



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FORTY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume XLVII

FOURTH SESSION

Number 25

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Wade Verge, MHA

Wednesday

June 3, 2015

The House met at 2:00 p.m.

Admit strangers.

MR. SPEAKER (Verge): Order, please!

I am pleased to welcome to our public gallery today from Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador Ms Pam Mills, Recreation Specialist; Michelle Hunt, Operations Manager; and, Jane Collins from the Recreation Division of the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development.

Welcome to the House of Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I do believe I erred. It is Jaime Collins, I believe.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: We will be hearing members' statements today for the members representing the Districts of Humber East, Virginia Waters, St. George's – Stephenville East, Port au Port, Trinity – Bay de Verde, and Bonavista North.

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

MR. FLYNN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Frank Humber of Corner Brook. On May 31, the big left-hander pitched his 200th win in the Corner Brook Senior Baseball League.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FLYNN: Frank has been involved in the sport of baseball for over thirty years and has achieved a distinguished career. In 1985, Frank attended high school in Florida and won the Fort Lauderdale/Miami High School Player of the Year Award. This was followed by four years at Wake Forest University where he achieved notoriety for appearances, innings pitched, wins, and strikeouts.

During those years Frank represented Canada at the 1987 Pan Am Games, the 1988 World Baseball Championships where he was National Team Most Valuable Player, and the 1988

Summer Olympics. A crowning achievement came in the 1989 when Frank was drafted by the LA Dodgers.

Frank played in the Dodger's minor league system for a couple of years before returning to Corner Brook to establish his professional career as a teacher and school principal. As a player and a coach, Frank has been an inspiration to many young players in Corner Brook and throughout the Province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating Frank Humber on his many accomplishments in the great sport of baseball.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize the unwavering dedication and love for community service of two special individuals in the District of Virginia Waters. Jim and Theresa Boland received the Brother Jim McSheffrey Community Award which recognizes individuals and organizations for long-standing contributions to the MacMorran Community Centre.

Jim is known as the go-to person for the community food bank, providing a compassionate and critical service for those in need. He can be found in the centre each day gathering, sorting, and distributing the many food items wherever they are needed. Nearby, Theresa spends her time each day co-ordinating the efforts and the services of the clothing bank to ensure that requests go fulfilled, whether it is the clothes for back to school or the clothes the kids need to go to camp.

Motivated by community pride and care for their neighbours, they are hard-working volunteers. Involved in family events, folklore projects, and the 50 Plus Club, Theresa and Jim are so very deserving of this recognition.

I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating Jim and Theresa Boland and thank them for their contribution to the neighbourhood they call home.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, the College of the North Atlantic was presented with two awards at the Colleges and Institutes Canada Awards of Excellence held in Winnipeg.

CNA's innovative blended learning offering of the Heavy Duty Equipment Technician Program was recognized for Program Excellence, and its instructor, Grey Ryan, was recognized for Teaching Excellence.

The program combined a group of geographically dispersed apprentices in Labrador West, an innovative instructor in Bay St. George, and a creative use of technology to create an engaging classroom which integrated students from the two dispersed locations.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time the college has received awards for this innovative program. In 2013, they received the Shirley Davis Award for Excellence in Blended Learning from the National University Technology Network. In that same year, they were recipients of the Sloan Consortium Effective Practice Award.

I ask members of this House of Assembly to join with me in congratulating the College of the North Atlantic, all the people involved in setting up this program, and instructor Greg Ryan on the award-winning work they do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Port au Port.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CORNETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to congratulate Master Warrant Officer Alysha Chaulk, Master Warrant Officer Stephen Eckhart, and Master Warrant Officer Andrew Patten of the 2904 Cambrai Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps in Stephenville, who are the only cadets in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador to attain the highest level of the National Star of Excellence program this year.

Mr. Speaker, this award is based on the ability of cadets to collect points in different areas of assessment to reach four distinct levels of excellence. The areas of assessment are a combination of compulsory and participation training and events, including such things as leadership, fitness, community service, drill, wilderness survival, marksmanship, and participation in optional training teams like first aid or drill teams. More points are given for higher levels of success within specified training or levels of participation.

The National Star of Excellence recognizes senior cadets who display exceptional involvement in the Army Cadet activities, and is the most comprehensive Army Cadet Challenge.

I ask all hon. members to join with me in congratulating Master Warrant Officers Alysha Chaulk, Stephen Eckhart, and Andrew Patten on this prestigious accomplishment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to recognize the Heart's Content 50 Plus Club and congratulate them on the completion of the launch of the book *By Hook or By Crook, Tales of Days Gone by in Heart's Content*.

This past Sunday, I had the opportunity to attend the launch. The idea for the book was developed by Mike Middelkoop, and was then fostered and brought to fruition by members of the 50 Plus Club.

This book is a collection of interviews from the memories of local residents. In 1866, Heart's Content made telecommunications history by being the site of the first successful landing of the transatlantic cable. 2016 will mark the 150th anniversary. This event brought many modern conveniences to the area, while hardy residents coped with the everyday struggles of a developing settlement.

Recollections for the book were provided by Donald Blundon, the late Herb Crocker, Annie Cumby, Bill Cumby, Marina Langer, Ed Matthews, Betty Piercey, Frank Piercey, and Jack Smith.

The Club is hopeful this book will become the first in a *Tales of Days Gone By* series.

I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating the Heart's Content 50 Plus Club on the launch of *By Hook or By Crook*.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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.

As you drive towards New-Wes-Valley, you see a sign that looks like a piece of artwork inviting you to visit Norton's Cove Studio in Brookfield. The owner-operator artist, Janet Davis, is a true gem as a multi-disciplined artist.

Surfacing by Janet Davis is currently running at the Main Gallery of the Newfoundland and Labrador Craft Council on Duckworth Street. It concludes on June 13 and it is definitely a must see. It includes prints, pottery, hooked mats, and paintings that celebrate the many moods and metaphors found in the surface of the oceans.

Janet, a local resident and graduate of Cabot College's Textiles Program – before it was CNA – and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design has been producing fine art and sharing her craft with students and visiting as an artist in the schools for many years.

Janet creates interdisciplinary images based on her life in rural Newfoundland. She says that the sea is present in all aspect of her life, from sailing as a past time, to watching the sunrise and sunset as they reflect with the waves as her first and last inspirations, daily.

I ask all hon. members to help me toast a former student, Janet Davis – to recognize her achievements and wish her much success in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On May 29, Newfoundland and Labrador Crime Stoppers announced the recipients of the 2015 Police and Peace Officer of the Year Awards. This marked the twenty-first annual event that recognizes officers for their professionalism and for the contributions they make to their communities.

I would like to congratulate this year's recipients. For police officers, the winners were Royal Canadian Mounted Police Staff Sergeant Donald Rogers of the Happy Valley-Goose Bay detachment, as well as Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Constable Scott Mosher of Corner Brook. The peace officer of the year is Fishery Officer Sherry Pittman, who is employed with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

RCM Staff Sergeant Rogers was promoted to his current leadership position last year and has been a member of the RCMP for almost twenty-six years. He currently oversees a busy detachment in Labrador with eighteen officers. Despite his busy workload, Staff Sergeant Rogers still contributes greatly to his community and volunteers with groups such as the Labrador Friendship Centre, the Homelessness Coalition,

Special Olympics and the Mokami Status of Women.

Mr. Speaker, RNC Constable Scott Mosher has already had a significantly positive impact on Corner Brook despite being a relatively new officer. In addition to his duties with the patrol services, he is extensively involved with the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program, commonly known as D.A.R.E, and last year he spoke to hundreds of elementary school students about the dangers of drugs. Constable Mosher is also a dedicated volunteer and assists with youth sports, the Corner Brook Winter Carnival, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and the local Crime Prevention Committee.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, but certainly not least, Fishery Officer Sherry Pittman is also stationed in Corner Brook where she engages fish harvesters and the public to educate and promote conservation and protection initiatives. In 2014, Officer Pittman was involved in a rescue at sea in the Bay of Islands when she and her partner came upon an overturned vessel. One of the survivors of the incident had drifted from the vessel and was located with the assistance of the Canadian Coast Guard after a search was initiated by Officer Pittman.

Mr. Speaker, all three recipients of this year's Police and Peace Officer of the Year Awards are certainly deserving of the accolades they receive and they are fine role models for their fellow colleagues. On behalf of the provincial government, I congratulate them and I also commend Newfoundland and Labrador Crime Stoppers for bringing recognition to their important work.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. I am pleased to stand in the House on behalf of the Official Opposition to commend Newfoundland and Labrador Crime Stoppers for

recognizing such important members of our workforce and our communities.

The Police and Peace Officer of the Year Awards provide us with an opportunity to appreciate the valuable work that officers do, both on the job and off the job, in big and small communities across the Province. I would like to extend congratulations to this year's recipients, Staff Sergeant Rogers, Constable Mosher, and Fisheries Officer Pittman, for their outstanding professionalism and their commitment to the improvement of public safety in this Province.

The volunteer contributions these individuals make and have made to their communities, in addition to their demanding jobs, deserve the highest accolades. I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage all members of the Province to engage with their communities as these officers have and follow the fine example they have set.

Once again, congratulations to the officers and to Newfoundland and Labrador Crime Stoppers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I too thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Congratulations Staff Sergeant Rogers, Constable Mosher, and Officer Pittman. Congratulations also to all the women and men who work as police and peace officers.

The public depends on these people and depends on their professionalism, their dedication, and expertise. I applaud the work they do in our communities. The transition of police forces into police services is enhanced by all the extracurricular community work done by these officers. How better to serve the community than to be a visible part of it. Bravo to them all.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to note that June is Recreation Month in Newfoundland and Labrador, a time to highlight how active, healthy living enhances the quality of our lives.

The theme once again this year is *Celebrate! Activate! Motivate!* As a government, we work with our partners at Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador to do just that. We celebrate and promote the benefits of recreation, Mr. Speaker, while putting in place a supportive environment at the community level to motivate residents to become more active.

Mr. Speaker, we have supported hiking trail development, park development, wellness grants, age-friendly grants, physical activity equipment grants, and provided community-based organizations – large and small – with funding to deliver recreational programs to all ages. We also support Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador in its efforts to promote active, healthy living and to deliver key programs like Eat Great and Participate, High Five, the Find Your Fit! campaign, and more.

Our government has put the infrastructure and opportunities in place which allow people to engage in healthy, recreational pursuits. But we also know that at the end of the day, individuals must make the choice to use those opportunities to improve their own lifestyle, and to encourage our children and grandchildren to do likewise.

Mr. Speaker, in February, federal, provincial, and territorial ministers responsible for recreation met in Prince George, British Columbia and endorsed a National Recreation Framework to guide the sector. I encourage those working at the community level to read the document, and to incorporate it into their community recreation planning and practice.

Our government has also committed to developing a new Provincial Wellness Plan, Mr. Speaker. It will be representative of the new synergies we have found in forming the

Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development – with healthy living, recreation, and sport development together. It will also represent the views of our stakeholders, both inside and outside of government.

It is a major undertaking, Mr. Speaker. We essentially need to change the collective mindset of our population and encourage more Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to make active, healthy living a way of life. So I welcome this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, during Recreation Month, to encourage everybody to take the first step. Get outdoors. Go for a hike. Start right now to pursue a healthier, more active lifestyle.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HILLIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. While June is officially recognized as Recreation Month in Newfoundland and Labrador, it is important to promote health and active living throughout the whole year. Whether it is summer, winter, spring, or fall, there are lots of opportunities to remain active and promote healthy lifestyles.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador as they have just completed their thirty-day challenge, where residents of all ages and abilities came together to Find Your Fit! Incredibly, seventy-one communities, fifty-eight schools, and over 40,000 people took part in this community physical activity initiative.

Mr. Speaker, at the same time they are promoting recreation, this government has raised the fees at the three provincially owned and operated swimming pools in the Province. That, in particular, has affected our seniors. The minister also states that government has committed to a new provincial wellness plan. We have been asking for that plan since 2008 and we have not yet seen the outcomes that the first wellness plan was supposed to deliver.

Mr. Speaker, we need to do more to inspire residents of Newfoundland and Labrador to incorporate physical activity and healthy choices into their everyday life.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Every month is Recreation Month and indeed every day is recreation day. I play hockey and even scored a hat trick this year, and I try to get in a walk at least once a day.

Changing the collective mindset of our population to embrace a healthier way of life takes leadership. I challenge my hon. colleagues to show leadership by organizing community walks, rolls, hops, jogs, or whatever works to get the people in our districts, young and old, to get more exercise. The longest journey starts with that first step, or that first roll.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CRUMMELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House to emphasize the importance of promoting occupational health and safety particularly as construction activity and other seasonal work increases during the summer months. Preventing accidents and illness in workplaces throughout the Province is part of the mandate of Service NL, and we remain dedicated to working with employers to promote the well-being of workers year-round.

Mr. Speaker, I remind my hon. colleagues that only a few weeks ago we celebrated North American Occupational Health and Safety

Week, with the theme being "Make Safety a Habit – For Your Career." This is an important message to be remembered throughout the year, but especially at a time when many new construction workers are entering the workplace to start their careers. It is important that all employers give site-specific safety orientation to all new employees. Safety orientation and ongoing safety coaching are critical components for preventing injuries in the workplace.

Mr. Speaker, in 2014, the number of workplace injuries resulting in lost-time compensation claims remained, for the third consecutive year, at the lowest level ever recorded in our Province. This speaks to what can be achieved through a collaboration between employers, union representatives, and the provincial government. Nevertheless, eleven workers died last year as a result of workplace accidents, and another eighteen died from occupational disease. These statistics underline the need to be vigilant and consistent in promoting a strong safety culture in every workplace.

