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*Speaker: Honourable Wade Verge, MHA*

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Admit strangers.

I am pleased to welcome to our public gallery today Mr. Earle Howell, President of the Vera Perlin Society, as well as Marilyn Wall, Manager of the Employment Division.

Welcome to the House of Assembly.

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

**Statements by Members**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today we will hear members' statements from the members representing the Districts of Trinity – Bay de Verde, Bonavista North, Port au Port, St. George's – Stephenville East, Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi, and Bellevue.

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 congratulate Ryan Barrett of Old Perlican for winning the title of Top Student at the Military History Challenge sponsored by the Royal Canadian Legion, Carbonear.

On Wednesday, May 13, Ryan Barrett and his teammates from Baccalieu Collegiate: Blake Potter, Zachary LeShane, and Michelle Gillingham, participated in the Royal Canadian Legion-Carbonear sponsored Military History Challenge. This competition was based on the knowledge of Newfoundland and Labrador, along with Canadian military history. Four schools participated in the competition: Carbonear Collegiate, Ascension Collegiate, Crescent Collegiate, and Baccalieu Collegiate.

The Baccalieu Collegiate team capture the goal, and Ryan Barrett was awarded top student. His award entitles him to accompany the Royal Canadian Legion on their annual trip to Beaumont Hamel, scheduled to leave on June 28. This trip includes visits to several World War I and World War II Memorials, as well as Beaumont Hamel on July 1.

His history teacher, Mr. Garland Button, describes Ryan as being an exceptional student with a vast wealth of knowledge in history. The competition was videotaped and will air on Eastlink on July 1.

I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating Ryan, all participants, and Royal Canadian Legion – Carbonear on this competition.

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:** It gives me great pleasure to rise today, Mr. Speaker, to salute nearly 200 residents of Lumsden who answered the call to give freely of their labour to construct, assemble, and repair playground equipment on Saturday, June 20. It was also known as Lumsden Community Spirit Day.

The Lumsden Recreation Committee had purchased several pieces of new play equipment and desired to repair existing property situated near the Lumsden Festival Site on the Northside beach. Residents of all shapes and ages showed up sharp at 9:00 a.m. eager to assist.

The town supplied BBQs, sandwiches and beverages, and town equipment with staff to operate it. Local ladies supplied their culinary skills, and by 4:00 p.m. everyone had a belly filled with tasty treats, but more importantly our hearts were filled intrinsically with community spirit. As the castles and slides were completed, they were filled with children whose voices gleefully competed with the seagulls as they played in a backdrop of beach and icebergs. Their smile was the only payment necessary.

A contest to name the facility was earlier won by Carter, Caiden, and Cohen Gray as they scripted the name Seaside Playground.

I ask all hon. members to collegially assist me in complimenting the Lumsden residents who gave freely to make Seaside Playground a reality.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. CORNETT:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Randy Alexander, Ian MacDonald, and Kara Alexander of Stephenville High School for their recognition by School Sports Newfoundland and Labrador.

At the recently held SSNL Annual Awards Banquet, Randy, Ian, and Kara were among others to receive the well-deserved accolades for their accomplishments.

Randy is a physical education teacher at Stephenville High School. He was acknowledged with the Coaching Service Award for the numerous hours he has devoted to guiding student athletes. He also received the Honour Award for his dedication to the sports program at the high school.

Ian, a Level III student, is the winner of the 2014-2015 Brother G. Moore Male Student Athlete of the Year Award. His athletic prowess has contributed to winning many provincial banners for his school.

I would like to commend Kara for placing second in the Female Student Athlete of the Year category. She too, is a very dynamic athlete.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to join me in congratulating Randy, Ian, and Kara for their honours and, Mr. Speaker, best wishes to all our student athletes.

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.

This year the Stephenville Theatre Festival will celebrate its thirty-seventh season of entertaining people. The Festival kicks off on July 17 with

the hilarious Monty Python's *Spamalot*, Norman Foster's *Looking* opens on July 18, *Tales of Ti-Jean* debuts on July 19, *Back in 59* opens on July 23, and *Mama's Country Record Collection* debuts on July 24.

Other highlights of the season include the "A night with ..." series and Reading for the Future series, both of which take place on Wednesday nights during the Festival. The Festival wraps up on August 16 with the always popular Gala performance.

Since its beginning, the Stephenville Theatre Festival has enriched the economy and the cultural sector of the Town of Stephenville and has become a major draw for tourism in the Bay St. George area. The Festival has provided training and hands on experience for numerous artists, many of who are now counted among Canada's top professionals.

Show tickets are on sale now at the Stephenville Arts and Culture Box Office or at their website.

I ask all members of the House to join with me in wishing the cast and crew of the Stephenville Theatre Festival a good season.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

It is with the greatest pleasure that I rise today to recognize a woman who has spent the last twenty-eight years devoted to the work of the Vera Perlin Society.

From 1987, when she began her work as coordinator of a sewing program, to the present, as Manager of the Society's Employment Division, Marilyn Wall has been a mover and shaker in this organization.

It was her drive and commitment that brought the employment division to where it is today, supporting approximately 140 individuals on a daily basis with their work positions throughout the city.

The Vera Perlin Society is a charity and as a charity relies on fundraising. Marilyn has also been a driving force with the organization's golf tournament and chocolate bar drive – generating approximately \$43,000 annually.

Marilyn Wall has not just been a successful and efficient manager; she has also been a woman of compassion going above and beyond for the individuals served by the Vera Perlin Society, making sure individuals have food, clothing, and support with life events.

I ask all members of the House to join me in wishing Marilyn Wall well as she begins, in August, a much-deserved retirement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

We are all saddened by the tragedy that took place off our waters just a week or so ago, in which three fisher people lost their life.

The Member for Bellevue, who represents that district, wanted to make a member's statement that exceeds the normal time we allot for members' statements. He is asking for leave to be able to do this.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Leave.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Leave.

The hon. the Member for Bellevue.

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

It is with a heavy heart that I stand in this hon. House today to remember and pay tribute to three fishermen who tragically lost their lives on June 16, 2015.

Friends and family watched from the wharf that day as these three fishermen ventured out into Placentia Bay in a twenty-three foot boat to go to Bar Haven on the other side of the bay to haul crab pots. Just another normal day for a fisher person who makes his or her living from the sea. As the three fishermen went out of sight, the people of Davis Cove carried on with their usual

day and it was not until late that evening the message went out to man a search.

The Coast Guard, the Search and Rescue, and the volunteers are to be commended for braving up to forty-two knots of wind to search for the missing men. In the afternoon, the wind had changed and instead of what you would call a reasonable day, Placentia Bay became a roaring lion, ready to pounce upon its pray. In these unforeseen circumstances, these three men lost their lives.

Captain Kenneth Hickey of Southern Harbour, age forty-eight; Kenneth was a family man with a wife and three children.

David Wareham of Arnold's Cove, age forty-two; David was a single man who lived with his parents.

Larry Loveman from Leading Ticks, age fifty-eight, with a wife, daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren.

On the eve of Captain Hickey's funeral, the waters of Placentia Bay were calm, quiet, not a whisper, as if the lion had successfully completed its hunt and lay down for a rest.

I ask all members of this hon. House to join me in expressing our condolences to the families of these three fishermen. With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I ask if we could have a moment of silence in the memory of Kenneth Hickey, David Wareham, and Larry Loveman.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The House will stand for a minute of silence.

[Moment of silence.]

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

Statements by Ministers.

### **Statements by Ministers**

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in the House to congratulate Jeremy Charles and Jeremy Bonia, owners of Raymonds, as well as Todd Perrin, owner of Mallard Cottage, on being named the number one and seven restaurants in Canada respectively by Vacay.ca.

Mr. Speaker, this is the second year in a row that Raymonds, located in downtown St. John's, has been named the best in Canada. The reputation of the experience offered by the staff at Raymonds has become so well known that Adrian Brijbassi, founder of Top Restaurants in Canada has said that "Jeremy Charles and Jeremy Bonia have made Raymonds the nation's greatest destination restaurant in one of its finest places to visit."

This designation is not a casual one, Mr. Speaker. This sought-after recognition comes from a collection of Canadian and US fine-dining connoisseurs, leading food and travel journalists, and industry experts, which is published each year by Vacay.ca.

Mallard Cottage, in historic Quidi Vidi, ranks number seven with its contemporary twist on authentic Newfoundland cuisine. The Mallard Cottage, an eighteenth century Irish-Newfoundland style cottage, is recognized as a National Historic Site because it is one of the oldest wooden buildings in North America. It is also now known as one of the country's best restaurants.

