field through the enforcement of Tourism Establishment Act and Regulations,

specifically targeting unlicensed accommodations throughout the province."

Mr. Speaker, we have an act governing operations in this Province and it is a very important act, because not unlike the Food Establishment Act, there has to be safety followed.

I think the fire that was down in Marystown this past year really demonstrates the need that this as an industry, we have to ensure, if nothing else, the protection of the occupants in these hotels. From my understanding, that hotel did not have a sprinkler system. The kids walking along the road actually discovered the fire. We are inviting the world in here, and we have been very fortunate to date that we have not had deaths that could have been avoided.

So it is important, Mr. Speaker, that the government bring – if they have the regulations in place, they are obviously put there for a reason, that we level the playing field. A quick check, and I have done this, is showing that we have in the area of 150 properties that are operating across this Province, according to the legislation, without the proper inspection. That is significant, because you have one person who wants to operate the best property, offer the safest product to its guests, and they are actually put at a disadvantage by actually doing that.

It is important that if we have the regulations, we have to follow these regulations. Not for the sake of following them, not something as trivial as, well, I cannot give you a licence because you do not accept credit cards. These are life, health, and safety, Mr. Speaker, and they have been ignored. There are just too many operators out there across the Province that are functioning without proper life safety things.

The other one on tourism, and I want to touch on very briefly that I never had the opportunity the other day when I spoke. We have had layoffs in the department of tourism over the past number of years. We had some great product development people across the Province. Right now, we have the whole of Labrador without a tourism development officer. There used to be three people working there with the department of tourism. If you go to Corner Brook, there is one staff person left.

Mr. Speaker, Labrador has a developing tourism industry. They need guidance, they need support, and they need direction. This government has taken that away. Without any due respect, they have stolen all of these people out of the department of tourism and I think it is wrong. We have the ability to have a good product, but we have been neglected with it.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, on the West Coast – and I say that and I only have a minute or so left – we have the best tourism product in North America. I strongly believe that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FLYNN: We have to have – and the investments that have been made to Marble Mountain, I congratulate them. When I see media reports saying, oh, what does the government own, a ski hill? No one ever looks at, we also own a convention centre, Mr. Speaker.

Look at it as a product we have to attract people here to the Province, because I can assure you, with the weather the West Coast has, the product they have from Gros Morne to the ski hill, to the river and so on, it is a great opportunity for business to flourish, but we need that help to take it to the next level. So it is not just a six week or an eight week operation. It can become a year-round operation, which I am sure, at the end of the day, is what the Minister of Tourism wants for tourism in this Province. That is what the people on the West Coast want. I will commit that I will work with whatever minister is sitting there to make sure that that happens, not only on the West Coast but on the East Coast.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FLYNN: Mr. Speaker, I could go on into *Vision 2020*, but I basically have twenty seconds left. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the government on what they have done right, but also work with us and correct what has been done wrong, and there has been some of it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, today, I am certainly delighted to be able to speak in this House of Assembly on Budget 2015. I listened to the previous speaker. I have heard some optimistic comments coming from the previous speaker. The previous speaker made some comments about some of the progress this government is making. It is good to hear a member sitting opposite make those comments in relation to what this government is doing.

Every time I get the opportunity to speak in the House of Assembly, like today, and in particular on a very important Budget, Budget 2015, a Budget that we will continue to invest in major projects, in health, education, and in wellness. Those particular items are very important to every district in Newfoundland and Labrador, whether you live on the West Coast, as the previous speaker, or whether you live in Central, whether you live in the St. John's area, or whether live in the great land of Labrador. This Budget, and in particular this government that I am part of, have rolled out a plan, a fiscal plan, a reality plan, leading into the future, Mr. Speaker, a plan that certainly considers all aspects of every community and what happens in every community in Newfoundland and Labrador. We, as a government, have been fair in the past. We have made substantial investments in the past ten years. We will stand as a government, stand on our feet and talk to the people about that in our districts as we move forward.

I, for one, can say that as a MHA standing in the House of Assembly, I supported the investments that our government made. I can say for a fact that leaders in the communities who are in my district support what our government has done in relation to major investments in the communities of Newfoundland and Labrador.