To promote this, Service NL's Occupational Health and Safety Division completes inspections at all workplaces throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. The inspection process not only assesses the level of compliance, but also helps employers understand their legislated responsibilities. Staff of the division are also available to answer questions at any time to help stakeholders better understand their responsibilities under the legislation. This complements other efforts by our government to improve safety for workers at construction sites, such as amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act* to improve the safety of road construction crews. Our government doubled the fine for speeding in construction zones to safeguard workers on the job.

Mr. Speaker, maintaining safety in the workplace is everyone's responsibility. As construction activity ramps up over the coming months, I encourage everyone to remember their respective roles and responsibilities, and work together to make sure workers come home safe at the end of each day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. We here in the Official Opposition also want to recognize the importance of occupational health and safety. As the minister says, we do have the roadwork season coming on now. Certainly, I have seen a lot of improvement, particularly as it relates to the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Safety Association and the impact they have had on safety when it comes to that type of work. So, we certainly applaud them and we applaud that initiative.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about occupational health and safety, government has a much larger role to play than simply reading Ministerial Statements. We look no further than Labrador, where we have had no safety inspectors there for the last three years, and according to the minister we cannot get anyone to work in Labrador. I am not sure where he got that information, but that certainly is an issue. We have a silica dust study up there that is over a year behind. We have the fish processors safety sector council which was supposed to be established three years ago that did not happen.

God forbid if you get hurt, you get injured, we know the mess that is going on at the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission and the Review Division, and how people have to wait so long to get their cases heard. Government is breaking its own sixty-day legislation.

I thank the minister. There is a lot of work to be done. Let's get at it.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. LANE: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement here today as well. It is important to note in the facts behind workplace injuries is the fact that assaults and violent acts and injury rates are well up according to the latest WHSCC annual performance report. I was only having a look at it yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes a strong culture of safety also needs to be legislated by government. I will give a good example: how about lone-worker legislation to help protect workers on the job? Such legislation has the potential to lower incidence rates as well as lower accepted fatality claims as well.

Above all, Mr. Speaker, we encourage government to enforce those components of the Highway Traffic Act to ensure lower injury rates. We have to remember that the key to any of this work that is being done on the highways is enforcement. We need better enforcement mechanisms, particularly when it comes to the Move Over legislation that our party backed them on.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, the minister said that he would check with Nalcor to determine the costs associated with offshore seismic vessels that are currently being tied up in St. John's Harbour. This, of course, is due to regulatory issues with the C-NLOPB. The boats have been tied up now for over a week.

I ask the minister: You have now had time to check with Nalcor; what impact will this delay have on the exploration program?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The two vessels that are currently in the harbour, one vessel has been released and is headed to the offshore, Mr. Speaker. They are tied up because of offshore safety concerns. It is the responsibility of the companies and through the C-NLOPB to work through to ensure offshore safety for workers, and that they are compliant with the new transitional regulations.

So that is why they are tied up. I think that is for good reason when we are talking about safety of offshore workers. With respect to any additional cost to Nalcor, Mr. Speaker, there is no additional cost to Nalcor with the vessels that are tied up in the harbour.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Methylphenidate or Ritalin is a drug that is commonly used to treat ADHD. There is a legitimate need for this use with this medication; however, professionals are telling us it has been highly abused. The first line of Ritalin covered by government's Prescription Drug Program is forms that can be easily abused.

I ask the Premier: Are you aware of this issue – you were the Minister of Health and Community Services – and, if so, what are you doing to address it?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition raises a very important issue, and it is one that came up during recent consultations that the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions have held in various places in the Province, with more coming up later this week and next week as well.

The misuse of any kind of prescription drug is always a great concern from a health perspective, from a legal perspective. There are numerous efforts being made in this Province to crack down on the misuse and abuse of prescription drugs. Ritalin is a drug that many people need and when used properly and when the prescription is followed, there are not issues with that, but any kind of drug abuse is very concerning, of course.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some of the efforts that the minister speaks about, he must know that there are other forms available for methylphenidate or Ritalin that cannot be crushed or cannot be easily abused; however, this government will only cover these medications after they have tried or they have failed on the kind that is easily abused.

I ask the Premier: Since you know that these pills are being sold on the streets, why haven't you made the changes to the Prescription Drug Program to reduce the abuse that is currently happening with this particular medication?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, all of the time in the Department of Health and Community Services, while working closely with Atlantic counterparts and counterparts across the country, we are reviewing what drugs are under formularies, we are reviewing what drugs are covered under the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program.

As I have said in my previous response, this is a serious issue. We are certainly looking into it further. The whole issue of the abuse of prescription narcotics is actually a major public health issue across this country. We recognize the severity of it, we are working with other key stakeholders to respond, and there is actually an Atlantic Provinces working group that has been

formed to look at gaps and opportunities and approaches to deal with prescription drug abuse.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, in various jurisdictions the problems that this particular medication causes to society, in particular our youth, there are options available. Many health care professionals and parents want this current policy to be changed. They do not want the first option being drugs that are easily abused, like methylphenidate, the one that is currently being available to most of our youth. Government is aware of this. They have been told this, as the minister said.

I ask the Premier: Why aren't you listening to these concerns and putting the proper measures in place so that you can help solve some of those problems with our youth right now?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, time and time again within the Department of Health and Community Services we have demonstrated our willingness to adapt in the face of evidence, and that is changing all of the time. We are constantly monitoring what is occurring with various prescription drugs and the misuse or abuse of those drugs.

We have also started discussions within the mental health program and the addition programs within Eastern Health on this very issue, so I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that it is an issue we are looking at because we do recognize the seriousness.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I agree with the minister when he talks about this being evidence-based, but surely he must be aware of the evidence that is currently out there. Our educators are telling us, our parents are telling us, health professionals are telling us – why aren't you listening to the evidence that you already know exists?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, like every province and territory in the country, we subscribe to the Pan-Canadian review processes that are in place when it comes to drugs, which drugs are listed, which drugs are included in drug programs. We monitor very closely what is happening across the country. We consult with stakeholders within our own health care system as well, so this is an issue that has been recently raised and it is one that we are closely looking at, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, the 2014 Auditor General's report shows that the Province is currently owed over \$37 million in outstanding traffic fines. Governments current collection methods are only applied to accounts or fines of \$400 or more; however, there is \$6.3 million owing in fines totalling less than \$400, each which is not being actively collected whatsoever – and those are the words of the AG.

I ask the minister: Given you current fiscal difficulties, what steps are your government taking to collect this \$6.3 million?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the question from the member opposite. As he referenced, we talked about this in Estimates and we talked about it at length. I

think anyone who has been involved with the Department of Justice on either side of the House recognizes that there are challenges for all of us in collecting outstanding fines. A lot of it has to do with the nature of the clientele you are dealing with in many respects. A lot of them have no fixed addresses and are very hard and difficult to locate.

What I can tell the member, as he just referenced, we have taken a number of steps to try and crack down on repeat offenders and to try and generate further revenue with respect to the public Treasury.

Just recently we conducted a pilot project with the RNC. I cannot share a lot of data at this point because I do not have it, but I can say it looks like there is some good success in what we have tried.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, as I said, the AG has stated that any accounts of a less than \$400 are not being actively collected. That is \$6.3 million.

Recently, the Finance Minister hired his political friend to collect roughly \$900,000 from seniors and pensioners because of his department's mistake. It is important to remember that over half of those overpayments, made by the government, amount to less than \$400 each.

I ask the Premier: Why are you allowing people who violated traffic laws to evade over \$6 million in fines and, instead, forcing seniors to make up for your \$900,000 mistake?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a very serious issue there. It is shameful the member would lump the seniors of our Province into a discussion –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KING: It is shocking that the member would lump the seniors of our Province into a discussion about those who commit criminal activities in the Province, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, as I said a few moments ago, we have taken a number of significant steps to enhance our ability to collect fines. We have garnished wages. We actually now do not allow drivers' licences –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. KING: If the members are interested, I can continue, Mr. Speaker, but I am not going to compete for airtime in Question Period.

We garnish wages. We do not renew drivers' licences. We will not register vehicles. The challenge with the clientele we are talking about is many of them drive without a licence and registered vehicle anyway.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, it is shocking to hear that this government's priority is to prosecute seniors rather than offenders. This government has targeting vulnerable seniors, many living on fixed incomes to pay for their mistakes.

In 2013, the PC government cut collections officers tasked with collecting these unpaid fines – over \$37 million. The AG said that cutting them had a huge impact on collecting fines and that is why we have such a poor collection rate.

I ask the Premier again: How do you justify having Leo Bonnell go after seniors for \$900,000 while downsizing those who should be collecting the \$37 million owing by offenders?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is certainly appropriate that the member wants to score political points. I accept that. That is part of the theatrics in the House of Assembly, but the fact that he would use seniors of the Province and lump them into a discussion around criminals in the Province I think is just absolutely terrible.

We are talking about a very serious –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KING: We are talking about a very serious issue here. We are talking about those who commit crimes, have outstanding fines, and trying to find a way to collect the fines. To take the vulnerable and the seniors of the Province and to lump them in with that discussion and to suggest that somehow there is a connection to that, it is absolutely atrocious in my view, Mr. Speaker.

I have outlined to the member opposite very clearly that we have taken concrete steps to try and collect fines. We will continue to pursue every option available to us.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, speaking of concrete steps, other provinces such as Alberta, Manitoba, and New Brunswick use a program in partnership with Canada Revenue Agency. It allows income tax refunds, GST rebates, and tax credits to be withheld from debtors and redirected to the province. New Brunswick alone collected \$2 million in voluntary payments

in the first year because people knew that their tax returns would be affected.

I ask the minister: It has been successful elsewhere, will you consider the registration of traffic fines, regardless of their amount, with CRA?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I appreciate the question. The member has hit on a very good point there, and contrary to the opposite member's belief that we are the least, last, and lowest in the country, we are not. As a matter of fact, we do a lot of great things.

The member just raised a very good point. We are actually doing what he is asking me if we will consider doing, Mr. Speaker. We have been doing it for some time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last week, I asked the minister if those who are homeless are counted in the number of individuals on Income Support and he was supposed to get back to us with an answer. We do not yet have that answer.

I will ask the minister: Can he confirm today that individuals without an address do not qualify for Income Support?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It so happens that I have the information here, Mr. Speaker. I will table it right after Question Period.

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

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Will he confirm for the House today that individuals without an address do not qualify for Income Support?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I will have to check with my staff on that. I certainly will report to him. I will report to him as soon as Question Period is over.

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

MR. OSBORNE: It is very typical of that government, Mr. Speaker. We have the information; we do not have the information. We will make a decision; we will not make a decision.

The rental allowance provided through Income Support is not nearly enough to pay for rent. Some individuals become homeless because they simply cannot afford to pay their rent based on what they receive on Income Support. If you cannot pay your rent and become homeless, you do not have an address. If you do not have an address, you do not qualify for Income Support.

Will the minister confirm that people are becoming homeless because the rental allowance is simply not sufficient to pay their rent?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, we take this entire issue very seriously. That is why, we as a government, commissioned the OrgCode report. We have had discussions with groups and organizations who put forward the challenges of rents in urban versus rural. As this report rolls out, as we continue our meetings with groups, this will be something that the entire study of this and the movement forward will take a look

at. I recognize it is an issue, and we will continue to work and try to find a solution to it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HILLIER: Mr. Speaker, earlier this year the government issued a request for proposals to conduct a review of the Province's Home Support Program. The contract for this work was to have been awarded by the end of March. That did not happen. Mr. Speaker, seniors' organizations are anxious for this work to start. They have changes they want to recommend.

I ask the minister: Can you provide a timeline from when this work will begin to the presentation of the final report?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report to the House that the responses to our recent request for proposals have been received. We are finalizing the evaluation right now, and we expect to award the RFP within the next number of weeks.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. HILLIER: Mr. Speaker, the RFP says that the successful contractor is to consult with seniors and other key stakeholders Province-wide, but the type of consultation is not defined. It could be anything, send an email or write a letter.

I ask the minister: Can you assure this House that the primary type of consultation will include public meetings where anyone and everyone with concerns or opinions will be heard?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KENT: Mr. Speaker, in recent years we have done a lot of work to improve the Home Support Program, and we recognize that there are still concerns and that there are still challenges. That is why we have commissioned this independent review of the Home Support Program.

I can assure the hon. member that we want input from anybody who has any suggestions, ideas, concerns, issues they wish to raise. I will be asking the consultant to provide multiple opportunities for people to have a say and to have input into the process, because we want to make the program as strong as possible for the families who avail of Home Support in our Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

The Minister of Finance confirmed last week in the House that the freeze on discretionary spending that the Premier put in place last year will not continue with this Budget. He said that government will operate within the Budget they have presented, but the Budget documents show that they plan to spend the same or more than they did last year.

I ask the Premier: Why are you not continuing the elimination of discretionary spending when you have projected the largest deficit in the history of Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WISEMAN: Mr. Speaker, let's understand what a Budget document is. A Budget document clearly maps out for the people of the Province and for members of this House, maps out what government plans to spend its money on next year, how government plans to generate revenue, and that becomes our guide. That becomes a plan.

The Budget is a plan. The Budget says we will spend this much on salaries, we will spend this much on supplies, and it allocates it by department, by board, or by agency. So that becomes the guide, and that will guide government's expenditure levels for the next twelve months. In building that Budget, we exercised great discretion and did due diligence to determine what was an appropriate level of spending by each expense category, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has an interesting definition of due diligence.

The minister himself indicated in the Estimates Committee meeting that they came in significantly under budget last year in areas such as travel as part of this elimination of discretionary spending, but now the Department of Finance and others have budgeted significantly more for travel than they actually spent last year because the freeze is no longer in effect.