Mr. Speaker, culinary experiences play a tremendous role in the tourism industry. Spending reached \$1 billion for the first time in 2011, while the Province welcomed more than 1.5 million non-resident visitors from 2012-2014 and non-resident tourism spending increased by 36 per cent. Offering a high quality, unique and truly Newfoundland and Labrador dining experience only adds to the top-notch travel product we offer.

Mr. Speaker, the majority of restaurants throughout our Province are small businesses. I am keenly aware that encouraging and supporting local business owners, especially our

Province's tourism and food sectors, is critical to building new businesses, which ultimately leads to a stronger economy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House today to join me in congratulating the owners and chefs of Raymonds and Mallard Cottage on being named amongst Canada's top ten restaurants. Their dedication to their culinary craft and creating incredible dining experiences is something everyone in the Province should be very proud of it.

Thank you.

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

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

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

I want to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. It is truly outstanding that two of our local restaurants and their owners should be recognized in this way. Industry has certainly raised the bar and shown its professionalism. We have come a long way in the past twenty years.

It speaks volumes about the kind of tourism product we are able to produce using local products to develop award-winning cuisine which is outstanding. We join the minister in offering our congratulations to the owners of Raymonds and Mallard Cottage. They are on the leading edge of what tourism could and should look like in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, there are things that are really lacking when it comes to our government's work to support the industry from the signage program that has been delayed again and again since 2009 to the point where it is completely stalled. We are hitting our outfitters who supply our adventure tourism product with a 50 per cent increase in the licensing fees that they were not consulted with. We even allow unlicensed operators to continue to operate in this Province.

I thank the minister for an advance copy, and we have a lot of work to do.

**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 today. Congratulations to both Raymonds and Mallard Cottage. While I have not had the time yet to go down and visit these restaurants, I am pretty sure that I will in the future.

Mr. Speaker, we have to keep in mind, of all things, the importance of small business in this Province and we know that we have two fine examples here. We know that small business in this Province supports about 40 per cent employment in this Province. It is a very important revenue generator for government. These people, because they took that chance and started those small businesses, it is a great example for Newfoundland and Labrador citizens as well as they consider entering into the small business trades.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

I rise to highlight the ongoing work of the Agriculture in the Classroom and Little Green Thumbs Programs in providing hands-on agricultural learning experiences to students throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Since 2010, the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture, through the Agriculture in the Classroom Program, has been helping to increase interest in agriculture among children throughout the Province by bringing schools to farms and farming activities into the classroom.

The aim of the program is to provide teachers and students with educational resources and programs that promote agriculture as an

important contributor to the economy and our everyday life. Through the federal-provincial Growing Forward 2 Program, \$280,000 has been provided to help support this program in Newfoundland and Labrador for 2015-2016.

One of the programs managed by Agriculture in the Classroom is Little Green Thumbs, a national program which aims to instill in young people, the value of their own health, as well as that of their community and the environment, through active participation in a classroom garden. These indoor gardens complement learning concepts such as where food comes from, how to grow healthy plants, sustainable food systems, community interdependence and nutrition in fun, interesting, and relevant ways.

It also serves to familiarize school-aged children with the agriculture industry in this Province and helps to develop lifelong values of environmental stewardship and awareness of how people can positively interact with their surroundings.

I was honoured to attend the launch of the Little Green Thumbs song last Thursday, at Lester's Farm Chalet on Pearltown Road in St. John's, with Grade 3 students and teachers from St. Mary's and Hazelwood Elementary Schools. The enthusiasm and pride in the room was clearly evident as these young students celebrated their achievements and launched the new song for the program, which was performed by Shelley Bean and The Duckety Muds.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to say that since the Little Green Thumbs program came in the Province in 2010, the number of classrooms participating has grown to seventy-two, providing hands-on learning experiences for approximately 1,800 students. This is indeed a worthwhile program and our government is proud to support it.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture, students and teachers, employees of the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency's Agrifoods Development Branch and everyone involved in making the Agriculture in the Classroom and Little Green Thumbs programs such successes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I say to the minister, even with a hoarse voice you are still loud.

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. The Little Green Thumbs program is a great program. It connects young people with the agriculture industry in meaningful ways. That is all very positive, Mr. Speaker.

The money spent in this program is funds well spent, but I guess the problem is that there is not enough money in the program. There are about twenty-five schools, I understand, that are still on the waiting list for this program. I would encourage the minister and the government to find those funds so that more schools can be involved in this program.

As well, the success of the Little Green Thumbs program, I think, demonstrates an interest among parents and students in having healthy, locally grown food in their schools. I think that is something that the government has to do to expand on the success of this program, is look at ways they can work with farmers, school board officials, and others in the community to bring healthy locally grown foods into the cafeterias of schools, and maybe even other public buildings in this Province, Mr. Speaker.

I think it is a very good program and a very good song as well. I am a little bit hoarse today or I would sing a little bit of it. It is a good program, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I too thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Congratulations to everyone involved in the wonderful Little Green Thumbs project. I have heard so much about it.

Everyone knows the best way to learn is by doing, and the best way to learn where food comes from is to grow some.

I remind government, besides educating our young people and youth, they also need to start building a stronger and more diverse industry aimed at food security for this Province. All people at all times need physical and economic access to adequate amounts of nutritious, safe, and culturally appropriate foods.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral Questions.

### Oral Questions

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

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

Government has repeatedly indicated they are delaying the release of reports and initiatives until this House closes. The minister admitted that this was specifically the case for the long-promised Population Growth Strategy.

We are also waiting on the Workforce Development Action Plan, a new Energy Plan, a diabetes registry, generic royalty regime, and any details on a \$30 million Vale Fund.

So I ask the Premier: Since you claim to be so open, claim to be transparent, why are you delaying these initiatives until this House is closed?

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

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

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

It is an interesting question from the member opposite today. I thank him for highlighting some of the very hard work that is being conducted on this side of the House by the members of our government, and also people in the public service, Mr. Speaker.

As I laid out here to the member opposite when I spoke in the Budget recently, I used several examples of very successful strategies that have been developed by our government, Mr. Speaker. Very successful strategies that are being executed by our government, and all of them are in the best interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. All of them are benefiting Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and we will continue to roll out those strategies. We continue to do the work.

We have a responsibility to govern, we have a responsibility to lead, we have a responsibility to set plans, develop plans, and to execute those plans, and we are continuing to do that.

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

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

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

Well, the Premier has forgotten that his responsibility is just not to write plans, his responsibility is to execute them. He claims to be open, claims to be transparent, yet we have so many plans that this Premier has yet to release. Now, there can only be two reasons for any government to delay these initiatives. One, they do not want to be questioned in this House of Assembly; or two, they want to release them closer to an election as part of their platform, using public service money as part of their PC election strategy.

So I ask the Premier: Which is it; are you avoiding the questions here, or using public service money for your election platform?

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

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

The hon. the Premier.

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Not at all.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, we continue to do work that we are required to do and is our obligation to do, and we are proud to do as a government, I can say to you. If the member opposite wants to talk about openness and transparency, I would be quite, quite pleased to have that debate with him –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible).

**PREMIER DAVIS:** I would, yes, absolutely, because that is the very member over there who hid who supported him in his leadership campaign, Mr. Speaker, gave money back so he would not have to provide it.

Mr. Speaker, they said they had twenty-five people at a dinner –

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** – they had twenty-five people at a dinner, Mr. Speaker. They released twenty-two of them, but not twenty-five, but only after significant pressure put on him by members of this House and by the general public who demanded to know where they are getting their funding from.

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Yes, I have had fundraisers, I tell the Opposition House Leader, I had fundraisers, and we have laid them all out publicly for everyone to see. They are out publicly right now, I tell you.

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

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

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

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

Well, the Premier must be too busy creating a plan for the coming weeks with Statoil or he has either cancelled his subscription to *The Telegram* because that has all been publicly released, I say to the Premier.



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

**MR. BALL:** Well in advance of when you released your leadership numbers, I say to the Premier.

On November 19, I introduced a private member's motion for the mandatory and immediate reporting by all government departments and agencies of the deaths of critical incidents involving children and youth. The Premier's mandate letter instructed the minister to introduce this legislation, but we have yet to see that as well.

I ask the Premier: Will this critical legislation be introduced in this House this session?

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

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

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

As the member opposite knows, we put great value in the work of the Child Advocate and other officers in the House as well. Mr. Speaker, they do very important work on behalf of the House of Assembly and on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We have had a considerable amount of work done in the area of critical incidents and reporting of those critical incidents to the Child and Youth Advocate, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you that even the Child and Youth Advocate, when I first met with her on this very matter – when she came in and talked to Cabinet, the Child and Youth Advocate could not tell us what a critical incident would be or how it would look.