If I go back and look at what happened in the fishery and look at the reality of what this government has done in relation to the Bonavista Peninsula and the major investments that were made in the tourism industry and how we

became an icon in the tourism industry, the Bonavista Peninsula – and I say icon because it is a reality check. People from all over the world come and visit the beautiful District of Bonavista South and other areas in the Province of Newfoundland, and this government have invested substantially in the business and tourism industries, over and over.

We have connected with organizations, with community groups, with leaders, with community councils, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to connect and listen and actually deliver in the future. That is what this government is all about. This is what we have been doing in the past ten years. This is what we will continue to do in the future. We will continue to invest on a regional basis to communities all over Newfoundland and Labrador.

We have a good track record. We will certainly continue to balance choices and we will continue to have a promising future, Mr. Speaker. I am very optimistic about that. When I speak, I speak from a positive tone. I can always say because of the positivity and the optimism, we always find solutions. We, as a government, find solutions.

To say that there are no problems and we can do everything for everyone, I would not be able to stand on my feet and make that comment, Mr. Speaker. It is all about choices, and it is all about finding solutions. That is what this government has been doing in the past and we will continue to do as a governing party in the future. It is important that we be upfront and honest with the people – and we do.

We are upfront, we are honest, and we do make choices, choices that are sometimes not popular, but choices that we have to make leading into the future. We do have a five-year plan, and we rolled out that plan in Budget 2015. We are being honest, we are being realistic, we have made choices that are very positive and optimistic, and we have certainly related to families and communities.

In education: \$45.7 million, a 10-Year Child Care Strategy, a plan that will continue into the future, a plan that this government has a vision of, a plan that will help out communities in

Newfoundland and Labrador; \$10.5 million plan that will continue full-day kindergarten, a plan that will help out our children at an early age, and families all over Newfoundland and Labrador.

So we are definitely dealing with some issues and concerns of parents and families in the education field. Mr. Speaker, \$65 million in relation to construction and school repair. I mean, when have you ever heard of such major investments by a government in Newfoundland and Labrador? Reality is, when you go back in time and you look at the history and look at where we were as a Province and where we are now, we are in a better position as a Province, economically. We are in a better position as a Province because this government has led the way into the future in relation to make major investments all over Newfoundland and Labrador.

Investments that will definitely pay off in the long term. Investments in our education system, investments in health care, investments in roadways. Our government has made some tough choices about balancing the Budget in the future, in a five-year fiscal reality plan. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador deserve to have a clear, detailed plan that supports our people. In that five-year plan, it certainly puts us in a position for continued transformation and growth moving into the future as the economy grows.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. LITTLE: Our government have rolled out this plan and it is very important to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to know the choices that we have made, and the people in Newfoundland and Labrador will understand why we made the choices we made as we move into the future.

I can certainly say that it was a balanced approach. We made a decision on attrition, and we highly respect the public employees who serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador on a regular basis from day to day and we value the work of public sector employees. We connected in many ways in relation to signing

off on major collective agreements, and it was a collective approach. It was not just our government. It was a combination of our government, the unions, the major unions in Newfoundland and Labrador, and in particular the public sector employees themselves when they signed off on the collective agreements that will lead us into the future.

We dealt with the unfunded liability in the pension plans, and we dealt with that issue head-on with the unions as well, which was another great accomplishment that will lead us into the future. We, as a government, have worked closely with community leaders, as I said earlier. We worked closely with the labour movement in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, and we made some major accomplishments moving forward in relation to the public sector and some of the agreements that were signed off and signed off with the membership of the different unions, actually signed off with large percentage membership votes as well to support us leading into the future.

When you look at the tourism industry – and I have to go back to the tourism industry because the last time I spoke, actually I spoke on the tourism industry in the Town of Elliston, Tourism Elliston, and how that small community revitalized, became leaders on the Bonavista Peninsula, and created the model in relation to tourism in the District of Bonavista South.