I ask the Premier: Why did you not direct the departments to cut discretionary spending on travel and other related expenses when your government has created the largest deficit in the history of Newfoundland and Labrador?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WISEMAN: Mr. Speaker, two moments ago in Question Period another member opposite talked about and criticized, in fact, criticized government for eliminating tax collectors. So let's use that as one example. If we are going to have people who are involved in providing services to the public, people who are involved in doing inspections, Occupational, Health and Safety people travelling around the Province, that is how they do their work. They go out to where the activities take place.

So if we were to say everybody stays home, nobody does anything, we are not going to do any travel, look at what we would do. We would shut down government. If you think about how government delivers programs and services and where people need those programs and services, and how do we get our employees out to those job sites? They travel, Mr. Speaker, and we have an obligation to reimburse them for their expenditures. So we need to look at how government operates because we cannot shut down the delivery of programs and services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Back in March, I asked the Minister Responsible for Agrifoods how government's review of the Province's Crown Lands Act would impact the designation of Crown land for agricultural purposes. At that time, the minister informed the House that there was a separate review taking place on that particular issue.

I ask the minister: Can he tell us more about the separate review, the process involved, and when we can expect a report?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, we are all aware in the Province the importance of land development. It is accurate that we are looking at the creation, through Crown Lands Interdepartmental Land Use Committee, as well as our agency is increasing compliance activities on existing agriculture leases, as well as to ensure these areas are being used for agriculture purposes.

We want to get more agriculture land back to farmers and more young farmers involved with the system. That is the goal of government.

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.

It is interesting that the minister did not tell us the process and when we can expect a report. Food security and availability of land is very closely linked.

I ask the minister: Will he speed up the process for farmers who want to access Crown land by having predesignated Crown land that is available for agricultural use? Will he do that?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister Responsible for the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, we are all aware, living on an Island, of the importance of food security, especially with the ice conditions that we see in the Gulf from time to time in the spring of the year.

It is absolutely critical as a Province, and as communities in the Province, that we get more and more food security. In the last number of years, we have seen an increase in the amount of food produced in the Province. We are self-sustainable in a number of areas, Mr. Speaker. This government is committed to making sure that we move closer and closer to food security for all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

As an example, now we are increasing the amount of funds that we are putting into cranberries and cranberry production – agricultural land development. Again, as I just said, we are looking at compliance with regard to leases of Crown land for agricultural purposes in the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, the Budget Speech announced that government would be carrying

out a kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum renewal as part of a new investment in education. However, we have learned since there is actually no new investment associated with this, and this purportedly new initiative is actually part of a routine annual curriculum review of the Department of Education.

I ask the acting minister: Don't you think it is misleading for you to use routine work of the Department of Education and include it as a major new initiative in the Budget Speech?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, contrary to the member opposite, I do not see the work done by the Department of Education in collaboration with the teachers of the Province routine when it comes to examining the curriculum that is delivered in our Province.

There are some 320 different curriculums, Mr. Speaker, and there is a plan and a process where we continue to renew. We become innovative. We look at new methods of teaching. We integrated new technologies, Mr. Speaker. That is important that we continue to advance and give our kids in our schools every opportunity with the best curriculum.

The fact that we would announce we are going to proceed and continue to do that, Mr. Speaker, I think it is extremely positive.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. KIRBY: Getting those sorts of answers from the minister is becoming routine, Mr. Speaker.

Every educator knows that new curriculum should be piloted before it is introduced in a new setting. The minister is a former educator himself. It was confirmed in Estimates that government has absolutely no plan to pilot the full-day kindergarten curriculum in a full-day setting.

I ask the minister: Why isn't your full-day kindergarten curriculum being piloted properly as is the standard practice in this Province? Are you simply planning to just chuck it out, hand it out to teachers and expect them to work all of the problems out?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: Routine answers, Mr. Speaker, for routine questions. Simple.

Mr. Speaker, as for the kindergarten curriculum, it is our government that have committed to full-day kindergarten.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DALLEY: They want to take credit. They all want to stand up and take credit, that member, the Member for Virginia Waters. They all want to take credit, but we are committed to full-day kindergarten. We are committed to training teachers properly. As with the curriculum, Mr. Speaker, the kindergarten curriculum, a play-based curriculum was developed and designed for full day. It is play based, Mr. Speaker, and we will implement full-day kindergarten with the best interest of students in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

Yesterday, the Premier refused to answer my questions about information OCI was to supply in return for cod MPR exemptions.

I ask the Premier: Did he really give OCI cod exemptions with no strings attached?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, to get a question from one of the Opposition parties with regard to pilot projects in education, and at the same time when the Fisheries and Aquaculture department of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador introduced pilot projects last year with regard to fishing cod in 3Ps, that is all of a sudden problematic.

We issued MPRs last year for cod production and cod catch in 3Ps. That, the FFAW agreed with, Mr. Speaker, and that, the current Leader of the NDP when he was President of the FFAW also agreed with it. We issued MPRs for cod out of 3Ps last year to increase the value of the cod landed in 3Ps, and that is what we did.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

So we have the answer. They are giving to OCI and taking from the workers. Mr. Speaker, in return for MPR exemptions –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: – for yellowtail, government said they had secured from OCI 110 full-time processing jobs for five years for Fortune workers. Last year they only got thirty-five weeks, and this year twenty.

I ask the Premier: Does the Province have any legal mechanism to force OCI to live up to its commitment to provide the full-time jobs?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am very pleased to stand and address that question. I have to tell you it boils me day in

and day out to hear that party that stood against the people of Fortune time and time again, while this government tried to find a solution to put people to work.

We have more than a hundred-vessel crew making money as a part of the deal that this government did with OCI, Mr. Speaker, and we have people working in the plant in Fortune. Time and time again the member opposite stands and would have us do nothing but shut the deal down and say too bad to the people of Fortune. Well I say shame on you, shame on your party, and shame on your leader for fighting the people of Fortune.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KING: We stand with the people of Fortune and we will continue to stand with the people of Fortune, in spite of where you stand.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

I am asking the minister, the Premier, and that whole bunch over there to explain to the Fortune plant workers how twenty weeks is better than thirty-five weeks. Why are they giving it to the company and not to the people of the community?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, let me say this to the member opposite: the question here is not whether twenty is better than thirty-five; it is whether twenty is better than zero, the big zero, because that is what the people in Fortune had for five or six years, I say to the member opposite.

The only problem now is that it is your party standing against them. I say to you, what the people of Fortune told your leader, go home and stay away from us.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

So now I ask the minister to do –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: – the math that the Minister of Finance cannot do: Is twenty better than 110 full-time processing jobs for five years?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Mr. Speaker, when you look at the situation that has unfolded in Fortune in the last number of years, clearly articulated by my colleague on this side of the House, OCI owns the quotas in Fortune. They own the plant. On every occasion as Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, I met with the union representative, Mr. Speaker. In actual fact, I met with union officials yesterday morning discussing again the situation that has unfolded in Fortune for the last couple or three years, and what we may or may not be able to do as we go forward.

Look, basically it is this: OCI is operating in Fortune right now. They promised twenty weeks work. We know that is not the thirty-two weeks that they got last year, but as the Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture, I am always looking for solutions. I would ask that we work together on the issue in Fortune, not try to cut us apart, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

Tabling of Documents

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Pursuant to section 8 and section 10 of the Public Tender Act, I hereby table the report of Public Tender Act exceptions for the month of April 2015, as presented by the Chief Operating Officer of the Government Purchasing Agency.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

In accordance with section 28 of the Child and Youth Advocate Act, I hereby table the 2013-2014 annual report of the Office of the Advocate for Children and Youth.

Further tabling of documents?

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

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, as was referenced in Question Period, the Member for St. John's South asked a question last week as to the number of people who are homeless and whether they are added into the statistics of people on social services. I would like to report and I would like to table a response to his question.

MR. SPEAKER: Further 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 Bay of Islands.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand in this House today – to the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS due to the Animal Health and Protection Act in 2012, SPCA has been instructed by the Department of Natural Resources to cease responding to animal abuse and neglect complaints; and

WHEREAS complaints will be dealt with by the RCMP, RNC, and designated municipal officers; and

WHEREAS SPCA is to hold, provide care, and assume all expenses of seized animals until a decision is made in a court of law; and

WHEREAS this court process can take several months or longer; and

WHEREAS due to the very busy schedules and lack of hands-on training of the RCMP, RNC, and municipal officers, some animals may be left to suffer needlessly;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray, and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to review the Animal Health and Protection Act and make the SPCA a voice for the voiceless and appoint them as enforcement officers of the Animal Health and Protection Act.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have hundreds, and probably even thousands of signatures here to urge the government to review this. When this was brought in, I encouraged and I spoke here on many days for the government to bring in this legislation. Part of this legislation was to enforce and help the animal protection. The SPCA, Mr. Speaker, one of the four known

providers of health and protection for animals across the Province are excluded from this now.

A lot of the reasons why, they were saying it is protection if there is a violent situation. Most people in the SPCA would agree, if there is something major and there is some harm, the RNC or the RCMP –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Orders of the DayPrivate Members' Day

MR. SPEAKER: It now being 3:00 p.m., Private Members' Day, we have to go to the hon. Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi to begin debate on the private member's motion.

The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

WHEREAS following the imposition of the 1992 moratorium on Northern cod, the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans assured inshore harvesters of the Province that upon the return of the resource, the first 115,000 tons of 2J3KL cod would be allotted to the adjacent inshore harvesters; and

WHEREAS the Northern cod is showing a resurgence in numbers; and

WHEREAS the current federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has shown contempt for the principle of adjacency;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House urge government to call for the federal minister to reaffirm the federal policy of returning the first 115,000 metric tons of Northern cod quota to the adjacent inshore harvesters of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the Member for St. John's Centre.

It gives me, I suppose, pleasure to stand and speak today to an issue that is so important, I think, to all of us in this House and all of us in

the Province. It is too bad that we have to stand and speak to this. It is something that should be a given, something that we believe has been a policy that we have been following in this country and in this Province for decades now.

The Northern cod stock was recognized as one of the greatest fish resources in the world. It supported the settlement of hundreds of communities from Cape St. Mary's to Cape Chidley, and was the mainstay of the economy of most of these communities.

From the early days of European settlement of Newfoundland and Labrador until July 2, 1992 – that fateful day – this stock was fished year in, year out. It was fished with inshore vessels using fixed gear until the advent of trawlers in the 1950s. It was subject to heavy overfishing by foreign fleets peaking at 800,000 metric tons in 1968.

The inshore fishery declined precipitously in early 1970s in the wake of that onslaught of foreign fishing, notably on the Hamilton Banks off Labrador. It was in those early 1970s that I, myself, first became interested in what was happening with the fishery and was part of a small conference here in St. John's involving the newly formed union, involving fisher people themselves, and involving the newly formed St. John's Oxfam Committee, talking about the soon to be called 200-mile limit off the coast and what that would mean for the fishery.

A new era of hope with declaration of Canada's 200-mile exclusive economic zone in 1978 came to be. The federal government forecast a total allowable catch of Northern cod rising to 450,000 metric tons and gave incentives for trawler companies who had been kicked out of the Gulf of St. Lawrence redfish fishery to fish Northern cod through the ice in the winter.

Because of the importance of Northern cod, DFO convened a special Northern cod workshop in Corner Brook, in August 1979, to discuss the science and management of the stock. At this workshop, attended by government, federal and provincial, and industry leaders, there was general agreement that the inshore allowance of 115,000 metric tons of Northern cod would take precedence over all Canadian fleets. I will talk more about that further on.

During the 1980s, inshore fish harvesters warned of serious problems with Northern cod stocks, something that, when I was at the small conference in the early 1970s, was a fear that was raised. Their plea largely fell on deaf ears until the late 1980s, when scientific advice finally caught up with the harvesters' observations and recommended significant quota cuts.

Meanwhile, foreign fleets – notably the EU – continued to fish Northern cod, as well as other key stocks, far about the quotas they were allocated by NAFO.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (Littlejohn): Order, please!

MS MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, that is helpful.

The unthinkable happened. The stock collapsed, nothing any of us could have thought, and on July 2, 1992, John Crosbie announced the moratorium.

I would like to quote from a couple of documents that confirm the priority access for the inshore sector. I have copies of those documents if anybody wants to see them afterwards, but it is important for us to go back and to hear what has been proclaimed over and over.

In April 1996, the Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, William Rowat, in a response to questions from the Chair of the Senate Committee on Fisheries said, "Your recommendation that the inshore sector have priority access to reopened groundfish stocks is contrary to our existing policy and one that we are not prepared to accept other than for the 2J3KL cod stock. Since the Corner Brook Northern Cod Seminar in August of 1979 it has been the department's position, and in general terms the industry's as well, that the inshore sector should have priority of access to this cod stock." This confirmed a statement Fisheries and Oceans Minister Brian Tobin had made in his speech to the St. John's Board of Trade the year before.

A May 21, 1994 article in a special Atlantic Canada report in the *Financial Post* referred to the task force on incomes and adjustment in the Atlantic fishery, Chaired by Richard Cashin. The article said, and these are important words, “In his task force report, Cashin cautioned the return of a directed offshore cod fishery. On this point, Brian Tobin seems to agree. Both Tobin and Cashin have tossed out the figure of about 115,000 tonnes, a level the northern cod quota would have to reach before the offshore could return to those fishing grounds.”

This policy was more recently confirmed during a presentation from long-time senior DFO management official, David Bevan, in an appearance before the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans on March 13, 2008, when he said as part of a discussion on the DFO enterprise allocation policy in the offshore fishery, “That policy was put in place as we made significant decisions, for example, on 2J3KL cod. The first 115,000 tonnes go to the inshore and the remainder would be shared between the inshore and the offshore.”