I am glad to say that a number of departments have gone through an interactive process with the Child and Youth Advocate and her office. We are working towards an agreement and an understanding of what we would see as a critical incident, Mr. Speaker. That work continues, and I can tell you it is work that is important to us. We are continuing to have those discussions and conversations.

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

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

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

Well, the mandate letter clearly says that the most fundamental responsibility of society is to ensure the safety and well-being of our most vulnerable children and youth, but this government has ignored the Advocate's call for mandatory reporting, still waiting for the definition.

I ask the Premier: This legislation could have saved lives, why has it really been delayed for so long?

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is right, it is very important. It is a very important piece of legislation. It is also important that we get it right. We continue to work – I know the minister and I discuss it on a regular basis, on the progress of this.

It was important. It was important enough that it was included in the minister's mandate letter. I know the minister is working diligently. Staff and officials in his department are working diligently on this piece of work. We are continuing to make progress, I can assure you. As a matter of fact, he and I had a discussion on it today; just today is the most recent discussion we had on it.

We are going to continue to do that work, Mr. Speaker. We are still within our mandate. The execution and delivery of what has been listed in those mandate letters continues to be worked on, Mr. Speaker. It is part of the work that we do on a daily basis.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier was Minister of Transportation and Works for a full year during the time of the AG review. He also was Minister of Health which was one of the

departments involved. He was also a Premier for part of the time during which the AG conducted the review. Almost 70 per cent of the contracts looked at during the AG review received payments without approval.

I ask the Premier: While you were minister you allowed payments to be made by two consultants without Treasury Board approval, why?

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

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

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

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

What the hon. member is noting here is a process that has been ongoing for a number of decades. It is a process that is well covered, well researched, and due diligence being done on what we call a consultant's registry. What that entails, Mr. Speaker –

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** – is our staff assessing exactly those consultants that we have in our registry to show their ability to handle any project that we give to them. We go through a process that is in place.

There are some policies in place that we are reviewing. We take the work of the Auditor General very seriously. I am further reviewing exactly what policies best serve the people of this Province so that we can continue to move our economy forward and continue to get the professionals to do the job we need done.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** I can see the Premier's words, but being open and accountable are only just

words, Mr. Speaker. They are not actions I can assure you of that.

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, the AG has found that the request for Expressions of Interest and the direct appointment process does not provide a competitive, open, fair, or transparent procurement process.

I ask the Premier, and directly to the Premier: Have you during your time as Transportation Minister directly appointed consultants?

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

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

**MR. BRAZIL:** Mr. Speaker, Request for Proposals and requests of interest are all one of the tools we use. One of the other ones is the appointments that we do.

These are professionals who have an expertise and a specialty in a particular field. We want to ensure projects that are out there, be it around road safety, be it around life safety, be it around building of schools, water treatment, these type of things that are important to the people of this Province, get done on an expedited time frame and get done within the time frames and the budgets that we have allotted, Mr. Speaker. The Auditor General has noted that.

They were done in our time frames, done within our budget lines. What we have done in some cases is do change orders because we get a better economy of scale as we move forward on one part of the project and move to the other. It works better for the people and works better for the project.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, here we have a Premier who was the minister who did not

follow Treasury Board guidelines and will not stand up and be answerable to those decisions.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier said he accepted the findings of the AG. If you accept the findings, you accept that the process used did not provide fair competition and was not transparent.

I ask the Premier: Why did you directly appoint consultants while you were minister? Why did you allow it to happen while you were Premier also?

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

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

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

As I outlined at the beginning of this dialogue here, the process was in place, Mr. Speaker. It is this Administration that went back and reviewed how we better improve on that process. This Administration, and I and my officials have said we respect the Auditor General. We have had dialogue with the Auditor General. We have gone back, and he made two recommendations about how we improve and how we continue to do things in a manner that best fits the people of this Province. We are taking that under advisement.

I have gone back to look at the existing policy to see how we better implement what works for the people of this Province. We are about openness and transparency, Mr. Speaker, and all of those we contract work have the ability and the expertise to deliver to the people of this Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. EDMUNDS:** Mr. Speaker, the state of emergency relating to the loss of drinking water continues in the Inuit community of Hopedale. When I asked about this situation in this hon. House in March, the Minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs said that government was

fully committed to an assessment of the long-term needs of the community.

I ask the minister: Has the assessment been completed, and when can the residents of Hopedale expect a long-term solution to their drinking water shortage?

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we have been working diligently with the people of Hopedale, the mayor, the Minister of Labrador Affairs. This morning I spoke to the mayor. We (inaudible) the Municipal Capital Works projects to the issue they have over the winter. We have approved a Municipal Capital Works project of \$640,000 to address that immediate issue in terms of the reservoir.

Incidentally, now they are having trouble with particular leakage in terms of pipes and those types of things. We are working with Hopedale. They have a contractor coming soon to look at that and how we deal with the immediate concerns of leakage in their pipes. Then again, the \$640,000 project, we hope to get started soon and certainly work with the community, as we do with all communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, to deal with issues that they have at any particular time.

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

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

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

My question is about the long-term plan.

Mr. Speaker, the window to get some meaningful work done on the situation in Hopedale is already closing. It would be disastrous for the residents if a solution is not found this construction season.

I ask the minister: In the absence of a long-term solution, what contingency plan do you have in place for the residents of Hopedale?

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

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

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Mr. Speaker, any solution to any community is driven by that community. It is driven, oftentimes, by three levels of governments: municipality, provincial government, the federal government, and in this case certainly the Nunatsiavut Government as well. We are working collectively.

The community would make their priorities. Over the past number of years they have made priorities in regard to capital infrastructure. That is their choice to make.

What we have done this particular year in regard to issues that have arisen, we have stepped up and put over \$600,000 of taxpayers' money in this Province. We think it is a very important project. It should be done. We are going to partner to do it.

There are immediate concerns right now. We are working with them to address it. As we move forward with the community we will address long-term issues in that community and all communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, we understand government recently counterclaimed against a class-action lawsuit of approximately \$15 million undertaken by employees and former employees of the College of the North Atlantic's Qatar campus. Government's claim has now been dismissed by the Supreme Court.

I ask the minister: Why did you counterclaim against these individuals, given that in 2010 you and the college president both stated that the government had no legal or moral right to go after them?

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

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

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

It is our understanding that there has been an ongoing dispute between the College of the North Atlantic and employees at Qatar dating back to, I think, when I was probably Minister of Education five or six years ago. I will say to the member opposite, I am not fully aware of the details of the case. Obviously it is not involving government directly, it would be the college, which is an arm's-length entity of government. We will certainly endeavour to get some details and report back to the member.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, and speaking of details, I am still waiting on how much this government has spent in outside counsel fees which leads to my next question.

Can you advise how much government has spent on outside legal fees to file and lose this counterclaim?

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

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

**MR. KING:** Once again, Mr. Speaker, I do not have those details in front of me, but I can certainly get the details and report back to the House.

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

**MR. HILLIER:** Mr. Speaker, in his review of select government run long-term care facilities, the Auditor General discovered some residents were accidentally being underfed while others were being given the wrong supplements. I asked the minister last week whether the families of these residents were notified, but he avoided the question.

I will ask again: Were the families of these residents notified?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, in the recent report by the Auditor General numerous important issues were raised. I can assure you that the regional health authorities working closely with my department are following up on all those issues, especially those relating to our personal care homes in this Province and our long-term care facilities as well.

I can also assure the member opposite that our staff, who are well trained, they are professional people in our long-term care facilities, are in regular contact with families of residents of patients in those facilities. That is a normal course of practice when it comes to maintaining those important family connections for those in long-term care.

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

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

**MR. HILLIER:** Mr. Speaker, when we asked last week about a resident being fed half portions for seven full weeks, when that resident should have been receiving full portions, the minister questioned the mere suggestion that residents in any facilities are being neglected.

I ask the Minister of Health: Do you not consider it neglect to underfeed a resident from almost two months?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, any safety concerns that are raised in relation to the delivery of health care services of any kind in this Province are important and require full investigation. The Auditor General has raised a number of important issues. We are working very closely with the regional health authorities, with the

management and staff of our long-term care homes to address any concerns that exist.

When it comes to meeting dietary needs, there are all kinds of individual circumstances that are taken into consideration. We work closely with dietitians. We work closely with doctors and nurses in our long-term care facilities to ensure that the individual needs of residents are indeed met.