Also, Mr. Speaker, in the Town of Trinity Bay North, the Sir William Ford Coaker Foundation and the board, the community volunteers, the committee and community council there, and a number of organizations and groups have partnered as committees, partnered with the community council, partnered with the provincial government, the federal government, and different agencies. If you go there to that part of my district you can see what has happened in the tourism industry and how the Sir William Ford Coaker Foundation has certainly helped the tourism industry, and grown the tourism industry in Bonavista South, and in particular, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Any time you see partnerships happen and you see a connection, you see growth, you see numbers of actual tourists who have come to the

Bonavista Peninsula and there is an increase year after year after year, and the investments that our government will have continually made on behalf of the people in the tourism industry, you can see the success stories, Mr. Speaker. You can see the growth. You can see how we have tapped into a new resource. It is a highly competitive resource around the Province because there are many tourism places in Newfoundland and Labrador that are untapped.

The industry is very competitive. Budget 2015 definitely allows the tourism industry to continually grow in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. If you look at the Town of Bonavista, it is another success story. Look at the harbour front development and the continuation of the Church Street development. Look at the Garrick Theatre, home of a very cultural, historic building that actually closed down at one time.

I used to go to the Garrick Theatre and watch movies when I was growing up, Mr. Speaker. I should say my children did not have the opportunity to go to see movies at the Garrick Theatre because there was no Garrick Theatre. Due to the fact that this committee came along – the Bonavista Historical Society formed the committee – it expanded from there.

Now there is a theatre right in the centre of town that provides more than movies. Entertainment occurs at that site. As a matter of fact, every entertainer who comes to the Garrick Theatre from all over Newfoundland and Labrador and performs there, leaves with an impression that this is one of the astonishing theatres in Newfoundland and Labrador. They always want to come back.

Mr. Speaker, through initiatives, through heritage and cultural exchanges and programs, we as a people have tapped into a vision for the future. It is a vision that allows our people to continue on and provide a cultural heritage perspective. Our children now and their children can have theatrical performances in a region that, for years, did not exist. Through partnerships, community leaders, provincial government, federal government agencies, we have tapped into a very good resource. That particular part of the tourism industry helps

sustain and make that industry grow on a regular basis.

Tourism is a big aspect of what we are all about as a people. When our heritage and our cultural resources connect into the tourism industry, it allows the tourism industry to grow, Mr. Speaker. That is the point that I am trying to get across. For a long time we did not have that resource, we did not go down that road. Through this government, the vision of the people, and the partnerships of community leaders, we have created a great tourism industry in this Province; a tourism industry that I am optimistic will grow and grow.

At one time in the District of Bonavista South the fishery was big. It was massive. Now the fishery is still massive in Bonavista South, Mr. Speaker, and the tourism industry is a very massive sector as well. I am so proud to be part of a government that has connected with the people, partnered with the people, and made this actually come true. It is an industry that will definitely grow. People will actually come to the Bonavista Peninsula time after time.

This is a model that we can take to a different region of Newfoundland and Labrador, or to a different region of my part of the country, or to a different region of my part of the world. That says something. That says we are doing things right on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. This government – we are part of that process, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we should stand in the House and shout about the good things we do as a government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LITTLE: On this side of the House we will continually do that. Each and every MHA will get up and speak about their districts and the good things that are happening on the ground in our districts. I can tell you I am very optimistic about the future of this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

There are some major, major great announcements in Budget 2015, Mr. Speaker. Yes, as a government, we should relay that message to the people of Newfoundland and

Labrador continually. As we move into the future, the prosperity of Newfoundland and Labrador will grow because of the decisions that we made in Budget 2015. We did make choices, wise choices.

The previous speaker for Bonavista North, my colleague and good friend, I must say, talked about his grandchild and the future. He certainly relayed a strong message. Budget 2015 is not only about our generation, it is about future generations.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LITTLE: That is what a responsible government does, Mr. Speaker. It looks into the future and lays out a plan that will benefit people in the future, our children and their children. That is what certainly makes a great Province, when a government that has a great vision, like our government, takes us into the future and also lays out a plan for the future. We will continually look after the people in the future, our children, their children, and their children. That is what this government is all about – laying out that plan. Budget 2015 certainly takes us down that road.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a pleasure for me to stand the third time now and speak to the Budget on the main motion. It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that we do not have more opportunity to speak to the Budget. There is so much that could be said, but we are limited by the amount of time that we have in debate.

The last time I spoke about some of the missed opportunities that this government has sort of just let slide by, economic opportunities that we have had over the last number of years, whether it is the forestry, the fishery, in industrial fabrication, in shipbuilding, and other areas. I would like to focus now on some of the things I have managed to learn about this year's Budget

in terms of education, which is of particular interest to me.