This policy seems very clear as we go over these historical documents. So, why the need to reconfirm it? Because the Harper government, Mr. Speaker, has clearly demonstrated that it cannot be trusted to manage the fishery fairly, and especially fairly for this Province. Nowhere has this been more evident than in the recent controversy surrounding the halibut quotas in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Gail Shea flew in the face of clear, established DFO policy called stable shares, when she took halibut from resource-short fishing fleets in the Newfoundland and Labrador portion of the Gulf of St. Lawrence to increase shares in the Maritime Provinces and thereby improve Conservative electoral prospects. Shameful, Mr. Speaker, shameful!

Gross abuse of the major powers of the Fisheries Act confers on the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, using her position for political gain. Previously she has shown her colours by refusing to move from a unilateral interpretation of the so-called LIFO, Last In, First Out policy in the Northern shrimp. In spite of the strong arguments presented to her in person by our all-party committee on shrimp quotas.

In other words, she continued to take the overwhelming majority of quota reductions from the inshore and disregard the principle of adjacency priority of access to the most adjacent people and communities. She did that as well to benefit the people in her own home province, again, abusing her powers as minister.

The only consistent feature of all of this is that the minister consistently jumps all over the place. She treats DFO management principles as options of convenience, to be adhered to or discarded at her sole whim. Again, I have to say disgraceful, Mr. Speaker, and shameful.

It is to confront this arbitrary authority and its flagrant misuse that, we, the NDP, present –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

It is very difficult to hear the speaker.

The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

It is to confront Gail Shea’s arbitrary authority and her flagrant misuse that, we, the NDP, present this private member’s motion in the House today.

The Northern cod resource is on the rebound. We know that. It is critical to the survival of coastal communities on the Northeast Coast of Newfoundland and the Southeast corner of Labrador that we fight tooth and nail to ensure that the first 115,000 metric tons of Northern cod quota is allocated to the inshore fleet, as promised by various DFO officials and ministers.

No doubt, Mr. Speaker, the offshore lobby will be fierce in the light of this proposal. They may be lobbying the minister right now for so-called scientific quota, as they have done in the Northern shrimp fishery among others, but the minister should reject out-of-hand that pathetically transparent attempt to increase quota share by the backdoor.

Adjacency and historic dependence are the traditional cornerstones of fisheries access. The people and communities along the Northeast Coast of Newfoundland and the Southeast corner of Labrador are the most adjacent to the 2J3KL cod stock. They have centuries of historic attachment. For once, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans should stick to the core principles that are supposed to guide fisheries allocation policy and irrevocably confirm the long-standing policy that the first 115,000 metric tons of Northern cod be allocated to the adjacent inshore sector.

Mr. Speaker, we have an obligation here in this House to stand for this motion that we are putting on the floor today, to stand for the people of the communities who will be kept alive by the growth in our Northern cod, the communities that form a backbone to our economy in this Province, Mr. Speaker, the communities that for centuries have fished off those waters, the communities that are waiting for the restoration of the Northern cod. They were promised that in 1992. They were promised it was not going to be forever and that the cod was going to come back. Now it certainly has taken much longer than anybody hoped, but everybody is filled with hope over the signs of the resurgence.

Every year for the past few summers you hear the fishing people from the inshore talking about what they are observing in the waters. We all know that we have to take our time. We have to make sure we do not move too quickly because we have to make sure the resurgence is for real. When we get to a point of 115,000 metric tons of fish, and we know that fishing can happen and that fish can be taken out of the water, the only people who should benefit from that historically, ethically, and morally are the people of the communities that have to go on living, that we need to go on living, and that will need that fish to do it.

Mr. Speaker, I call on all members of this hon. House to support my motion, to support the call for an action that will be for the life of this Province and for the life of the people of our fishing communities.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It is not too often I will run to a minister and say can I speak on that motion, but I did that the other day when the member of the NDP put forward this motion about the cod fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador. I will tell you why, Mr. Speaker, because I grew up in it. I grew up in a fishing family. I grew up in a family that fished. We trucked, we bought, and we were agents. I challenge any person in this House to say he cut more cod tongues than I did.

Mr. Speaker, the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador is the reason why we are here in the first place. We can never forget it. The fishery is what brought people to Newfoundland and Labrador. It is what made Newfoundland and Labrador what we are today as far as I am concerned.

I can remember fishing and coming in with my father's boat. It was about a twenty-eight-foot boat and she had an 8 Acadia in her. The sound of the echo, the putt, putt, putt, putt, putt on the rocks was just something that you could never imagine. I can remember one morning we had her log-loaded. It is a memory that you will always remember – log-loaded. I lay across the cuddy in her and the water was coming in over the top a little bit. He put the oil clothes over me so I would not get wet. I was only about seven or eight years old, but it is a memory I will always have for my whole life.

There are lots of memories I have with fish because, like I said, I grew up in it. My first job ever – well, I guess I was about ten years old. I used to drive around with the fish truck driver and I used to write the slips out to the fishermen and weigh the fish. Back then when we look at the fishery and what we got to have today – and I would say to the hon. member, I would say I could sit down and every member in this House is going to agree with this motion today, because it is a good motion. I 100 per cent support it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about today, because we made mistakes. There were a lot of mistakes made in the cod fishery. I will give examples now today of what I am going to talk about. Quality was an important thing. In the 1970s and the 1980s we concentrated more on catching a quantity of fish rather than we did with quality. I can remember driving around in a fish truck where they used to prong the fish out of the boat into a tray, they would haul it up to the stage and they would prong it into the stage, and they would prong it into the back of the truck – and that went around the whole day then with no ice on it. So by the time it got to the plant about 2:00 o'clock in the day, there was not much left to the fish.

The fishery of the future is going to be a different fishery. I talked to fishermen last night. I made a couple of phone calls last night, and I wanted to talk to a couple of fishermen and just get their ideas. I told them about the motion that was coming today, and I said: What do you think of the fishery of the future? Where do you think we are going to be with the cod?

Mr. Speaker, I look at the cod fishery and I hope someday – while the crab is a great fishery for Newfoundland and Labrador, but what the cod fishery will do for Newfoundland and Labrador, it will bring our communities back. It will bring the excitement down on the wharfs – I can remember going on the wharf and everybody down there, no matter who it was, my father would make sure that so and so got a fish, and this one got a fish. People were going home with fish, and eating fish – it brought the community together. I remember cutting cod tongues. You would cut your cod tongues, and every little fellow had their own bucket with the little hole in the middle where we were all sticking cod tongues down, and made a few dollars at it. It was what brought the community together.

It was so important, and in 1992 when the cod fishery left and was closed down, it was devastating to our communities – I know all the communities down my way; it was unbelievable. At the time my father owned a company called Flat Rock Trucking, and the only thing we trucked was cod and capelin. That is it. That is all we did. We had about ten employees, and

that was it. It was all over, finished for us. That was ten families that it affected.

I never, ever thought that the fishery would be back to where it is today. The fishery today is huge in my area, and the people who are involved in the crab fishery today are making great money. They are doing great things. I talked to a couple of crab fishermen last night and they told me: Kevin, boy, I do not know about the cod anymore. We are doing well with the crab. We would like to see the cod come back, but there are a lot of things that have to change.

I want to talk a little bit about quality again, because I know that people use gillnets. I do not like gillnets. I tell you the truth, I think that you are drowning the fish, the quality of fish – and if you get a fish on a hook and line versus in a net, I think the fish is a whole lot better quality. I am sure the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace would agree with me because we talked about it one day before.

There are a lot of things we have to do. I can remember – and like I said my job was working on a fish truck and what I used to have to do, I used to go down and we used to weigh fish and I would have to cull it. They had to take the fish – I had to cull fish that was under sixteen inches, fish that was between sixteen to eighteen inches and eighteen inches over. The fishermen got a different price for it. The last going off they never got anything for the sixteen and under fish, nothing at all. You know, it was funny because some communities, where I did this, you could see the difference in what the fishermen were using for their gear in their cod traps.

The cod traps, in some areas, you could see that, because I would go down in one area and the percentage of under sixteen would probably be about 3 per cent or 4 per cent, while I would go to another area and it would probably be 35 per cent or 40 per cent. The work in the back of the trap – my father explained this to me – was a different size so if you had three-and-a-half inch work in the back of the trap or five inch work in the back of the trap meant the fish could swim through. The fishermen who had five inch work they were getting a larger amount of fish.

Those are some of the regulations that if we ever come back, we have to be a bit smarter than what we were back then. I do not know if the cod traps will ever come back again. I really do not think so. I do not see it, but someday it may. It will have to come back in a way that people will have to understand what they are doing and make sure that we leave the small fish.

I can remember watching on the news and you would see the big draggers come in, dragging the big load of fish and they would dump it all out on the – you would see little fish, this length, getting caught. We cannot go back to that anymore. I can tell you, last year I had a friend of mine who was doing the sentinel fishery and I think they get 6,000 or 7,000 pounds per quota and they put out six nets. They put out the six nets and the second day or third day they took in two because they were catching so much fish, that it was all they could handle was with four nets.

I know down in my area the fish is coming back. I love the food fishery. I absolutely love the food fishery. Every chance that I can get out to catch a cod, I will catch a cod. I will tell you, there are a lot of people down our way that I give a fine lot of fish to. If anyone needs a feed of fish, if I know it, they are going to get a feed of fish because I appreciate just the point of being able to eat a cod fish because I did it all my life. Like I said, driving the fish truck the first thing we did in the morning was send one fish into mother and she would put it on the boiler and we would have a bit of boiled fish with a bit of butter and pepper over it for breakfast every morning, that is what we had.

Fish is a part of who we are. The cod fishery for years and years like I said is an important part of our community. We have to be smart about what we are doing. When the fishery comes back – and I know it is going to come back. Like I said, last year, going out at the food fishery, one drift and we would have our fifteen fish, no sweat at all. There was lots of fish there. You can see the improvements over the years. I will tell you another thing; you can see the improvements in the size of the fish. The fish are really after getting bigger. It is important that we do it, but it is important that we do it right. When the cod fishery comes back, it is important that we do it right.

Mr. Speaker, there is a huge problem – and it is a problem I think most of the fishermen realize – where we were in 1992, we had a lot of plants around this Province, and every second fellow you talked to could fillet a fish. Everyone knew how to fillet fish and everything else. I can remember, I think it was the early 1980s, that I was up to Quick Freeze up in Witless Bay and they brought in this machine that you used to lay the fillet on and do it. It was amazing just to watch a machine fillet fish. Meanwhile, there were probably about forty or fifty people there filleting fish along the table and skinning and doing everything else.

I tell you, Mr. Speaker, for the cod fishery to come back, I do not know if we have the workers to do it. I do not know if the people out there – there is going to have to be a big change. I know that right now – I am not sure, I would not be able to make an estimate even. I think there are only a few companies in the Province that really handles the codfish anymore.

I know last year, my brother and them sold so much fish to some guy who was coming down. He was with one of the plants. It had to be in ice and the grade – and it was good. The quality had to be really good. They could not get rid of a lot of it because they only took like, I think, 1,500 pounds a day or 1,000 pounds a day. While it is nice to know that the fishery is coming back, we have to do a lot of work. There is a lot of work to do with the fishery coming back to develop markets, to develop the technologies, and to get the people back in the plants.

Like I said, this is the thing that could really drive rural Newfoundland and Labrador. We are always looking to see what we can do in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, and this is it. I can remember bringing fish to Hant's Harbour. I can remember bringing fish to Dildo. I can remember bringing fish to Green's Harbour. I can remember bringing fish down to Old Perlican. We trucked fish to Renew's.

Mr. Speaker, on the Southern Shore there was a plant in Witless Bay, there was a plant in Bay Bulls, Tors Cove, Cape Broyle, and I think up in Renew's. There were plants all along the shore and they were busy. That employed the whole Southern Shore, people in the plants. The

fishery itself, like I said, is the reason why we are here in the first place. I think we have to make it – there are a lot of changes that have to come.

I believe the demand for the cod fishery will come back. Back in the 1980s and 1970s, I think nearly all the codfish that was caught and went to the plants we went to, I know all went to the Boston area, New England area, and that is where they sold it. Now, I do not know if we will ever get those markets back again, but we have to work a lot at getting the markets back to where it was. I think the quality of the cod is the best fish that you can eat, myself. That is my opinion. I think it is.

I think it is important that we make sure we do – I agree with the hon. member, the first 115,000 metric tons has to go to the inshore; do not go to the offshore. It has to stay to the inshore, because that is what will keep Newfoundland and Labrador alive. I think it will bring back people to our communities.

There is great pride in being a fisherman. There is great pride in knowing your father was a fisherman and your grandfather was a fisherman. Mr. Speaker, it is a great skill being a fisherman.

I can remember one day being out with a fellow – he is long gone now – Mr. Jim Maher. My brother asked me to go, we were out hand lining. I was as nervous as anything going out with Jim Maher because he was a legend in Flatrock. I remember we were catching a few fish, not very much. He told me to haul up. I hauled up the grapple and we said we would move. I thought we were going to move down to – we moved about twenty feet, threw out the grapple again and we caught away at the fish again. He said, now we have to get on the shoulder of the bank, we were out a little bit too far. The skill that these people had was unbelievable.

Technology today is after changing. When we used to go out fishing first, you looked at a river down here and a greenhouse up there, hoping it would not be painted every year because that was the mark you went on. Now, everybody uses GPS and the different technologies they use. Technology today is way beyond what – I can remember down looking in a cod trap with a big glass with a silver thing like this, and you

would look down in the cod trap and you could see the fish swimming around. That is how they knew. Now they go over the trap and the fish finder comes up and shows them that there is lots of fish there. The technology today will definitely increase the amount of fish you can catch.