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

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

**MS DEMPSTER:** Mr. Speaker, government spends close to \$90 million per year on skills development funding for people eligible for EI. The Auditor General reported that 40 per cent of the files he reviewed did not include training updates to confirm attendance. He said government may be missing out on tuition refunds.

I ask the minister: How do you justify this gross mismanagement of the EI fund?

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, we certainly take the recommendations of the AG very seriously. In the climate of openness and investigation, the thing is to ensure a program that meets the needs of the people; but, more importantly, I think, is that things are being done correctly, people are availing of the programs that they need, and that process is in place within the department.

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

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

**MS DEMPSTER:** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a fund paid for by hard-working Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars spent but not tracked. The results of this mismanagement are clear. We have the highest

unemployment rate and nineteen consecutive months of year-over-year job losses.

I ask the minister: How can you expect to meet the needs of the labour market and tackle high unemployment rates when you continue spending without a plan?

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

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

**MR. JACKMAN:** Mr. Speaker, the member has gotten up in this House on several occasions now and raised the issue of where employment figures are. This Province recorded the highest rate of employment in 2013-2014. We recognize that there are dips because projects are winding down.

The thing about it is that we continue to offer programs that support workers, we have put out information about the labour market, job opportunities, and we will continue to do that to ensure that this Province has a strong economy, which it does, 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.

Several weeks ago I asked the Minister of Environment about oil leaks into the Port au Port bay from abandoned oil wells. He said he was on top of the situation and committed to having the matter investigated.

I ask the minister, or his alternate: Does he have a report completed yet, and when will it be released to the public?

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

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Mr. Speaker, I do not have the answer in front of me whether a report has been tabled, but I do know that officials have visited the site on a number of occasions – I

believe that they have visited there four times. I will get the answer with regard to if a report has been developed and present it to the House.

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

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

**MR. REID:** Mr. Speaker, government has already delayed action on this for years, and people living in the area are concerned about the environmental impacts.

I ask the minister: What representation has been made to the federal government on this issue, and when will these sites be cleaned up so this issue is finally addressed, Mr. Speaker?

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

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

**MR. GRANTER:** Mr. Speaker, the safety and well-being of all Newfoundlanders and Labradors is first and foremost for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in all departments, and I am sure in the minister's department with regard to environment.

Clean-up prevention for further discharge in the area that the hon. member speaks about, further environmental site assessment will take place and will be a topic of further work and discussion between our department and Environment and Conservation, as well as with the federal government.

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

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

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

**MR. FLYNN:** Mr. Speaker, in April, government announced again a plan to build the long-term care facility in Corner Brook, but this time it was going to be a private partnership.

I ask the minister: Is government committed to building a long-term care facility in Corner Brook through a private partnership in 2015?

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

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

**MR. KENT:** Mr. Speaker, we are not only committed to building the long-term care facility as part of the new West Coast hospital campus, but we are also committed to building an acute care hospital on the site as well. I have made it clear in this House on numerous occasions that we will award a contract for the construction of the long-term care facility later this year.

This fall we anticipate that contract being awarded. There will be other site work ongoing this year as well. The water treatment facility needs to be completed. There is various other infrastructure work that is required as we prepare to move towards full-blown construction. Progress continues and there will be a contract awarded later this year.

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

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

**MR. FLYNN:** Mr. Speaker, when the plan was announced, the Minister of Health said that in the coming weeks government would engage in a competitive selection process to find private long-term care providers to build the facility.

I ask the minister: When will government issue a Request for Proposals for the Corner Brook facility; this year, or will it be again next year?

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

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

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

I am glad the member opposite raised a very important matter. It is one that we have taken on head-on, Mr. Speaker, and looked for a way different than we have been accustomed to –

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** – here in this Province in creating projects. I also want to just to remind the member opposite as well the significant investments we have made in the West Coast part of our Province, Mr. Speaker, and the work that we have done for the Corner Brook region as well.

As you know the new city hall, which the City of Corner Brook is very proud of, is a brand new state-of-the-art facility for people on the West Coast, Mr. Speaker. We have done great partnerships –

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** We have done great partnerships with Kruger, Mr. Speaker, to ensure the continued operation, providing jobs and employment for the people of the West Coast. We have made investments in fire and emergency services and fire services out there, a new courthouse, and new roads like nowhere else in the Province. We will continue to make investments for the people on the West Coast.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters.

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

Several weeks ago in this House the minister stated that he has been unable to fill staff positions at a public long-term care facility in St. John's while the wait-list continues to grow. He stated that the private sector is better at recruitment and retention of staff than this government.

Maybe that is the real reason you are privatizing long-term care services, because you cannot manage recruitment and retention – and people wait; the unit opening is further delayed until this September.

I ask the Premier: People of the Province are fed up with your lack of planning, creating a crisis for them – seven years you have had to plan the staff and get them in place – when will these

critical beds be open so the people who need services will get them?

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** I will, I say to members opposite, I will. Because I know just a moment ago I talked about some of the great work we are doing on the West Coast and members opposite did not want to hear it. I had a job to hear myself think over here, Mr. Speaker, loud heckling me over across the way over there. I know it is important to them –

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** – and I know that progress is important to them. When we came in here a decade ago – the member opposite referenced years ago, and I will reference years ago. Because when we came in here there was a critical deficit of infrastructure in Newfoundland and Labrador. Our programs were deficient of the important needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We made billions of dollars in investments in infrastructure in this Province – billions, Mr. Speaker.

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** We have improved programs and services, Mr. Speaker. We have made greater improvements in so many more and such better improvements than any other Province in Canada. The successes are countless. The investments have been enormous, and the benefits to the people of the Province have been second to none.

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

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

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

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

This government has a terrible record for getting buildings like schools built on schedule. There

is something grossly wrong when it comes to getting tenders out in a timely fashion. The building of the replacement school for Virginia Park Elementary has been stalled for weeks.

I ask the Minister of Education: Why hasn't the tender for the next construction phase of the new school gone out as yet?

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member opposite asked –

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** I am glad the member opposite has asked the question, Mr. Speaker, because it really falls much in line with the last question asked by the Liberal member – because we have made significant investments in schools in this Province, there are no two ways about it. We have almost sixty new schools or significant expansions, extensions, renovations to schools in this Province in the last decade, Mr. Speaker, more than have ever been completed before.

A decade ago, Mr. Speaker, when we came into power, a daily conversation was about the mould in the schools and classrooms that were not fit to put children in. Today, we talk about the challenges in capacity, keeping up with the growth of our Province, keeping up with the growth of the Northeast Avalon, areas where things are happening. The economy is driving and jobs are available to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. That is growth of families.

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

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

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

Well, does the Premier have an answer as to why there was not planning done in a timely manner so that the bulk of the construction on



the new school in Virginia Park, on the exterior of the school, could have been done over the summer so that students will have a safer environment to return to in September? What about the safety of students, Premier?

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, the safety of students is a paramount consideration in these projects, I can assure you. When you make infrastructure investments, Mr. Speaker, they are for the benefit of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. When you make investments in schools, they are for the benefit of students, I say to the member opposite. They benefit students in classrooms. As I just said, we have such a tremendous amount of growth we have experienced in recent years, especially in certain areas of the Province. The Northeast Avalon is a great example.

The area where the member is referring to, she is quite well aware of the significant growth that has happened in that area. It is a challenge we have to keep up with that growth – that is a challenge, but it is not the challenge we had a decade ago when we had schools that were not fit to put students in. We do not hear those problems from people today. We continue to make economic –

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

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** Mr. Speaker, occupational accidents have almost doubled over the past year, according to the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour. Accidents abound, particularly for young workers.

I ask the minister, I ask this government: It is obvious there are rules for workplace safety and some inspections are occurring, we will admit that, but when do we see criminal negligence charges being laid against some of these violators?

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

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, investigations –

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

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Investigations regarding safe work practices occur in this Province on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker. There are thousands and thousands of inspections and directives that are issued on an annual basis. What is fortunate – and where the member erred slightly – is that the number of accidents in workplaces has gone down. It is lower today than it has been before, and that is because of partnerships that have created. We are a big fan over on this side of the House of partnerships and working with groups and organizations.

You look at some of the safety associations, like the Construction Safety Association who have led the charge to create safer work environments in the construction industry. They have done work beyond anyone's belief or comprehension. No one could have predicted the great success they have had.

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

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

The hon. the Member for St. John's East has time for a quick question.

**MR. MURPHY:** Mr. Speaker, why doesn't government publish any company's workplace safety reports or stop work orders? It sounds like a great idea. Three other provinces in this country do it.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Premier has time for a quick reply.