One of the things that I have observed over the last couple of years is that government came to the House of Assembly in 2013 and said: We will amalgamate the four school boards that have English language education. Basically, the bulk, the vast majority of the schools in the Province, they will amalgamate them under a single school district. They called it the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District. This was going to save this whole bunch of money.

In fact, at the time the Minister of Education sat just over there, here in the House of Assembly, in the Estimates meeting. He said that at maturity this was going to save almost \$13 million. It was over \$12 million and then it was \$12.9 million and all that. In fact, he said at the time that he could produce an Excel spreadsheet – you can go back and look at the minutes – and show where these savings would be achieved.

We had an Estimates meeting here last night, two years later. I asked sort of every which way possible about these savings. Well, I did not see a whole lot of evidence of savings. In fact, the amount of money that it cost the Province to operate that particular line, School Board Operations, has increased. There have been no savings that are obvious. Then I said, well, maybe if you could just show where those monies were redirected. I did not have a whole lot of success in that regard either.

It is somewhat farcical, too, because if you look at our law, if you look at our legislation, if you look at the legislation governing schools in this Province, the Schools Act, 1997, it says – just remember, Mr. Speaker, these school districts were effectively amalgamated in the summer of 2013. We are almost two years after that. It says right here in section 60 of the Schools Act under Board to adopt constitution, 60(1), “The board first elected or appointed for a school district shall adopt, not later than 6 months after its appointment or election, a constitution regarding its duties and responsibilities ... ” et cetera. I could go on.

According to the Acting Minister of Education, we have had so many Ministers of Education

since 2011 it is sort of hard to keep track. Not as many as Fisheries, but we have had a good number. According to the minister, that constitution has been sitting in the minister’s office since about October and the board is waiting for that to get approval. He said: Oh, we are waiting to get a legal opinion.

I do not have to get a legal opinion to tell you that the government, this government, is violating, in the least, the spirit of the Schools Act, which says we should have had a constitution adopted by this government’s appointed board by now, certainly by now.

It has been sitting in the minister’s office for over six months waiting for a legal opinion. It is like they have too much better to do than to follow the spirit and the letter of the law of the land regarding schooling in this Province. It is pathetic. There have been no savings that they can demonstrate. They cannot even follow the legislation properly.

That is one thing I found out last night in the Estimates committee because the Estimates committee is a bit more free flowing. The minister answers some questions that they choose to answer and some of their staff occasionally answer some of the questions. We are here for a number of hours. We get to examine the Budget in a bit more detail.

One of the things I thought was really interesting when we listened to the Throne Speech this year, and if you listened to the Budget Speech, there was a big hullabaloo about this – the only thing we did not have was trumpets in the background and another tea party paid for by the taxpayers out in the lobby like we had for CETA, Muskrat Falls, and everything.

They said they were going to proceed with a kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum renewal in many areas, and went on to expound on their curriculum renewal. They are launching this great initiative, and named up all the subjects where we were going to have the curriculum renewal. Well, Mr. Speaker, do you know how much new funding is dedicated to this great curriculum renewal that we are going to have now? Do you know how much money is backing that up? No new money. No new money.

This is one of the major planks of this government: please elect us to another term, Budget. This is one of the major planks they have going into the election, is their curriculum renewal. Somehow this reflects the current Premier's commitment during his leadership to have a review of K-12 education in this Province. This is somehow supposed to be a reflection of his commitment. A review of curriculum, that was already going to happen anyways. That was scheduled to happen anyways. There is no money at all, there is nothing new here at all, and they held it out like it was some great new initiative, and nothing could be further from the truth.

Then I asked, well, what about the math curriculum? We have heard about all the problems we had with the math curriculum in this Province. Some provinces have managed to address issues when it comes to mathematics, and there was supposed to be this major math review and so on. I did not get any indication that any of that is going ahead before the general election happens – if we have a general election this year, if we have it according to the law of Newfoundland and Labrador. There is no indication that is going to happen this year.