I know everyone in this House is going to support this motion. We need the federal government to make sure that if it does come back, that it is managed properly. I think by managing it properly, it is making sure that the quality of our fish caught is good enough to get to that market so we compete with everybody in the world. I believe we have to make sure that we are not catching little tiny fish. We are not catching stuff under sixteen inches.

I believe in the hook and line. I do not like gillnets at all. I do not like them because you can leave them out for three or four days. You can always feel the fish, if a gillnet fish is a bit softer when it comes in. As soon as you get the fish in the boat it should be iced. You would even do that today. When you go out to the handline fishery, you used to cut the throat anyway so it would be nice and white when you are filleting it and stuff like that. So the quality is very important.

The crab fishery is a great fishery, and we are seeing it lately. I talked to a lot of fishermen down my way. There are areas this year where they are really concerned about the crab fishery, because to the ‘southard’ there is not as much crab as what was there in previous years. They are really seeing a decline there.

Now, off down our way, a buddy of mine came in last night and they had a fine load of crab. He said there are still lots of crab there and they are doing well. The mid-shore crab, they are doing pretty well too in the offshore, but as it goes to the ‘southard’ I think people are worried about the type of crab. We have to be careful what we are doing with that fishery because, like I said earlier, the fishermen today are doing really, really well with that fishery.

As the cod fishery comes back, I think we can have both of them. I think it is very important that we manage it properly and get it done properly so that it will make rural Newfoundland

and Labrador a better place and bring back what I used to – like I said, my memories of growing up in Flatrock, cutting tongues and being down there. When I was on the fish truck, I used to hear the putt-putts coming in. I could almost tell who owned the boat because of the different sounds they all made. You could see it in the communities.

Today, we look at Newfoundland and Labrador and you go out to rural Newfoundland, beautiful, beautiful places, but how nice would it be to see the cod fishery come back and have that excitement on the wharf, and that excitement with young people going to a cod trap, hauling a cod trap, or even going out and jigging a cod. I am sure everyone in this House here would love to go out. I know it is great experience. I do it on a regular basis, and anybody who wanted to come along with me, they can come on and we would catch a few cod. It is a great feeling. It is a great feeling to be on the water. It is who we are as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

This motion today, I am 100 per cent in support of it, but I hope when the cod fishery does come back that it is managed properly and we do it right, because we did it wrong in the 1970s and 1980s. For too many years we talked – people blame it on seals, people blame it on foreigners, people can also blame it on ourselves, because we did not do proper management. We did not do it in the offshore and we did not do it in the inshore.

I believe it is something that could bring Newfoundland back to where we were years ago with how we were and how we were as a community, and keep our communities in rural Newfoundland alive.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SLADE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, any time the gentleman from Cape St. Francis gets up and speaks about the fishery,

I can commend him because I will tell you, he has it in his heart, and that is what it is all about, having it in your heart. There is an old saying, it is not blood that runs through your veins, it is saltwater, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, before we begin the debate today on the PMR and the fishery, I think it is important to go back in time. As it has been said many times, if we do not know our past, we will not get to our future. At this point in our Province's history and with the current fiscal crisis and mismanagement that is happening on our shores, it is insightful to turn back the pages and to get acquainted with the sole reason why we are here as people of the Province, and what brought us here, Sir, is cod.

Mr. Speaker, the Northern cod stocks, 2J, 3K, 3L commonly referred to as 2J3KL, has been harvested by fishermen from Hopedale to St. John's for over 500 years. In fact, it was here in 2J3KL that the famous story arose about the fishing being so abundant that they impeded the progress of ships and could be caught merely by lowering baskets in the water.

Mr. Speaker, the fishery went on to become the economic foundation for European settlements along the East Coast of Newfoundland. Our famous Newfoundland cod were the reason to be here, and for existence of Newfoundland as a colony and later as a Dominion.

Prior to the moratorium in July 1992, the Northern cod fishery was the single most important fishery in Canada and the most abundant cod stock in the world. As somebody once said cod was very much like peanut butter; it spread itself from the tip of Labrador all the way down across the South Coast of the Province and it went into every nook and cranny and affected more people. In fact, Mr. Speaker, Northern cod was instrumental not just in building Newfoundland, but in development of the new world. It was truly the king of fish.

Mr. Speaker, most of the Province's coastal communities were built up on Northern cod which concentrated in the headlands and the islands and the great bays on the East Coast. Cod was so important to our economy and culture that it was in fact called Newfoundland currency.

At its highest, at the total catch peak in the late 1960s to around 800,000 ton, these were the glory days. By 1991, a year when the total allowable catch was at its lowest in decades, the fishery still had an estimated value to the Canadian economy of over \$700 million and supported directly and indirectly some 31,000 jobs in the region, about 12 per cent of the Province's labour force. In 1990, for example, the total landed value of species was \$277 million, of which cod accounted for \$134 million or 48 per cent.

The seeds of Newfoundland and Labrador's destruction were planted during the 1960s and 1970s when the cod stocks were shamelessly overexploited. The first systematically collection of data on the Northern cod stock did not take place until 1959, and so the state of the scientific knowledge in the 1960s was such that no estimates of stock size could be made.

The deficit in science would cause the overestimation of the size of the cod stocks over the years, together with other factors like federal mismanagement and disengagement, foreign overfishing, advances in technology, and big boats all lead to the decline of the cod biomass. Despite catch quotas or TACs being imposed in 1970, together with the gain of the 200-mile limit that was to benefit the traditional inshore, there was no heading off or appealing this ecological and cultural disaster even as fishermen were warned that not all was well in Northern cod stocks.

Mr. Speaker, that happens to be a very true statement. Back then, fishermen were coming in, they were saying there was something wrong. Science did not listen to them, and I like to refer to it as under kill. When the cod started coming back a little bit, fishermen talked about it again and they said it seems to be picking up a little bit and one thing and another. They went to the Science Branch and said: Do you know something, guys? The fish are starting to come back. The scientists once again are not listening to the fish harvesters.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to tell you something, the best scientists in the world are fish harvesters.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SLADE: They know what is going on around them, Mr. Speaker. They definitely, definitely know what is going on around them.

On Thursday July 2, 1992 was there ever a more significant milestone in the Province's history – some say that it is up there only with the founding of our Province in 1497. For the first time in 400 years, we could not harvest cod fish. It was a tragedy that was beyond comparison for many of us, not to mention the fact that over 30,000 people from over 400 communities were laid off and set adrift for a lifetime in their security.

I was kicking around when the moratorium was called, and I am going to tell you something – and this is right from here, Mr. Speaker. It was the hardest thing ever I went through in my lifetime. I invested, I had cod traps, I had the boats, I had men hired on aboard the boat to go catch the fish, I invested over \$8,000 that winter in replacing twine and cod traps only not to be able to set it, but I still owed the money for the cod twine. I still owed that. It took every fibre of my being to be able to get up the next morning and know what my situation really was. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that went across this Province like wildfire and people are still reeling from the effect of that today.

I heard the member over there not too long ago from Cape St. Francis. He is well-versed in the fishery. I heard him talk about the crab. God bless the crab, Mr. Speaker, and the shrimp, but we have to recognize that cod is coming back to the shoreline.

I will tell you, because I know the last two years that I was at the sentinel survey, the bigger cod was coming around. Mr. Speaker, when you opened up that fish – I reported it to the Science Branch. I reported everything I saw out on the water, when I caught the fish, the size of the fish, and the sex of the fish. I cut the otoliths out so people in the Science Branch could tell how old the fish was. They could tell how old the fish was.

Mr. Speaker, when we started cutting open the fish and these larger fish: five, ten, fifteen female snow crab. You have to understand the female snow crab is only probably about this big

on the round. They are perfect bite size for the cod.

Mr. Speaker, if some correction is not done and if the cod is back – I do believe the cod is back in a reasonable amount. Now I do not think we should jump off the horse here and go and fish it willy-nilly. I think we need to be very careful with it and at least fish harvesters can get something out of it and make a living at it. I do think it needs to be corrected because if you do not, down we will go.

I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, I know over in 3Ps now the fish harvesters over there are having a problem catching 9,000 pounds of crab. That is a fact. If we are not careful, we will have problems. In Conception Bay, or Trinity Bay, or whatever bay you live in there will be problems. There is no doubt about that because a cod's diet would be that crab. It would also be shrimp. So we better be very careful.

It is wonderful for the fish harvesters out there at this point in time are getting a fair dollar for their product. It is wonderful. Mr. Speaker, it brings many, many dollars. I want to remind this hon. House those are brand new dollars that are coming into the Newfoundland economy. If fish harvesters do well, they will go off and they will buy a TV set, or they will go and buy a new couch and that. The communities are doing good, so every dollar that comes out of the fishing industry is a brand new dollar and we need to remember that. Like I just said, I was around during the moratorium and it was very tough.

I would like to speak now about the federal-provincial relations. Just last week we stood in the House and debated another fishery PMR about the unfair sharing of halibut quotas. That is a decision by the federal minister not to honour quota sharing arrangements was deplorable and disrespectful of our Province and our people. As I stated then, federal-provincial relations are in crisis and this is having the most detrimental effect on our fisheries. The fact that the minister, who lives 2,727 kilometres away, has a discretionary decision to impose whatever logic she wants on the fishery without being guided by any established principles, is slowly, but surely killing our fisheries and our people.

We must show leadership and encourage the vision to move us beyond a sixty-five-year stalemate where the federal government gets to control our destiny. Mr. Speaker, I just want to speak about that one for one second. It is kind of ironic when you sit here to know how much control the feds actually have over us. I sat home one night about five or six years ago, and somebody called into the Open Line show from up on the mainland. They were very disrespectful of Newfoundlanders and said that we were living off the EI system.

I am going to just say this, Mr. Speaker. When we have the federal government up there – it does not matter to me or any member in this House whether some gentleman in Toronto gets a Toyota dealership with 500 or 600, or 5,000 or 6,000 tons of cod or anything else attached to it. When it is fished inside that 200-mile limit it makes a difference to me and every other fisherman out there. It makes a difference to every one of you guys over there. I am going to tell you something, it should never be.

We were like what we were, because Ottawa had control and they still have control. They are very disrespectful to the people of this Province. They are very disrespectful. Mr. Speaker, I am going to put a little bit of blame here now because I do not have much longer. I am going to put a little bit of blame here now, and I am as fair as fair can be.

This started back during the ABC campaign. Mr. Speaker, that is when this started. I will tell you something, the federal government has been down on this Province ever since and down on its people. I say to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, shame on you, Sir.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SLADE: Shame on you for what you are doing to the people of this Province, the great fish harvesters of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is just simply not good enough.

Mr. Speaker, this PMR calls the House to, "... urge Government to call for the Federal Minister to reaffirm the federal policy of returning the first 115,000 metric tonnes of northern cod quota to the adjacent inshore harvesters of Newfoundland and Labrador." The priority of

the access to the first 100,000 to 115,000 tons for the inshore has been mentioned in numerous reports including those by DFA in 1993, Cashin in 1993, and DFO. Today, our inshore fishers are recommending a modest increase in TAC so they can engage in small commercial fisheries.

Mr. Speaker, just to kind of clue up here a little bit, back in the day, prior to 1992, we had allocations. There was no quota set for the inshore, it was allocations. Those allocations were never, ever caught. You had a season and whatever you caught in that season, that is what you had. There was an allocation, not a quota.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, fish harvesters today – and they do not have much of a quota – have 105,000-pound round. That is what they have right now today. That should have been creeping up a little bit all along, but it was not. Anyway, just to give you a little bit of an upper hand on that one – because I am sure there are people here who did not know that – it was an allocation, it was not a quota. The Member for Cape St. Francis said he knew it. The resource allocation issue has been problematic through the years and still is.

I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I am very sorry I ran out of time because I could have gone on for another twenty minutes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANTER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Before I begin I just want to say thank you to the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi for bringing this private member's resolution forward this afternoon, and my colleague who sits behind me from Cape St. Francis for his commentary, as well as the speaker before me from Carbonear – Harbour Grace. We listened to his story with regard to his years involved with the fishery, Mr. Speaker, around the time of

the cod moratorium. I know that he spoke this afternoon from the heart.

I do not come from a fishery background, Mr. Speaker, but I could hear what he was saying was from the heart. I could also hear the member behind me. When we look at the internal consciousness of the people of the Province in the moratorium years – actually, as we all know, it tore the guts and it tore the minds out of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians from across this great Province. From every cove and every inlet we were all impacted.

Houses were all boarded up, windows were all shut up. People were loading up their pickup trucks, moving to the mainland, looking for work on the mainland. Entire communities were absolutely devastated. So the entire consciousness of the Province back during, prior to, and just after the moratorium, Mr. Speaker, was absolutely devastated. We have stories written about it, books written about it, and music and song. It is a part of our history that we want to forget, but a part of our history that made us strong and resilient. That is what Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are. So I am glad today that this private member's resolution was brought forward.

Mr. Speaker, I have always known that the fishery has been very complicated and involved with its issues, and also complicated when you look at the opportunities. We have opportunities in our fisheries every day. Since I have become Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister, every day I get calls from the offshore sector, I get calls from the inshore sector, from producers, from harvesters, and from union reps. I sit down with community reps on a daily basis. We cannot cherry-pick one issue over another issue because they are all very, very important to the people of the Province. They all individually have solutions to their particular issue, or all have suggestions on where we might want to take the fishery.

As I stand here today, it is great to see that all members on the floor of this House and all parties are standing firm, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the importance of the fishery in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the historical significance of the fishery, as well as where we need to go with regard to the

groundfish fishery, or the shellfish fishery as we move into the future. So, indeed, I am pleased to stand today to support this private member's resolution calling on the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, "...to reaffirm the federal policy of returning the first 115,000 metric tonnes of northern cod quota to the adjacent inshore harvesters of Newfoundland and Labrador." I am glad that all members of the House will support that.