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, it is important that a number of actions be taken to

ensure that we reduce the risk to workers. Workers' safety is of paramount consideration for many groups. It is important that we do work together. We look at valuable ideas and give careful consideration to them.

One loss of life is too many. One injury in a workplace is too many. We will work together, and we accept all suggestions and recommendations to find ways to move forward to create safer work environments.

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

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

Time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

#### Tabling of Documents

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

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

Pursuant to section 26(5)(a) of the Financial Administration Act, I am tabling an Order-in-Council relating to the funding pre-commitments for the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further tabling of documents?

Notices of Motion.

#### Notices of Motion

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

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

I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill, An Act To Amend The Auditor General's Act, Bill 17.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further notices of motion?

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

**MR. S. COLLINS:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Child, Youth Advocate Act, Bill 16.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further notices?

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

#### Petitions

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

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

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

WHEREAS many communities in the District of Trinity – Bay de Verde do not have cellphone coverage; and

WHEREAS residents of the district require cellphone coverage to ensure their safety and communications abilities; and

WHEREAS cellphone coverage on many portions of the highway in the district is poor or non-existent;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to work with the appropriate agencies to provide cellphone coverage throughout the entire District of Trinity – Bay de Verde

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity this afternoon to enter this petition on behalf of the residents of the District of Trinity – Bay de Verde. This is a petition that I have entered many times here in this House in my short period of time here. It is an ongoing issue.

Every time I speak to people in the district, it is always a concern of theirs.

I guess I will do a little bit of a recap. You go back to the 911 system that the government implemented back in the later winter, early spring and the seventy-five cents that each of us now get to pay on our cellphone bills each and every month. Government still shows no willingness to act on the issue or lack of cellphone coverage in many parts of the Province.

Mr. Speaker, I hear it day in and day out from my colleagues: my colleague for St. Barbe, my colleague for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair, and my colleague for Burgeo – La Poile. There was an incident this winter in Burgeo – La Poile where we had people stuck on a highway.

Mr. Speaker, I look at Route 74, Route 80, and Route 70; and Route 70, being the Heart's Content Barrens. There are very treacherous conditions on the Heart's Content Barrens. It is the main transportation link between the district, or much of the district and the hub, which would be Carbonear where we go for medical services among other things, Mr. Speaker.

We also have four community-based ambulance services in the district. We have a community-based ambulance service in Heart's Delight – Islington, we have one in Winterton, one in Old Perlican, and another on the North Shore. These community-based ambulance services have all expressed to me a concern with the lack of cellphone coverage in the district.

Mr. Speaker, we look at economic development. We have the largest processing and harvesting fishing industries in this Province on the tip of the Bay de Verde Peninsula, when you look at the fish plants in Old Perlican and Bay de Verde, and the fish plant in Winterton, all producing shellfish.

Mr. Speaker, we look at the thousands of people employed, and still when people come in there is no way to use cellphones. All of the harvesters coming into Old Perlican and Bay de Verde, and other parts on much of the Bay de Verde Peninsula, little or no cellphone coverage.

Mr. Speaker, again, I call upon the government, I call upon the minister, to act on the cellphone coverage issue in our Province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS Route 510 from L'Anse au Clair to Red Bay is in deplorable condition and requires immediate upgrading; and

WHEREAS the condition of the highway is causing undue damage to vehicles using the highway and is a safety hazard for the travelling public; and

WHEREAS both residential and commercial traffic has increased dramatically with the opening of the Trans-Labrador Highway and increased development in Labrador; and

WHEREAS cold patching is no longer adequate as a means of repair;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to immediately allocate resources to Route 510 from L'Anse au Clair to Red Bay that allows for permanent resurfacing of the highway.

As in duty bound your petitioners will every pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have stood numerous, numerous times and especially over the ten weeks of this spring sitting, entering this petition on behalf of the residents who drive Route 510, specifically the residents of L'Anse au Clair to Red Bay.

The petition I am entering today, Mr. Speaker, is signed by residents of the community of

Forteau. That will definitely be one of the towns that have the worse pavement going through. Forteau would be one of the communities where you are swerving off the road and into private property. It is very, very dangerous for buses and for ambulances.

I have said it before, Mr. Speaker, and I will say it again, it is an absolute miracle that someone has not been killed. Traffic has greatly increased there. We see very, very heavy traffic going back and forth to Muskrat Falls. We are entering into the tourist season, and I just hope that nobody loses a life on this stretch of the road. I have called on the minister again and again, and I will call on him again today to tell the residents who drive Route 510: what is your plan, what is your list of priorities, where does that road sit on your list of priorities?

I will continue as long as the House is open, to enter this petition on behalf of the residents who drive Route 510, which is the main artery, I might add. We are not talking about side roads, community roads. It is the main artery that goes right through Labrador. It is in deplorable need. It is almost forty years old. It is long past its expiration date, and it is definitely in need of repair.

Thank you.

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

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

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

WHEREAS in 2011 the provincial government announced that it would lift the 8 per cent provincial portion of the HST on residential heat and light by introducing the Residential Energy Rebate; and

WHEREAS heat is a necessity of life and a health concern, particularly for seniors; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has projected oil prices to increase in the next five years;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to stop taxing home energy and to reverse its decision to abolish the Residential Energy Rebate.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the people of the Bonavista area, the Town of Bonavista, particularly, who certainly appeared to have gone out and gotten a few names on this particular petition to express their discontent with government's policy of taxing home energy. I think it was a gross disappointment on the people's part when they saw this come down in the Budget that the tax was coming back.

As much as we did not want the tax to come back, the people are highly upset again about the simple fact that government reversed their decision on not taxing home energy and decided to do it again. It may have been a need on the part of government to generate revenue, but they should not have gone back to the people of the Province and told them they were going to be taxing a necessity of life.

Mr. Speaker, we know how much money this puts back into the economy, number one. The simple fact of keeping the money where the money mattered, in the consumers' hands. We know as well the costs of home energy are projected to rise in the future. We certainly know that the price of electricity is going to be going up. We certainly know that the price of heating oil, as an example, is going to be going up. We certainly know, by looking at the numbers out there, that there has not been any kind of a strategic retreat in the price of home heating oil this year. We are still looking at, for example, in this area in St. John's roughly about eighty-four or eighty-five cents a litre.

Mr. Speaker, tax on top of that, on top of a 900-litre tank fill up is probably going to be – well it is obvious, I guess, in this particular case at \$1 a litre it is going to be \$90. That is quite a lot of money. When you are talking about constituents, when you are talking about seniors out there –

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

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

**MR. MURPHY:** – or people on a lower income, I think that we have an issue here as regards to people's well-being. I would like government to address this, to withdraw from their policy of taxing home energy, and give the money back to the people. Let's keep it back and keep it rotating in the economy.

Thank you very much, 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.

I have a petition today related to road conditions in the Bay St. George South area and especially the bridge across the Crabbes River that connects Jeffrey's and St. David's, Mr. Speaker. The petition reads:

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

WHEREAS the roads in the Bay St. George area are in much need of repair in many places; and

WHEREAS the bridge at the mouth of Crabbes River has continued to deteriorate and is creating an unsafe situation; and

WHEREAS there is significant danger specifically related to children on a school bus which have to cross this bridge;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to repair roads in the Bay St. George South area and the bridge on Crabbes River.

Mr. Speaker, this petition came together very quickly. In a matter of four or five days, parents in the area put together a petition and circulated it. This petition, I estimate, has about 400 or so signatures on it. People are very concerned about the state of this bridge and the entrance

and exit from the bridge. There is a big dip there and it is causing a lot of problems. The road seems to be sinking away from the bridge and there is a big dip there.

I could talk about the many roads in the area that need repair. I could talk about Fortune's Road in Jeffrey's. I could talk about the Highlands Road or the Station Road in Robinsons as well. These are all in need of much repair.

The bridge between Jeffrey's and St. David's was built in the 1980s while Ron Dawe was Minister of Transportation. The bridge has deteriorated a bit since then. At this point, parents of school-aged children are really concerned about their children having to cross this bridge. They are worried that it is going to get worse. It is at the point where it needs to be repaired now before the school opens. They are concerned that this bridge will become worse and that children will not be able to use this route to get to school and be safe.