Guess how much new money, Mr. Speaker, is dedicated to that math review? Guess how much they have allocated to that? The same amount that was allocated for the routine review of curriculum that we were going to have anyway, masqueraded in the Budget Speech and the Throne Speech as a new initiative.

Thank goodness we have the Estimates committee.

AN HON. MEMBER: How much was that amount again?

MR. KIRBY: How much new money?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

MR. KIRBY: Well, do you know what a goose egg looks like? That number looks exactly the same as that, because there is no new money for either of those things. It is much ado about nothing, because there is no evidence they are going to do the math review before the election. This other business when it comes to a

curriculum review had to happen anyways. That is what we normally would have done. So that was very interesting.

Then I asked about the full-day kindergarten. Last August, when a lot of people were not paying a whole lot of attention, because it was August and people are on their holidays and so on, the Minister of Education at the time – because it was a different Minister of Education then as well – came out and talked about how for some of the schools that they are introducing full-day kindergarten, instead of doing something like the other provinces did, doing something more reasonable and phasing in full-day kindergarten, having some pilot projects here and there, doing so rural, doing some urban, doing a coastal, doing Labrador; learning from the process and implementing it over a period of time, which would help us to learn from the process, it would help us to improve it as we go along, it would not be as expensive all of a sudden. Instead of doing that over a period of two or three years, they decided: please elect us and we will do it in 2016. That was the Budget last year.

So they came out last August, because they had not done a whole lot on it up to that point, and said: Well, some of these schools are not big enough. That is not a big surprise because they are still planning to build schools as it is. They have not even broken ground on schools that they have admitted cannot accommodate the number of students that the board is going to be sending to them. That is not a big surprise, but they said: there will be a team teaching model in some of these schools for full-day kindergarten.

Basically, that means if you are a teacher now teaching half-day kindergarten, you are going to have another teacher and almost another full classroom full of kids, kindergarten age, in your classroom come September 2016. That is going to be, more or less, what exists outside – to use the government's language – the standard classroom setting; team teaching with almost doubled-up classrooms. Not exactly double, but close to.

There was a list of, I believe it is 190 schools that were appended to the minister's press release last August, and it lists all the schools. So I said to the minister: Can you provide us

with a list of the schools, of this 190, where they are going to have team teaching outside the standard classroom model? The officials from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development: Oh, yes, we have such information – based on their projections. Based on their projections, we have the information.

You would think, Mr. Speaker, since this government has done backflips trying to separate itself from Bill 29 – they completely reversed themselves on Bill 29. First, they said it was good to give people less information, and then they realized that was really a bad idea. So they paid \$1.1 million for new legislation that we all told them – we told them that Bill 29 was a bad idea but they decided to bring it in anyways, waste a whole bunch of time in the Legislature ramming it through in a filibuster, and then pay \$1.1 million to get somebody else to get them out of the situation they were in.

You would think they would have learned something from that process. The minister says, no, we are not going to give you a list of the kindergarten classrooms that will have full-day kindergarten with two teachers in one classroom. Some of these, as far as I am concerned – and we will wait and see the evidence otherwise – are going to be classrooms that are exactly the same size as the ones now that have half the crowd of kids, or about half.

The minister refuses to provide disclosure of that information, and I do not know why. Parents deserve to know. Teachers deserve to know if it is their school, their kindergarten students, their children who are going to be in these team-taught, classroom settings. There is nothing extraordinary there. You would think he would be happy to let people know, because they are asking. I am not sure what they are worried about. That was a big surprise to me. Those are just three things I learned last night here in the House of Assembly in the Estimates.

There are all sorts of other things we could say about education, and about savings and potential savings. Government says all the time, where are you going to cut? Where would you cut? Where would you find the savings?

You have to go back to, again, the schools in this Province that this government has been

running year round, paying the light bill, paying for maintenance, paying for insurance, paying for other costs, schools that do not have any children in them. There is one up in the Member for The Straits – White Bay North District, St. Anthony Elementary, it closed in November 2013. Government is paying somewhere in the order of \$105,000 a year to operate, even though there is no school going on there, and the status of that school is, according to the board, building to be demolished, site converted to a playfield for a new school. Government is operating a school to the tune of \$105,000 –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. KIRBY: I do not know if the heat and lights are on. It is funny, the Member for Trinity – Bay de Verde said that the school they closed out there in Heart's Delight-Islington, the bell still goes off there recess time. He said the people in the community set their watches by it. That is true, the school – it is like the horn at the mill in Corner Brook, people know what time it is. People know what time it is because the school that is closed down, the bell still goes off recess and lunchtime. People look at their watch and make sure they have the right time. You cannot make this stuff up.