All of us here, Mr. Speaker, in this hon. House know the importance and value of the seafood sector to communities throughout the Province. That is why our government has invested over the years over \$100 million in the Newfoundland and Labrador seafood sector, including the wild fishery and aquaculture. Approximately half of the funding has been directed to fisheries innovation initiatives, fisheries science and research, and marketing initiatives. The remainder has been directed towards supporting aquaculture infrastructure and development.

Both the wild fishery and aquaculture are of vital importance to our Province's economy, and have a combined annual value of approximately \$1 billion, Mr. Speaker. We saw in Gander, when all parties went to the rally a few months ago, and were shown time and time again by parts of the Province, in Corner Brook, in Gander, and Clarenville how important the fishing industry is to these communities as well, not only to the rural parts of the Province, but to the communities of Central Newfoundland and the West Coast, here in St. John's and Clarenville and those places, with spinoff jobs and spinoff opportunities, people buying vehicles and equipment for their boats, et cetera. So it has a real impact on the GDP of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. This is why it is important to the people and why we are all supporting this resolution today.

Today's debate is about cod and about calling on the federal minister and the federal government to live up to a commitment to ensure inshore harvesters in this Province receive the first 115,000 metric tons of Northern cod quota once the commercial fishery reopens.

Sometimes we try to compare our fishery in the cod to other parts of the world; 115,000 metric

tons is what we are asking for. We look at Norway. Norway currently has 1 million metric tons of cod fisheries, Mr. Speaker. Iceland currently is in – I do not have the number in front of me, but I believe it is somewhere between 150,000 and 200,000 metric tons in Iceland. That is the markets of the world. That is the countries of the world that we are speaking to, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

MR. GRANTER: Well, that is a first that I cannot be heard in the House of Assembly. So it must be some noisy here today.

Mr. Speaker, we believe this is extremely important. In 1992, the cod moratorium amounted to the largest mass layoff in Canadian history – the largest layoff in Canadian history; 30,000 people out of work representing 12 per cent of the Province's labour force. As I said at that onset of my debate this afternoon, it actually tore the guts and the heart out of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, no more articulated than from the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace because he articulated it very well.

As well all know, an aid package was announced for displace fish harvesters and plant workers in the wake of that moratorium, Mr. Speaker. The Northern Cod Adjustment and Recovery Program, we all remember that. The acronym we called it was NCARP, which provided weekly payments to displaced workers.

In 1994, NCARP ended and was replaced by the Atlantic Groundfish Strategy often known as TAGS, which ran until May 1998, providing participants with weekly income as well. The TAGS program and NCARP encouraged displaced workers to retrain for work in other fields or accept retirement packages. Both programs, as we all know now that we look back on it historically, had limited success. While the program for displaced workers was income support during difficult times, they did not

adequately prepare participants for work in other fields or training in other parts of the fishery.

The same time that NCARP and TAGS were being implemented, a promising shellfish fishery was absorbing some of the displaced workers. Although, the value of landings fell to \$179 million in 1992, the year the Northern cod moratorium came into effect, the growth of the lucrative shellfish industry with shrimp and snow crab, as we now know, permitted the industry to quickly rebound.

Mr. Speaker, by the end of 1995, the total landed value of the fisheries in the Province had reached \$330 million despite the complete absence of cod. The structure of Newfoundland and Labrador's seafood industry has changed significantly from that time to the present. The industry has shifted from one harvesting, primarily groundfish, to one harvesting, as was said here earlier today, primarily shellfish.

Now with cod stocks showing promising signs of rebuilding and shellfish showing signs of decline, we need to prepare our harvesting and processing sectors for a shift back to an industry predominantly reliant on groundfish, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the challenge is that we have been out of the groundfish business in any major way for more than twenty years. Our government, along with industry, has been taking steps to prepare our fishing industry for the shift back to that ground fishery, Mr. Speaker.

The production value of the fishery has been at historical high levels during the past decade. Landings have averaged over 300,000 tons annually and the landed value has been more than \$420 million a year. This is more than double the amount prior to the moratorium.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial government investments over the past ten years has helped to strengthen and diversify the industry and prepare to the return of cod. We need to continue, we all understand that, to invest as we move back into the groundfish fishery.

For example, our government has been a strong supporter of Icewater Seafoods, a cod processing plant in Arnold's Cove, working with the company to ensure that the plant remains open,

creating employment opportunities. That is where I said at the beginning it is difficult, you have to look at the fishery in its entirety, as a whole. We cannot cherry-pick one part of the fishery and compare it to another part of the fishery. Because when we start cherry-picking, just as in any natural resource, one part of the industry and starting to criticize, there are always all kinds of links when we look at the fishery.

The offshore is connected or interconnected to the aspects of the inshore. Processors are connected to harvesters. We are all connected, so it is incredibly important that we do not cherry-pick one part of the industry, criticize that, and compare it to another part of the industry because we have been doing that for far too long. It is time that we work together, Mr. Speaker, to have a solution for the fishery of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Arnold's Cove plant is the largest buyer for local cod and is currently the only dedicated cod processing plant in the Province. This makes the plant strategically important, Mr. Speaker, for the industry as groundfish stocks, cod in particular, recover. I am glad to hear that – I understand that more and more of the processing facilities in the Province will be getting involved in the processing of codfish this particular year. I wish them the very best with that.

In 2014, the Icewater plant in Arnold's Cove employed approximately 200 employees for approximately 145 days, operating two eight-hour shifts a day. I had a wonderful opportunity earlier this year or late last fall to get a chance to tour the facility out in Arnold's Cove, Mr. Speaker. Under the joint federal-provincial Fishing Industry Renewal Strategy, the provincial government has also made important policy changes designed to renew the processing sector, enhance marketing initiatives, encourage new technologies, enhance access to financing, enhance safety initiatives, and support workforce adjustment measures.

In 2008, the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture introduced new more rigorous licensing policies to address overcapacity in the processing sector, essentially eliminating latent capacity, helping to ensure regional balance and serving to make the processing sector very

strong, Mr. Speaker. Government also invested in fisheries and aquaculture research, development through the Fisheries Technology and New Opportunities Program. The acronym we use is FTNOP.

To date more than 280 projects have been funded under this program focusing on safety, energy efficiency, marketing, product development, and diversification, all of which contribute to improving the value of the resource in the Province. Budget 2015 allocated a million dollars to this program bringing the total investment for FTNOP over the last number of years since 2007 to \$14 million, and it has trickled down through the industry.

Government also introduced enhancements to the Fisheries Loan Guarantee Program in 2012, improved access to capital for fish harvesters seeking to combine licences and enterprises to improve viability of their businesses, Mr. Speaker. We also continue to undertake seafood marketing efforts to work with industry to achieve increased market awareness and demand for a wide variety of seafood products in global markets. That will continue. We need to enhance that and move that further along.

The Department of Fisheries Aquaculture attends and provides financial assistance to industry representatives to exhibit, and seek new and expanded opportunities in markets at various trade shows such as the Seafood Expo Global in Brussels, the China Fisheries & Seafood Expo. Mr. Speaker, I had a chance to be at the China Fisheries & Seafood Expo. I was absolutely amazed, as I have said in this House before, about the importance of fish and fisheries to the world economies and the world market.

I thought I was going to a rock concert as I said here before, Mr. Speaker. Thousands and thousands and thousands of people, shoulder to shoulder to get into this China Fisheries & Seafood Expo competing with all of the nations of the world, all the new technologies of the world that will eventually have to be in place in this Province if we compete with the Norways of the world and Icelands of the world. It is a no-brainer. The department also carries out market research activities to target certain markets and co-ordinates the hiring of external market

research consultants to collect market information and intelligence for various species in the Province.

Mr. Speaker, we have also provided support to industry for sustainability and traceability requirements, which are becoming increasingly important to consumers at home and in the global markets. Seafood buyers are increasingly adopting fish sourcing policies, many of which include sustainability as a sole or key criterion.

The Marine Stewardship Council Certification, the most widely recognized seafood sustainability certification program in the world, such certification allows our industry to be competitive in a global marketplace of sustainable products. While we have been holding our own, Mr. Speaker, without cod, now is the time to prepare for cods return. Approximately 9,500 fish harvesters are employed by over 3,000 enterprises in the inshore harvesting sector, landing in approximately 450 communities.

If the federal government lives up to its commitment to return the first 115,000 metric tons of Northern cod quota to the adjacent inshore harvesters in Newfoundland, this sector, which lost so much after the cod's collapse, stands to gain significantly. As we all know, the inshore fleet provides major spinoff benefits to communities throughout the entire Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Through harvesting and processing, the inshore sector supports thousands of direct jobs and many more indirect jobs. Economic activity generated by inshore harvesters contributes to a tax base, creates and maintains jobs in rural parts of the Province, and contributes to the overall success of rural communities, Mr. Speaker. An active, strong inshore sector helps to support rural communities and regions throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Again, I am glad the hon. member across the way brought this motion forward. We support it as a party. We support it as a government, Mr. Speaker. It is great to see the Opposition support this too.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, I am so happy to stand in this House and speak to the private member's motion. I would like to thank my colleagues for Cape St. Francis – how wonderful to hear his presentation here today – and my colleague for Carbonear – Harbour Grace when he said I do believe the cod is back, and thank you also to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Mr. Speaker, this private member's motion is about our people. It is about social and economic justice. It is a story of hard work. It is a story of dedication. It is a story of risk and it is a story of community. This is about who we are, where we have come from, and where we are going.

Although I have never been a fish harvester or a fish processor, many of us in this House have never been fish harvesters or fish processors, but many of us are here because of the people in the fishery, because we know that our Province was born from the fishery.

My brother-in-law, Derek Keats, was the first local scientist to listen to the fishers, to listen to fishers who were out on the water who knew that something was happening with the cod stocks. He wrote the foundational report on which a lot of work went forward. He wrote the Keats report. So we heard about these issues at the kitchen table. We heard about these issues within family discussions. My mother was from the fishing community of Port Saunders where their community relied so much on the fishery.

My colleague, the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi, discussed earlier some of the treachery associated with fisheries allocations, especially with the current Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Minister Gail Shea. I would like to focus on the impacts of this treachery on the coastal communities of rural Newfoundland and Labrador which are all struggling, already struggling economically, struggling with out-migration, struggling with the aging of a population, and the inadequacy of resources to deal with those very serious challenges.

If you look around many of the coastal communities of this Province and ask yourself the question, were it not for the fishery would this community ever have been settled? In a great many cases the answer is no. It is clear, Mr. Speaker, as we look at coastal communities, as we travel our Province, we know that that community would not be where it pitched, that the people who may have pitched there hundreds of years ago would not have pitched there had it not been for the fishery.

The fishery is at the very core of our community, historically, culturally, and economically. How much of our music comes from the fishery? Ballads, laments, and recitations. Without the new dollars from the fishery, without the *raison d'être* that the fishery gives our community and our people, without the economic activity surrounding the prosecution of the fishery, the small outpost community starts to die.

Mr. Speaker, I live part time in a small fishing community in Conception Bay North. We know that the soundscape of the water is so different. No longer do we hear the putt-putt of the two-stroke. The putt-putt of the two-stroke early in the morning or in the evening when boats used to come back home, we do not hear that anymore. Or if we do it is on such a rare occasion.

As we look across the bay at times at night, we used to see the lights go on in the harbour. We used to see the lights go on in the houses in our community. It is so rare now at night that we see those lights go on. There are not as many people. There are more abandoned houses.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, landings of significant quantities of fish create the need for onshore processing plants which provide badly needed jobs. Inspectors, monitors, truck drivers, and others travel throughout the Province to inspect, to monitor, and to transport fish. They buy gas in local gas bars. They stay at local hotels or local B&Bs. They eat at local restaurants. They buy their food in local stores.

Tourism is an important part of our economy. As a Province, we have made improvements in how we sell ourselves as a tourist destination.

Entrepreneurs in the tourism sector have greatly enhanced the services and experiences that they provide.

Ghost towns do not draw tourists. What people want to see when they travel is something new, something different, and something they cannot get at home. The fishery offers just that. The fishery is a tremendous catalyst for continuing expansion and broadening of the offerings of our tourist sector. The fishery is actually a match made in heaven with the tourism industry.

One need look no further than the remarkable developments of Fogo Island where the Shorefast Foundation has built on the cultural, historic, and economic base that the inshore fishery provides to create a high-end tourist destination. The reason it is successful, Mr. Speaker, is because of the historic role that the fishery has played in that community and the current role that the fishery plays in that community.

The principle founder of Shorefast, Zita Cobb, has made it very clear in public comments and speeches that she has made that her foundation, which is becoming world renowned for what it has done, could not survive and prosper in the absence of a vibrant economy driven by the fishery. It is the very heart and soul of her foundation. It is the very heart and soul of what is happening in tourism in Fogo.

Tourism and the fishery are joined at the hip. Fogo Island is but one example. When you throw in our magnificent scenery, our fantastic people, we are offering a travelling experience that people will want to repeat, that they will want to tell their friends about when they get back home.

There are a lot of very, very difficult decisions that have to be made in the fishery as we, the baby boomers, retire and as the ocean environment continues to change. Some we will have some control over, some we will not. Recruitment of young fish harvesters and fishery workers is a major challenge. Just as recruitment is a major challenge in so many of our other sectors, particularly in some of our rural communities. As the ocean appears to be moving back towards a more historically, normal environment, based primarily on finfish,

with fewer opportunities for shellfish, young people are going to need something economically viable and attractive to be recruited to.

On the Northeast Coast of Newfoundland and Labrador the Northern cod stock was the historic cornerstone of the economy of the small fishing communities. They dot our coastline and they contribute so much to the character and fabric of our Province. These communities and the people who live in them go to the core of what we are all as a people, because we are all here because of the fishery.