It is a very serious situation with this bridge. It is recognized in the area as being a problem. With tourists coming to the area at this time, I think it poses a real serious safety problem as well. It is an issue that needs to be addressed, Mr. Speaker, and I call upon the Minister of Transportation to have people in his department look at this matter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

WHEREAS Route 2 on the Conception Bay South Bypass Road is the second busiest highway in the Province; and

WHEREAS we must ensure the safety of the residents who use the access road, especially when driving at night; and

WHEREAS brush clearing can reduce the risk to drivers from the local moose population;

We, the undersigned, petition the House of Assembly to urge the government to allocate funding to include brush clearing for the Manuels Access Road.

Mr. Speaker, this is six or eight times I have brought this petition forward. Basically we are asking for moose control from what we refer to as Weir's Pit to Fowler's Road. There is an area there with a lake and a lot of wooded area around it, and it is an area where moose come out on the highway.

Mr. Speaker, as I said I have brought this forward several times, and I have taken different themes as I have brought it forward. I brought it forward from a point of view of the Premier's district. I have brought it forward on behalf of people from the Premier's district, because they cannot seem to get him to act on it.

I have brought it forward from the point of view that the Minister of Transportation and Works at one point in time said perhaps we will get you into the next tender. Well, when the next tender came out, Mr. Speaker, there were nine contracts in the tender; all nine going to government districts. Nothing to Opposition districts, nothing to Third Party districts, all going to government districts.

Mr. Speaker, I have brought this forward from the point of view of the last contract that was completed goes down Pitts Memorial Drive from the Trans-Canada Highway down to Kilbride and for the most part, it is going through an urban area – not to suggest that moose do not come out in an urban area; but, in many cases, this particular contract goes by fences so the moose are not jumping over the fence onto the highway, Mr. Speaker.

There are a whole bunch of different ways of looking at this. To date, I have not been successful in getting any help from the Minister of Transportation, but we still know that there are 20,000 cars on that road on a given day. We know there are moose in that area as well.

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

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

**MR. HILLIER:** Mr. Speaker, I ask on behalf of the people in the District of Conception Bay South that this area be put in the next tender document.

Thank you very much.

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

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

I am happy to enter this petition. To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS the applied behavioural analysis, ABA program, for children with autism is funded by the Department of Health and Community Services; and

WHEREAS the program was introduced in 1999 and is in serious need of revision; and

WHEREAS with the advances made in early diagnosis of autism, the number of high-functioning children being diagnosed has drastically increased; and

WHEREAS the current ABA program does not take into account that children on the autism spectrum are involved in many educational, recreational, and social activities outside of the home; and

WHEREAS the current ABA program requires that the therapist be accompanied at all times by another adult, which is not only inconvenient but can be quite costly when a parent is unable to be that second adult due to work or other obligations; and

WHEREAS the current ABA program ends at Grade 3 but autism is a lifelong social disorder;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House to urge the government to implement a review of the ABA program with considerations given to alternate programming options, and to extend autism programming beyond Grade 3.

Mr. Speaker, this is very likely the last petition I will have an opportunity to enter into this House since I first started entering them four years ago. I am happy if this is my last one, I am entering it on a cause that is significant to people all over this Province and one that I have been questioning this government on and fighting this government on for four years, and that is the issue of autism in this Province.

The fact is this petition was based on talking to parents all over this Province who are saying the same thing: We need to revisit what we are doing here. We need to look at it again. Government, as we know, on many occasions they will talk about the investment they have made; but, like an investment, they are not talking about the outcomes. Any investment, you want to see what the end result is, and we are not seeing it here.

We have addressed it in this House – our leader did – on a number of occasions including today, that there are a number of strategies and plans that I am sure this government will unveil in the coming weeks and months as we get ready for an election. I hope this is one of the ones that they do.

We all know why they are doing it. They have delayed doing what should be done. They have delayed putting it out there because they want to hide from the questioning they will get in the House. If this is one of the ones they will look at between now and the election, I would be happy to see it because people have been calling for it for years. It is time that this government started listening. If they do not, the next government will.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

WHEREAS Newfoundland and Labrador has the greatest percentage of the workforce earning the provincial minimum wage in Canada, with women, youth, and those from rural areas making up a disproportionate number of these workers; and

WHEREAS the minimum wage is inadequate and does not provide enough money for the necessities of life because a person earning minimum wage working forty hours a week makes \$20,800 a year, which is barely above the low income cut off of \$19,496, and a working couple with two children are also close to low income; and

WHEREAS in 2012 the Minimum Wage Review Committee recommended an increase in the minimum wage in 2013 to reflect the loss of purchasing power since 2010, and an annual adjustment beginning in 2014 to reflect the Consumer Price Index; and

WHEREAS the provincial government, instead, legislated two twenty-five cent increases, one in October 2014 and one in October 2015 with no indexing; and

WHEREAS other provinces and territories are continuing to raise the minimum wage, and six now have a higher minimum wage than Newfoundland and Labrador;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to legislate an increase in the minimum wage in 2014 to reflect the loss of purchasing power since 2010 and make an annual adjustment to the minimum wage beginning in 2015 to reflect the Consumer Price Index.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I am very pleased to stand today and to present this petition from residents in Mount Pearl, people who are hard-working people, many of whom are working for minimum wage, especially in the retail sector. This is one of the concerns that I have – this government this year in its Budget says that they are concerned about poverty and their looking at a strategy, a continued strategy around poverty reduction, but

the only way to reduce poverty is to put more money in people's hands.

This fall, even though the minimum wage will go up by twenty-five cents, a whopping twenty-five cents, this government at the same time is adding extra burden to people's backs; number one, by putting back the provincial tax on home heating; by raising the general GST, the provincial side of the GST, putting that up as well.

At the same time that they are putting extra burden on people, they are only giving them twenty-five cents more an hour for those who are working minimum wage. There is no consistency, Mr. Speaker, in this government's policies. They cannot say that they are concerned about people being poor while at the same time –

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

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

**MS MICHAEL:** – keeping them in poverty.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Orders of the Day.

### Orders of the Day

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

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

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I move pursuant to Standing Order 11 that the House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. today, Tuesday, June 23, 2015.

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

The motion is that this House not adjourn at 5:30 p.m. today.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

At this time I would like to call from the Order Paper, number 2, third reading of a bill.

So moved by me, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that An Act To Amend The Teachers' Pensions Act, Bill 15, be now read a third time.

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

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion that Bill 15, An Act To Amend The Teachers' Pensions Act, be now read a third time?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Teachers' Pensions Act. (Bill 15)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Teachers' Pensions Act," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 15)

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

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

At this time I would like to move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to Consider Certain Resolutions Respecting the Imposition of Taxes on Income, Bill 6.



**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the House now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 6.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

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

### Committee of the Whole

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

We are now debating the related resolution and Bill 6.

### Resolution

"That it is expedient to bring in a measure respecting the imposition of taxes on income."

**CHAIR:** Shall the resolution carry?

The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

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

Throughout this whole Budget debate, what we are seeing today in the House – there are two resolutions we are going to be debating in the House today. For those who are listening, the Budget itself has been passed by this Legislature. In any Budget, there are a number of initiatives that need to be actioned after the Budget is passed in the House.

Two of the things we are going to be doing today are dealing with resolutions that give effect. They are enabling legislation really. These pieces of legislation give effect to the announcements that were made in the Budget and the fact that the general fiscal policies of government have been approved by this House. Embedded in those fiscal policies are the actions we are taking through these two bills that we are dealing with today.

The first one deals with Bill 6. Bill 6 is an Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, 2000. I just want to provide some commentary, Mr. Chair, of what the bill actually does. One of the things we have said repeatedly – and going back to 2003 in fact when this Administration formed government – we wanted to make sure Newfoundland and Labrador had a competitive tax regime.

We knew we were not going to be the best in the entire country. We knew we were not going to have necessarily the lowest taxes in the entire country, but we wanted to make sure our income tax was competitive. The other thing we wanted to do through this process here, and in Bill 6, that is what it actually does. We wanted to make sure our income tax was progressive, and that we had a distribution of taxation across various income levels.

So one of the things we have tried to do here is to maintain true to that intent that we have been saying since 2003, we need to be competitive. We are bringing in some changes to the income tax structure in Newfoundland and Labrador, while at the same time our personal income tax remains the lowest in Atlantic Canada. We have the third-lowest top marginal tax rate in Canada, behind only Alberta and Saskatchewan. Those two things are really important, Mr. Chair. If you look at Atlantic Canada provinces, we are still the lowest in Atlantic Canada when it comes to personal income tax.

When it comes to being competitive, trying to attract the talent we need to help advance our economy – the kind of talent our employers need to be able to attract, people who are well-paid individuals, and we are competing for that talent worldwide. When people start looking at recruiting or able to attract highly paid individuals to come to the Province, one of the big things they consider is your marginal tax rate.