AN HON. MEMBER: We are paying for this.

MR. KIRBY: We are paying for this.

So we got this list here – I requested this from the board. They are a little more willing to give information out. Hundreds of thousands of dollars – over a million dollars to operate schools annually that have been closed as far back as 1999, and all these schools have to be disposed, and to be disposed, and so on. Yes, there are agreements with the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland and Labrador that need to be worked out. We know that, but get it worked out.

That is like the constitution for the school district that is sitting somewhere in the minister's office over six months waiting to get a legal opinion. I mean, it is beyond laissez-faire governance. It is just sort of a ship at sea that –

AN HON. MEMBER: Autopilot.

MR. KIRBY: Well, it certainly is autopilot, absolutely.

Meanwhile, we get these sorts of commitments from government that they are going to kick-start a review of the K-12 system, and the Premier is going to lead a conversation, and the minister is going to lead a conversation on renewal of the curriculum and all that, and then we find out that is all nonsense. It was all going to happen anyways – just foolishness that it is not five cents of new money put towards it at all.

We have all these problems in the school system. We hear continually about mental health issues amongst youth in the Province that there are insufficient resources in schools to deal with addictions issues, to deal with other mental health issues. We have talked about it time and time again. There are public consultations going on about it. Would it not be better to take that money that is going towards vacant schools and use it for something like that? Wouldn't that make more sense? I am sure those properties are worth something too.

There are all sorts of other places that the government could find money to fund the education system. There is no end of it. How many times have they gone over budget – the sort of word on the street when it comes to tenders and this government is you can sort of have your way with them. You do not have to look very far to find examples where tenders were issued for a certain amount, then were awarded for a certain amount, and then it just ballooned out of proportion.

Look at the Confederation Building, to replace the Confederation Building East Block windows with blue windows for the PC Party's great legacy, \$39 million they said, and now it has gone up and up tens of thousands of dollars more. Moose detection systems on the Trans-Canada Highway, trotted out just before a provincial election, \$1.5 million worth of money on something that was never properly tested, never piloted; much like a bunch of other things in this Province, never tested, went ahead and spent the money on it anyways.

Advanced Education and Skills, look at that department; what a mess. They brought in their campaign manager Ross Reid, paid him \$160,000 a year or something for a population growth strategy, never saw anything from that afterwards. They brought in failed PC candidate John Noseworthy, could not get elected to the House of Assembly – they brought him in, paid him \$140,000 or something to do this review. The report is about yay thick, never touched the report at all; that is over there in somebody's office gathering dust. All sorts of recommendations from the Auditor General from that Auditor General, the current Auditor General, how the government could stop wasting taxpayers' dollars and divert it to the primary needs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, like education and health care. No, just let it go on.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KIRBY: All sorts of examples from Child, Youth and Family Services. What about Humber Valley Paving? People remember that – somebody was over there talking today about how open they are. I mean, we are not that foolish over here. We cannot be kidded all of the time. The retendering of the contract, the additional cost – and the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair tells me the road is still not finished up. They have several kilometres of road that is still not done – it is still not done, after all of that complete scandal.

Then the leasing of the *Norcon Galatea*, that vessel formerly known as the *Hamilton Sound* was sold by the government for \$214,000. The vessel has been leased back to the government for \$5,800 a month, so good money going after bad.

I could go on – as I said in the beginning, there is so much we could say about this government's failings in its failed Budget, but there is not enough time unfortunately.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): Order, please!

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, that the House do now adjourn.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Before the House adjourns, I just want to remind members of the Management Commission there is a meeting at 6:00 p.m.

The motion is that this House do now adjourn.

All those in favour, 'aye'.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader, just before we vote on the motion.

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I actually could have done it after, but I just want to do a reminder as well. You mentioned the Management Commission; there is also Estimates on this evening for the Department of Finance at 7:00 p.m. here in the House as well.

Thank you.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Carried.

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

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