So we can tolerate no more abuses like the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi described in the blatant misuse of the power of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Gail Shea, with respect to Gulf halibut. Indeed, that terrible decision must be reversed; it must be. Nor can we continue to allow the minister to continue to put offshore corporations ahead of inshore harvesters and coastal communities in the management of our shrimp fishery. This is about our people. It is about our communities. It is about social and economic justice.

The inshore sector, and the people in communities it entails, suffered serious hardships as a result of the Northern cod moratorium. We all know those stories. We all heard those stories. We all witnessed those stories in our own families, in our own communities, just as the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace so eloquently, eloquently told his own story.

All parties in this hon. House should stand behind this motion, should stand proudly to support this motion because all members in this House know how important this motion is. Because it is about fairness, it is about social justice, it is about economic justice. It is the right thing to do, and I know that every member in this House knows this.

We must demand of the Government of Canada that the people whose ancestors built the communities adjacent to the Northern cod stocks for the very reason that they are adjacent to the Northern cod stocks, the people who struggled through the dark days of the moratorium, the people who stuck with their industry and their

communities through thick and thin that these people should come first as the 2J3KL cod stock finally recovers because, as the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace has told us, the cod is coming back.

When it finally recovers to the point of supporting a real commercial fishery, the first 115,000 metric tons of cod in area 2J3KL should go, must go, because this is an issue of social and economic justice, it must go to the adjacent inshore fleets – full stop, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PEACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me a great pleasure to stand in this hon. House and take my place and represent the great District of Bellevue.

Mr. Speaker, I want to read into the minutes the motion that was put forward today by the Third Party: “THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House urge Government to call for the Federal Minister to reaffirm the federal policy of returning the first 115,000 metric tonnes of northern cod quota to the adjacent inshore harvesters of Newfoundland and Labrador.”

Mr. Speaker, we have come a long ways with the fishery but cod has been quite a story since the days of John Cabot, when John Cabot pulled the cod over the sides of the boats in baskets. I will take you back to the late 1970s, early 1980s, when the Northern cod was founded in Newfoundland. When John Cabot discovered the cod in Newfoundland, there was cod around in all our waters of the Island of Newfoundland and Labrador. When I fished with my father years ago in the little twenty-foot boat – the putt-putt, as my Member for Cape St. Francis referred to earlier – there was lots of cod around the Island.

When I joined the fishermen’s union back in the late 1970s, early 1980s, I remember a meeting

that we had at the Battery Hotel when the scientists were out doing research. At that time, Mr. Speaker, the scientists went down on Cape Bonavista under the ice. They found this large amount of cod so many fathoms deep, so many fathoms wide, and so many miles long.

Mr. Speaker, at that meeting there were harvesters, there were fish processors, and the fishermen’s union. We were all told at that time that this cod that they found, they were going to call it the Northern cod. That is where the Northern cod arrived from. Now some people argue and say well, there was always Northern cod. Sure, the fish plants referred to we are going north to fish the cod, but it was always Newfoundland cod up to that time and there was an abundance of it there.

Scientists said I will give you fair warning that if you fish this fish properly, you will get twenty-five years lifespan on Northern cod. What happened, Mr. Speaker? About twenty-five years later in 1992 the cod moratorium started. The cod was gone.

We all remember the banging on the walls and the big uproar that was going on when John Crosbie announced they were closing the fishery. I was in St. Mary’s Bay at the time. I had a full-time fishing licence up until 1989. I fished cod. I fished from my father’s boat. When my father went to work in the fish plant, he passed the boat on to me and I went fishing in Grand Bank. There was a very small amount of fish in Grand Bank at that time.

Mr. Speaker, the cod moratorium closed. I was in St. Mary’s Bay fishing with another fisherman from the Norman’s Cove area. I moved to Norman’s Cove in 1988 and in 1989 I went to work with the Avalon West School Board but I took a job in the inshore fishery again in 1990 and 1991. In 1992 when they called the cod moratorium I was in St. Mary’s Bay.

It was a very tragic day, Mr. Speaker, for fishermen. We had traps out in St. Mary’s Bay and at the time our traps were chock full of fish. They were bringing in boatloads, but then again we had to take traps out of the water. Everything had to be out of the water at a certain time. We had to take the traps out of the water

and that was it. That was the end of the fishery as we knew it at that time. We have been trying to revive that fishery ever since, Mr. Speaker. We have been trying to revive that fishery ever since.

Since the closure of the fishery in 1992, there are some extremely positive signs of Northern cod rebuilding. I have to agree with the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace. He said the cod is coming back. Mr. Speaker, I would have to say that the cod is back. The cod is back on the Northeast Coast and 3Ps. I mean this past year they increased the quotas in 3Ps so that is a show that the cod is back over in that area. There is an abundance of cod in the waters around the Northeast Coast.

When the food fishery is called I go out in the boats. I still have my boat. I go out, I see it. You cannot get it off the screen in the summertime, cod on the screen of your sounder. You cannot get it off. It is there. The fishermen know it is there, everybody else knows it is there, but they are only doing 3,000 pounds. This past year they increased it to 5,000. That is all they will give them to catch.

Mr. Speaker, you know the fishermen say we can sustain at least a 10,000-pound quota on the Northeast Coast. They say that now they are not being too optimistic about it. They are not saying let's go out and load our boats like we did years ago and take it all. They are just saying give us a fair share of the fish that is in the water. Let us catch 8,000 or 10,000 pounds of fish instead of putting us down to 5,000. That is all they are asking for. They are asking for a fair day's fishing so that they can have a fair day's wages to feed their families. That is what they are asking for and that is what it should be.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PEACH: Mr. Speaker, you talk to any fisherman around the Northeast Coast. You can go anywhere; you can go into the malls and have a good conversation. You can stand up anywhere with a fisherman and say I do not understand the policies of the federal government. Every policy they have come out with is always something that is against the inshore instead of for the inshore.

They have never been served right, that I know of, from day one, since I have been old enough to know what the cod fishery is. They have never been given a fair shake I would say, of the cod fishery, or of any policies, or anything that they can do with regard to the fishing. It is about time for that to change, Mr. Speaker. I agree with this motion today. I support this motion 100 per cent and I hope that the federal government listens.

Sure, our inshore fishermen should be the first beneficiaries of the reopening of the cod fishery. Mr. Speaker, I just want to read a couple of quotes I had here earlier about the cod fishery. One was made by Brian Tobin when he was Minister of Fisheries. In 1995, in a speech to the St. John's Board of Trade, the then federal minister, Brian Tobin, stated, "... as fisheries resources rebuild, inshore fleets will be given the first access to these resources." That was done in 1995.

Then in 2008, the ADM of fisheries and aquaculture management for Fisheries and Oceans Canada stated in a presentation to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans in reference to the Northern cod: the first 115,000 tons go to the inshore fishery, Mr. Speaker. So, we certainly expect DFO to live up to these statements. They were made by their ministers and deputy ministers so they should live up to them. They should live up to them.

Mr. Speaker, I can remember with regard to the offshore and the mismanagement of the fish in the offshore. I talked earlier about the Northern cod and how the Northern cod was down off Cape Bonavista under the ice and they could not get at it. So what they did – and when I say they, I mean the fish plants and the fish processors which used to be Fishery Products then and Bonavista Cold Storage. You had plants in Grand Bank and you had plants in Bonavista at the time. Then we had the Lake Group of Companies.

What they did is they took the four largest boats that they had – after the scientists warned them about catching the cod and not catching too much of it – and they put them in the shipyard in Marystown. They put the big icebreakers on the front of them and they went down and they dragged through the ice. I saw pictures from the

trawlermen. The trawlermen had taken pictures of it.

They took the codfish on the deck, and when they hauled the last net in, they had the boat loaded. They hauled the last net in; they phoned home to the plants and said what do we do, we have her loaded now. Well, if you have another bag there, put it on deck. They put it on deck of the boats. When they steamed away from the fishing grounds, Mr. Speaker, the cod washed off the decks. You could see it floating up behind the boats, I will not say miles, but for many feet behind the boat.

I mean it was mismanagement of our cod fishery over the years. The inshore knew this was going on and so did the offshore. The offshore fishermen warned the federal fisheries ministers. They warned the federal fisheries officers. They warned everybody they could talk to, but nobody listened. It is like what our Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace and Cape St. Francis said, no one listens to the fishermen. They are the prime people who are on the waters every day. They get up 4:00 in the morning. They are there until 5:00 or 6:00 in the evening.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PEACH: The next morning the same thing happens again. What happens to the fishery? Somebody walks into their office at 9:00 in the morning, looks at the policies, and says I think we will do this today. With a stroke of the pen it is done and nobody changes it.

Mr. Speaker, the inshore fishery is going to be strong. It has been strong all along. I have to agree with the Member for Cape St. Francis, I do not think we are going to get people in our plants anymore like we did one time. We are not getting them now.

I have a plant in Long Cove. They had a job to put people in their plant just a few months ago when they were at the herring. Do you know what they had to do, Mr. Speaker? Over Easter, they had to take people from the schools ten years old and eleven years old to put them in the plants to process the fish. They cannot get the people.

Arnold's Cove is one of the prime fish plants in North America, one of the best fish plants in North America. I would invite anybody to go to Arnold's Cove and look at their plant. Do not be negative about it because they did not buy some fish or whatever. They had their ups and downs with it, but they employ 200 people. It is a top-of-the-line plant.

I am very pleased to hear they have finally reached a settlement with regard to fish prices. I am told this year that the fish prices now are settled by the panel at sixty-eight cents until the last of August and seventy-five cents for the fall fishery, from August on, Mr. Speaker. So that is a very positive outlook for the inshore fishery. It may not have been what they were looking for, but it is a darn sight better than paying forty cents for it like they got last year.

My thoughts on the inshore fishery are that today if the crab prices were not up to where they are now, we would have an inshore fishery right now. We would have a strong inshore fishery now because what would happen is that while you are getting good prices for the crab, Mr. Speaker, a lot of the inshore fishermen do not want to fish the cod. They do not want to fish the cod at sixty cents a pound when you are getting \$2.25, or \$2.45, or whatever the price is right now, for the crab. They do not want to be at that. They want to fish their crab and get their crab.

This year there has really been a downturn in the crab for some of them because of the weather conditions. As the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace said earlier, for the crab in 3Ps it has really been a bad year this year. They have a job to find crab in some areas over there. We can see that going.

The extra quotas they put on the inshore, in the 3Ps this year, provided the fish plants keeps buying – if the fish plants do not buy, the fishermen are stopped dead in the water again. If they do not buy, they are stopped dead in the water, Mr. Speaker. They have to buy in order for the inshore to make a living.

So, if the crab fishery is like it is in 3Ps this year, a failure, if that becomes a total failure then the inshore fishery in Placentia Bay is going to be in trouble if the plants do not buy. If

the plants keep buying, the inshore fishermen keep fishing, they will make a fairly good year again this year because their quotas are gone up in 3Ps. Not only that, if you fish one quota, once you get that quota caught you can apply for another quota. That is my understanding, Mr. Speaker, when I was talking to some of the fishermen.

In 3Ps, they are doing really good with regard to the cod; but, Mr. Speaker, there was an awful lot of cod left in the water last year. It was left in the water because some of the plants did not buy it. The fishermen had no other choice, only leave it in the water. They could not sell it.

We find that on the Northern Peninsula. We find that all across the Island, where we have a problem with the plants buying. Now I do not know if it is the markets that are doing it or if it is just the quality of the fish or what is happening, Mr. Speaker, but there is always a struggle for an inshore fisherman, always has been, always will be, until somebody sits down and listens to the inshore fishermen and talks to the man on the street or the man on the wharf. They have to do that if they are going to make policies in order to be able to help them in the way that they need to be helped.

I support this motion 100 per cent, and I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the most important thing is not to forget that the most important thing, the most important thing, and the most important thing is the fishery. Words from Zita Cobb, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the fishery.

It is very interesting this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, to listen to the remarks from the Member for Cape St. Francis, the Member for Carbonear –

Harbour Grace, the Member for Bellevue, the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi, and the Member for St. John's Centre, but I want to come back to the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace, the Member for Cape St. Francis, and the Member for Bellevue, because they bring a perspective to the debate or to the proceedings this afternoon that is entirely different than I guess a lot of us can bring.

Mr. Speaker, in 1992, my memories are a little different. I was nineteen years old. I was living in Heart's Delight-Islington, and the fishery was very, very, very important in my town. It still is today. It still is hugely important to the District of Trinity – Bay de Verde, Mr. Speaker, but when you hear these three members talk about their experience in the fishery and what they went through in the fishery, I do not share the same perspective, only through history.

Mr. Speaker, to see the perspective that these three gentlemen bring to where we are today in the fishery, it is very humbling to see, and to share their knowledge. Because I do agree that if the federal government would have listened to gentlemen like these three members twenty or twenty-five years ago, or thirty years ago, we would be in a lot different place today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting too, just this afternoon I had the opportunity to read a member's statement from tales gone by. It is a book, *By Hook or By Crook* just released by the Heart's Content 50 Plus Club. It is very interesting when you read that little book about the history of Heart's Content and the things that happened in Heart's Content back, mainly in the 1960s I guess.

In 1969, the Town of Heart's Content had about 800 residents. The main industry in Heart's Content – even though they had the cable station by that time, Mr. Speaker, the main industry in Heart's Content, as it was on most of the Bay de Verde Peninsula, I would say, was the fishery.

Today, Heart's Content has only 350 residents remaining. Mr. Speaker, when you look at the effects of the fishery on Newfoundland and Labrador, it is amazing. The interesting thing when we refer to 2J3KL, because it goes from, I

guess, the Member for Torngat Mountains all the way down to the Member for Cape St. Francis would be adjacent to that fishing ground.