So we want to make sure we are still competitive. This change makes us slightly different. We were the second and now we are the third. Really, we are in good company. It is only if they go to Saskatchewan or Alberta will they enjoy – high income individuals – a better tax rate than they will here. What we are trying to do here is to make the tax, maintain it as

being the best in Atlantic Canada, but maintain ourselves to be competitive.

What we are doing, Mr. Chair, is we are introducing two new tax brackets for tax payables by individuals, and that does a couple of things. It makes sure that we remain competitive, as I have said, but also makes our tax system much more progressive.

I want to just, if I could with the indulgence of the House. There has been much discussion in recent past around: Who comments on our tax system? What are some of the credible references we use? Who are some of the experts who pass judgement and express an opinion about how well we are doing, how well we are performing, how well the economy of the Province is doing. One of those individuals is Dr. Wade Locke from the university.

There is a research team he led, Mr. Chair, that did a review. The report he released is entitled, Promoting Tax Fairness in Newfoundland and Labrador Through The Personal Income Tax System. If I could just read one particular excerpt from that report which I think speaks to the success of the changes we have made in making sure that our tax system remains progressive.

Let me quote, both the tax and transfer system has made our system progressive. It is interesting to note, however, that, "In terms of reducing income inequality associated with market incomes, government, transfers seemed to play a greater role than taxes." It does appear that there may be room for changing the income tax rates to improve the progressivity of the income tax system and improve the perceived equity associated with publicly funding goods and services within Newfoundland and Labrador.

That is the end of the quote, Mr. Chair. What it speaks to, it is suggesting that if we were to add a couple of new brackets as we have done, we would add to the agenda that we have to ensure our tax is a progressive system. So what we have done to assist with that, we are making an amendment to section 7 of the Income Tax Act 2000 and we will be amending that to include a fourth bracket. That fourth bracket will have a rate of 14.3 per cent for taxable income between \$125,000 and \$175,000. Then we will be

introducing a fifth tax bracket where the rate will be 15.3 per cent for taxable income greater than \$175,000.

Mr. Chair, these changes will come into effect as of January 2015. Therefore when you file your return sometime in early 2016 for your 2015 tax year, those new rates will apply. Mr. Chair, one of the things, as I have said, this still positions us, though, to have the lowest income tax structure in Atlantic Canada and competitively with the rest of the country on a marginal tax basis.

The second amendment to be included in this bill, Mr. Chair, speaks to the financial capital tax. Right now there is a rate of 4 per cent that is applied on taxable paid up capital allocated to Newfoundland and Labrador by banks and loan and trust companies. For companies that have total capital less than \$10 million, the first \$5 million is exempt. As a part of our government's approach to ensure that we have a fair tax system, we are now making a change. In Budget 2015, we are proposing to increase that financial corporation capital tax from the current 4 per cent to 5 per cent effective April 1, 2015.

Now, Mr. Chair, this will only affect banks and loans and trust companies that operate within Newfoundland and Labrador. Under Part II of the Income Tax Act, paragraph 66.2(1), the act presently sets a rate of 4 per cent. We will be making that amendment to be effective in this tax year.

This tax goes back a number of years. It goes back to the early 1980s when it was first introduced, but there has not been any change to this tax since the mid-1990s. So we believe that in today's environment with the earnings of our major financial corporations and their ability to make a fair contribution to the tax revenue stream of the Province, we believe that this is a fair and equitable tax for their operations in Newfoundland and Labrador. We do not anticipate that this will have any impact at all on their ability to operate in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Chair, when you consider when we talked about taxation, if you think about some of the other measures that we have done, we have taken measures that we have talked about in this

House, through this Budget process, then we provide relief –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

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

I appreciate the members' attention, obviously, but their excitement about our Budget has got them a little bit anxious today and they want to prematurely contribute to the debate, but I am sure there will be lots of opportunity for them to stand up and congratulate us on a wonderful Budget.

Mr. Chair, as we talk about the tax structure and some of the changes that we have made – and I just talked about how we have introduced a fourth and a fifth bracket for those people who earn on the higher end of the income spectrum; but, on the other side, we have taken some significant measures to make sure that people who are on lower income levels have a significant tax relief in this Province.

That is why in taxation year 2015, as a result of changes that occur automatically as a result of indexing, we now find ourselves in a spot in this Province where any individual, on an individual basis, whose income is at \$18,955 per year, they will not pay any provincial income tax to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Families who have an income of \$32,052, they too will not pay any personal income tax in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I say, Mr. Chair, as we have made some adjustments for the taxpayers on the higher end income levels, we have also continued to maintain and enhance benefits for individuals on the lower income. When you consider what we have done with the Seniors' Benefits, right now that is a program is also indexed; and seniors who find themselves in income levels similar to that, this year's contribution to that fund is some \$42 million.

Seniors, for example, who find themselves at that same income level, or similar income levels, will be entitled to \$1,059 as a one-time payment in the fall of the year. Because if you combine the Seniors' Benefit of \$1,059, combine the low-

income threshold for the non-payment of personal income tax in Newfoundland and Labrador and just think about the adjustment we have just made for the HST rebate, taking the income threshold from \$15,000 to \$30,000, these are the kinds of measures that we have done, embedded in our tax structure, embedded in our benefit program to ensure individuals who are on the low-income levels receive maximum tax relief from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and acknowledge their fiscal reality. While, at the same time, taking those individuals who make the 125's, 150's, 170's and beyond, take those individuals, who are in a position – as much as we have to have a competitive tax system, they are in a much better position to make a greater contribution to the provincial revenues than other individuals on the low income.

So these amendments that we are introducing in Bill 6, I think, Mr. Chair, is consistent with the philosophy and consistent with the approach that we have taken since 2003; and that is to maintain a competitive tax system, to make sure that we are the lowest personal income tax brackets in Atlantic Canada, to make sure that we are competitive with the rest of the country on a marginal tax basis, and to make sure that our tax system is progressing, so that individuals who are in the position to make a greater contribution do just that.

The addition of two new tax brackets for higher income earners is something new in this Budget. It is something that our government acknowledges that makes our tax system much more progressive than it was. It also acknowledges those individuals at the higher income levels need to make a greater contribution to the revenue stream to the Province.

We have also recognized that banks, trust companies, and loan companies that have the fiscal capacity need to pay a greater share of their revenue that they earn on the assets in this Province. They need to contribute a greater share of their revenue to the provincial coffers, and therefore contributing to improving social programs and the infrastructure that exists in this Province.

I say, Mr. Chair, with those quick introductions to Bill 6 and an introduction to what we are trying to do here, I will take my seat and invite members of the Opposition and others to make a contribution to this debate this afternoon.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters.

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

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

It certainly is a pleasure to stand in the House today, as it is every day, on behalf of the constituents of the District of Virginia Waters, soon to be renamed the District of Windsor Lake. I look forward continuing to serve the people of my district.

For those watching at home, as the minister indicated, the bill we are debating today is what is referenced as a money bill. For those of us in the House, we get the privilege, when a money bill is being debated, to speak to a variety of topics.

As the Opposition member responsible for the area of finance, I have certainly spoken at length about the minister's Budget and this government's Budget. As we all anticipate that government will today close the House and debate will stop, it will be important for those of us who do have the opportunity to stand up and speak one last time before the House closes to make sure that we talk about the really important things.

One of the things that continues to come up from constituents in my district and from constituents from many of the districts that we represent is a grave concern the economy. We have repeatedly asked questions in this House of Assembly around the nineteen consecutive months of job losses, year over year job losses that people of the Province are facing. I know in my own district I spoke to people over the last six months who have been impacted not only by job losses here on the Northeast Avalon and positions they were working on in the oil industry but also those who were working in Western Canada, those who were working in non-oil related positions who have seen the impact of the economy, the recession that the

minister has identified we are in the middle of. There is no doubt that many people of the Province have a very clear expectation of how they feel government should be involved in supporting the economy.

There are lots of questions about this government's continued focus on the oil sector which is an important revenue contributor to the provincial coffers but it is not a contributor to jobs en masse. It only represents about 4 per cent of the jobs that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians work in in our Province. That is why so many people in the Province, so many people from community leaders, to individuals, to business leaders are talking about the importance of diversifying the economy.

Mr. Chair, small- and medium-businesses are truly the ones that employ a significant portion of our population. As was mentioned in this House already, about 40 per cent. Many of those small- and medium-businesses are talking about the benefits agreements that have been under the guidance of this particular government over the last decade. They have a lot of questions about whether or not those benefits agreements are actually impacting them in a positive way.