The motion this afternoon is that adjacency be applied and that the fishery and the fish, when the cod stocks do return, that these are the primary beneficiaries, Mr. Speaker, and they have to be. Above all, the inshore fishermen in these areas adjacent to this have to be the primary beneficiaries.

The fishery, Mr. Speaker, is why we are here. There is no other reason why. We did not settle Newfoundland and Labrador before the oil. The oil is great but – the fishery is a renewable resource and a resource that we need to protect.

The interesting thing; I find here in the House of Assembly, just being here since November, is that even though there are three different parties here in the House, every time there is a fisheries motion, it always seems we find agreement. Because I believe the fishery is such a part of our society and our Province, that there is no way political parties can even be divided when it comes to the fishery, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROCKER: My family, Mr. Speaker, was not directly involved in the fishery for a long, long time. Actually, the last, I think, direct involvement in the fishery that my family had was my great-grandfather in Port au Bras on the Burin Peninsula.

Mr. Speaker, my family did operate a small business in the Town of Heart's Delight-Islington. I can remember in 1992 when the fishery closed and the impact it had on our service station. Both my father and my grandfather were mechanics, and I remember the impact.

Like the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace said earlier this afternoon, every single dollar that comes in over the side of that boat or every single fish is a new dollar. That dollar is distributed throughout the communities, no matter what communities, whether it be Heart's Delight, Bay de Verde, Carbonear, St. John's, Gander, or Corner Brook, there is no divide in that.

We have seen it this year when we were in Gander back in the late winter talking about the effects of LIFO. I think the Mayor of Gander stood up that afternoon or that morning and talked about the effect it has on car dealerships. The car at the dealership in St. John's does not get sold if we do not generate that new money, Mr. Speaker. At the end of the day, the fishery gives us new money.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace also brought up another thing this afternoon, the sentinel fishery. I hear this all the time with fishermen who are involved in the sentinel and fishermen who are involved in the limited – and I say limited – 5,000 pound quota. Cod is eating the crab and we see this day in and day out. We do not need scientists in Ottawa to tell us that. The scientists on the water who gets up and goes out and fishes every day, we should be listening to those scientists.

We come back to the comeback of the cod. We do recognize the fact that the inshore should be first when it comes to allocation of the first 115,000 tons. Mr. Speaker, I would argue that the inshore should be first even after the first 115,000 tons. We made a mistake or we were allowed to be brought into a mistake. In 1997 or in 1996, when Minister Mifflin brought the inshore into the shrimp fishery, there was never any mention of LIFO. LIFO has evolved, I think, mainly from Stephen Harper's years. At no time has Stephen Harper been a friend of this Province in any way, shape, or form, whether it be fishing or in any other part of our Province. We must assure adjacency first, and we must assure that the inshore fishermen are the ones who get the benefit from any new fishery.

When you look at the cod comeback, Mr. Speaker, you have to look no further than Smith Sound in Trinity Bay. Smith Sound has had to be designated an ecological reserve for cod because it is just full. Smith Sound is full. I participate in the food fishery in the summer. In Trinity Bay, like the Member for Cape St. Francis said earlier, to go out and catch your five, or ten, or fifteen cod, it is ten minutes work, Mr. Speaker. The cod is that plentiful.

One time, I remember going out with my grandfather and, I think, the Member for Bellevue, his uncle, Norm Sooley. I can

remember going out and fishing with my grandfather and Norm in what was a recreational fishery then. We would be lucky, if we spent three hours in the morning and we would cover the bottom of a fish box, Mr. Speaker. There were no fish. Today, you can go out in Trinity Bay and fill a fish box in a matter of minutes.

Mr. Speaker, one thing that has happened, though – and again, I think a result of the mismanagement from Ottawa – is we are missing the boat on science, to a point where the Province has had to step in and pick up another responsibility of the federal government and invest money where the feds have just set us adrift. They do not pay the respect to the fishery in the science either; and us, as a Province, having to pick that up is totally, totally uncalled for.

Mr. Speaker, you look at the fishermen in the Province today being allowed to catch 5,000 pounds of cod. I think it is six nets they are allowed to put out.

MR. SLADE: That is round.

MR. CROCKER: Okay, the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace is making the point, that is 5,000 pounds of round cod. So, at the end of the day, that takes no time anymore. I think they are catching it in a day, a day-and-a-half. No problem at all, there is that much fish, Mr. Speaker.

We know the plan goes to 2016. It is important that we impress upon the federal government, when we get past 2016, that they have a real serious look at it. A lot of this comes back, I guess, to federal-provincial relations. We see it with the halibut quota and the need to always be fighting with this federal government, whether it is LIFO, whether it is halibut quota. I think the rally tomorrow in Corner Brook with regard to that quota, the Member for Bay of Islands will be there tomorrow on behalf of our party to listen to the concerns of the fishermen in that area.

Mr. Speaker, last fall as I was campaigning, I was in Bay de Verde and I was at the plant there. One of the gentlemen there in management, I think has a Scandinavian or Islandic background, and he talked about cod quality and

one thing that we would have to ensure we do as the cod fishery returns. It has to be a focus on quality in lots of cases over quantity. We, for so long, treated cod with not enough respect.

The Member for Cape St. Francis brought up in his remarks this afternoon about the idea of bleeding a fish and using ice on fish. That was never done before. Simple quality control measures, Mr. Speaker, are things we are going to have to ensure are a part of the cod fishery of the future – in smaller scales, because at the end of the day, if we improve our quality of our cod, we will get more for it, we will attract new markets.

Cod marketing is somewhere where I think we have sort of lost our footing, and I am not exactly sure how we are going to get our footing back, because with the sale of FPI we lost control of the marketing arm. The Minister of Fisheries this afternoon in his remarks spoke about attending the Boston Seafood Show, and I think a seafood show in China as well. I hope that as we are attending these shows we are finding new markets. I am sure that is why the minister was on these trade missions. I hope that we are able to penetrate these markets as our cod fishery returns. We need a full marketing plan on cod, Mr. Speaker.

I had the opportunity about three or four years ago to tour the ice water facility in Arnold's Cove. When I did that day, they were doing a product for Marks and Spencer that day. It was a tray product, and it consisted of –

AN HON. MEMBER: High end.

MR. CROCKER: I say to the minister, yes, a high-end product, value added. It was cod, scallop, and there was one other species, actually, in this one tray, and that is how Marks and Spencer were selling this product, Mr. Speaker. It was sold as a package deal. You walk in, you get it, and it is cod, scallops, and maybe shrimp was another thing they were putting in this. So it was value added.

It is interesting this year, Mr. Speaker, and the Member for Bellevue pointed out, cod being left in the water. We did leave cod in the water last year, and hopefully we will not do it this year. We look at strong prices for cod in Europe, and

that being said, our cod prices this year, this coming season, the price that fishers are going to be paid for cod in our Province is down a little, but the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace pointed out to me earlier that this would be adjusted as the season goes on and reviewed. So, hopefully as we get into the cod season in 2015, the price for cod is there.

I will come back to the Northern shrimp, Mr. Speaker, because we see the mistakes made there, and it is very, very important that we ensure these mistakes are not made again. I looked at a graph today of Northern cod and the catch rates. Really, if you look at this graph, the destruction in Northern cod happens between 1955 – I would like to be able to use a prop, Mr. Speaker, but I know I cannot. It starts in 1955 and drags into 1975.

We see this astronomical increase in foreign fleets in our waters. The foreigners came in and pillaged our stocks, the Nose and Tail of the Grand Banks, caught undersized cod. I can remember a former Premier of the Province going to New York City and holding a turbot net up in front of the United Nations to get attention, Mr. Speaker, and that got attention.

Mr. Speaker, I see I am running out of time but I just wanted to mention another part of the cod fishery that was impressed on me a few weeks ago. A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to meet with the Harbour Authority in Grates Cove. There are twenty-two small crab quotas, or the smaller crab quotas in Grates Cove, and they were impressing upon me to work with them and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans with small crafts and harvesters to get infrastructure. The other thing we have lost since the cod moratorium, has been infrastructure in wharfs and other facilities to unload cod when the time comes.

Mr. Speaker, I see my time is running out. I really appreciate the opportunity to speak to this PMR this afternoon. Our party will be unanimously supporting this resolution this afternoon, and I thank the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi for bringing it forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: If the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi speaks now she closes debate.

The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

I have to say, I stand very proudly here with my colleagues in the House of Assembly today that we are all standing united behind the people in our Province, the fishing community in particular, the harvesters, the plant workers, and especially our communities. The communities that depend on the fish that is in our water.

I stand proudly that we are able to say we are united behind our people. I thank so much my colleagues, the Member for Cape St. Francis, the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace, the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture – who has to go to the airport and wants to be around for the vote, so I will not speak for the full fifteen minutes – my colleague from St. John's Centre, the Member for Bellevue, the Member for Trinity – Bay de Verde.

As the speaker from Trinity – Bay de Verde just said, and I want to repeat it, it was especially important to hear the voice of the Member for Cape St. Francis, Carbonear – Harbour Grace, and Bellevue with their personal experience, especially the two of our colleagues who actually worked in the industry; the Member for Cape St. Francis being his memories of that wonderful fishing community that he grew up in, in Cape St. Francis. The experience and especially the voice of the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace is eloquent and speaks to why we are here this afternoon and why we are united around the motion that I have brought into the House.

There are two sides to what we are doing here; I guess three in a way. One is very political because we have a government in Ottawa that does not care about what we have said here in this House today, a government in Ottawa that does not value the history of this Province, that does not value the history of our communities, and that does not value the history of the people themselves.

It is unbelievable, it is really hard to comprehend that we could have people in the federal government who have no understanding and obviously do not want to have an understanding of how important the fishery is to the economy of this Province. They are really just letting us out – they do not care if we sink or swim. It does not matter to them and that is absolutely disgraceful. So that is why on that level it is so important that we are standing here united today.

We formed last year the All-Party Committee on shrimp quota. I remember saying to the minister of the day maybe this Committee is going to have to go on. Well, now here we are faced with the issue around the halibut quota, so we have a bigger issue.

I hope that our voting together today on this motion with regard to the Northern cod and the work that we have done on the All-Party Committee will show us that we really need a standing committee on the fishery in this House because the issues are going to go on. They are not ending. That is what the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is showing us and that is what the Prime Minister is showing us by leaving that person in the role of Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. She does not deserve to be there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS MICHAEL: It is disgraceful that she is continuous in that role. It means the Prime Minister wants it to be the way that it is. It is absolutely disgraceful. It is total injustice. I cannot believe how unjust the situation is.

That leads me to the second point. Yes, we have a memory and the memories are wonderful, but it kills me when I look at our tourist ads. We have beautiful tourist ads and we have heard them talked about. When I look at the ones where we see all kinds of beautiful scenery and that beautiful technique that they use with regard to the colour, and you might see a person here or something on a clothesline, yes, it looks lovely, but I could not help thinking a couple of weeks ago when I went to Hibbs Cove to visit a friend, as I drove through Port de Grave I said this is the kind of picture I want by tourism, to see a fishery alive in Port de Grave.

I see the Member for Port de Grave – but really, that touched my heart that we have fishery alive and well. We can forget here in St. John's, and it is easy for us to forget the communities that still are really full and alive depending on the fishery. They exist on the Avalon Peninsula, they exist in the Northeast, they exist in Labrador, and they exist all over the Province. We are here to make sure that they keep existing.

What happened in 1992, we all know what happened, but we cannot let it happen again. We have to move wisely, we have to make sure that we do have a full, live fishery back again; but we also have to make sure that just as in 100 years ago that fishery was there for the communities, we have to make sure when that fishery comes back it is there for our communities, for the communities in this Province.

The offshore will always have resource out there, they will always have it, but we have to make sure the people in the inshore fishery and those who want to work in plants that they will have an economic viability. I do not want to see any more pictures of empty spaces. As beautiful as our scenery may be, I do not want to see empty spaces. I do not want to see any more communities dying. Because when I look at those pictures I think where are the people who used to be there, what are they doing, what happened to them, are they unemployed, are they moved out of the Province, are they living in poverty, where are they? That is what we will have to think about and that is why we are here today and that is why we are voting the way that we are voting.

We are talking about economic justice. We have a massive resource. We have always had a massive resource and we have to make sure that there is fair sharing of that resource, and the people who have to get the best share of that resource are the people of our Province who live in our Province, who are adjacent to the resource and they have to benefit from that resource.

My friends, here today we are doing this vote and we are going to be sending another message to Ottawa. I know the minister will make sure that the minister in Ottawa gets our message here today, but it not over and we have got to

keep working on this. We have to keep working on it too in terms of being wise as we move forward.

The Member for Cape St. Francis talked about the fact that we have to make sure that we are working towards – he did not use the word but it is what he meant – a sustainable fishery using new technology to make sure that what we are doing is going to keep the fishery alive, that the cod fishery is not going to die the next time, because we will do it wisely. Let's hope that the issues around shrimp – because we know that resource is going down – that we start really using our research and our science to make sure that we do it well for the economy of the people of this Province.

I am not going to keep us in here any longer, Mr. Speaker. I am going to thank my colleagues very much. I do look forward to tomorrow. I think probably all our parties will have representatives in Corner Brook at the rally. I will be representing our caucus and bringing the message that we all stood here today united to say we will not give up fighting Harper and fighting Shea on the issue of fair sharing, equality, and justice for the fishing people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

All those in favour of the resolution?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The resolution is carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

MR. SPEAKER: This being Wednesday, Private Members' Day and the business of the House concluded, the House now stands adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, at 1:30 o'clock.