There are also concerns about how our shrinking population and our aging population is going to impact the transfer of businesses from one generation to the other, and whether or not businesses will be forced to close as opposed to finding young entrepreneurs who are eager to take on the risk of a new enterprise.

Mr. Chair, we also hear regularly that individuals and business leaders who are interested in growing and diversifying the economy are frustrated with how government reacts to them, how government interfaces with them, and how there is a lack of an appreciation of how much effort goes into diversifying the economy. This government has been happy to sit back and rest on its laurels, perceived laurels, about growing a sector that really was about putting money into the provincial coffers as opposed to creating opportunities for young people and for families throughout our Province.

I found in Question Period today as the Leader of the Opposition asked a lot of questions

around the plans that this government has continued to talk about are coming, that they are going to do, one of the ones that was mentioned was the workforce development. This is a new plan that this government has started to talk about in the last number of weeks. This workforce development plan certainly – I do not think a lot of people in the Province have a lot of confidence that this government can actually develop a workforce development plan.

When we see situations like what has been reported to be the largest industrial development period in Labrador and this government cannot find one occupational health and safety officer to go up and make sure those employees and those workers are safe, and that there is an on the ground presence around safety. The questions I asked about in the House earlier today. We have a long-term care facility – the Premier takes great pride in talking about buildings. Well, I would remind him it is not buildings that take care of people; it is people who take care of people.

Quite frankly, the fact that this government continues to talk about investments in infrastructure without addressing the real issues of services that are not being provided. Like the long-term care facility that has a unit that is currently empty, while we have waiting lists and people backed up, and bed blockages happening at the Health Sciences Centre I think offends people. It certainly comes up on the doorsteps and in community town hall discussions when I am working in my district, as it does with many of my colleagues on this side of the House.

When we talk about the economy, the most important thing in an economy, quite frankly, is whether people have jobs. This government is not going to fix the population challenges unless they address that. The recession we are in is going to make it a whole lot tougher for people to choose to live here and to stay in this Province because it is going to make it tougher for them to find the resources to support their family.

I, along with many of my colleagues on this side of the House, and I would argue many people in the community, believe the battle for the future of our Province and the sustainability of our Province is on now. In the coming months and

weeks people of the Province will be asked very clearly to decide which party in this Province they believe are going to be the best to lead them through this difficult transition.

Mr. Chair, I know my time is rapidly cluing up. I want to make sure that I make the point to listen to the debate in this House of Assembly and listen to the members opposite and the government talk about major oil deals, in the absence of talking about a continuous improvement and an evolution of our benefits plan is quite worrisome to many people in this Province.

Extractors who want to come here and make money from our resources, we cannot be satisfied to only talk about benefits agreements. Quite frankly, we must insist that benefits be derived not just for the provincial coffers, but more importantly for the people of the Province. Mr. Chair, we need to guard against those resourceful global companies that are, quite frankly, motivated by shareholder value that will endeavour to prey on the weaknesses such as perceived productivity issues, a shrinking economy, and a declining population.

Mr. Chair, we must tackle the misconception that our businesses and our workforce are unproductive. Perceptions of, it cannot be done in Newfoundland, for example. We must celebrate the incredible resilience of a people who know one way of doing things and that is with hard work. We must advance our economy and not be satisfied with a narrow view of what drives economic activity. Every region of this Province deserves the attention of a government that is focused on all of the population and not just simply on the revenue that the Province brings in.

Mr. Chair, we must address the population. This Budget certainly is not one that is resonating with people of the Province when it comes to addressing the population. Quite frankly, we must entrust this work to happen with people who do not make excuses. Most people I talk to are fed up with this government's continuing habit of making excuses for their inability to get things done. The time for excuses is over and the time for action is now. The time for leadership and compassion, and more importantly, the time for results, is now.

Mr. Chair, I look forward to joining the Leader of the Official Opposition, our caucus, and do you know what, many, many people around this Province who know that better is possible and who know that better is achievable, and more importantly, better is a must. Not because we want to win a political battle, but rather because we want to ensure the survival of our beautiful Province for the 25,000 kids – I just want you to think about that for a second – between the ages of zero and four who are currently in our Province, and for the over 60,000 school-age kids. Quite frankly, it is those two groups, those 85,000 kids who are the real future of our Province.

Mr. Chair, as long as this government will allow this House to remain open, I will continue to speak about this Budget and the issues that people in my district are presenting to me, just like every member on this side of the House will continue to do that.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Bonavista North.

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

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

It is certainly great to stand up and speak today as maybe a final chance to speak in this term to represent the good people of the District of Bonavista North. As the opposite member just spoke, her district is transitioning and the one I hope to represent is transitioning as well. As we move into the coming months, I look forward and am eager to reacquaint with some of the people from the parts of the district that will be included.

The matter at hand today, Mr. Chair, is to stand here and offer a few comments about Bill 6, which will amend the Income Tax Act in order to implement a couple of tax measures that we feel in the plan of this government is necessary with this year's Budget. As our minister so aptly said when he stood up, the balance of looking at the broad spectrum of incomes in our Province and all of the other aspects that we

might have to raise revenues, these acts now, after the Budget has been passed, is necessary in order to fulfill the promise or the balance of that Budget.

If I may for a couple of moments, I just want to speak to the both of these. The income tax rate increase is one of these things that the minister alluded to. Basically, he referred to our tax regime as being very competitive and progressive. If this income tax rate that we are talking about applying today – if your income is less than \$125,000 per year, there is no impact on you. There is absolutely no impact on you. The addition of a fourth and a fifth rate to our income tax regime would mean that if you are earning between \$125,000 and \$175,000, then you are in a 14.3 per cent income tax rate.

Just after the Budget came out, I was talking to a few individuals who may have been in that rate. They were very scared about what was happening in the Budget and did not realize that when you get down to, as grandfather would say, the brass tacks and analyze it all, what happened is this increase for someone who is earning between \$125,000 and \$150,000 a year, the tax payable on that extra \$25,000 is going to be a difference of \$250 in their pockets or taken out of their pocket for this. Again, when they realize, in that amount, for someone who is in that bracket, that is a very modest hit.

The fifth rate at 15.3 per cent, which would be implemented for taxable income over \$175,000, if you are between \$175,000 and \$200,000, the hit on your pocketbook is going to be able \$1,000 per year. The hit for someone in that category, Mr. Chair, is not going to be felt as great as the protection we have offered to the lower income whereby the raising of it and the benefits that we have created over the years, such that now – as the minister alluded to – if your income is in the \$32,000 plateau, you pay no taxes at all, Mr. Chair. That has risen drastically in the years that we have been in office.

These changes maintain Newfoundland and Labrador competitiveness. We are still the lowest in Atlantic Canada and still in the third progressive rate of personal income tax in all of the country.

The second particular part of this is related to the financial capital tax as it is applied. Most provinces and federal governments have capital taxes on financial institutions. It also has capital tax on banks and loans and trust companies with permanent establishments in our Province; however, the rate that is being applied now is for people who have taxable paid up capital in Newfoundland and Labrador, all capital stock and other things. Really it is applied after \$5 million because the first \$5 million you have is exempt from taxes, Mr. Chair. What makes a need for this change is that this particular tax has not changed for the last nineteen years; 1996 was the last time this tax had actually changed. So in review for this year, it was something that was probably necessary.

Just to rebut a comment that my hon. member just made in the sense of trying to be critical about this government and the fact that we have not diversified the economy. It would make you think – and this comment was told to me just this last weekend when I was home and talking to people. If you would listen to the Opposition parties, you would think the oil is going to be gone tomorrow. This gentleman told me that. He said: You would think the oil is going to be gone tomorrow and what have we done.

Well, in looking at the potential for oil and where it goes, it is still going to be around for years to come and we have to take whatever chance we have to diversify. We depend on it in the beginning and as we grow, much like Norway or much like other countries that have had oil, after you get involved for fifteen or twenty years, you become major players and you are to the point that you can actually step up the idea.

The very first and probably biggest project that we are doing to diversify this economy, to take us away from the oil, is Muskrat Falls. All we get is comments and jeers and whatever from people opposing that and not really accepting the fact that that is a big diversification project for this Province, to take us away from the oil.

Also, Mr. Chair, in other ways with smaller projects, either with private business – I know through private enterprise in my district, there have been numerous commercial entities that have taken or have applied for grants or supports

or loans from this Province to help diversify, be it in the fishery or other aspects of our Province. There are also not-for-profit groups that receive capital investment from this government to help in the tourist industry and whatever.

We all agree that the basis of most of our economy and our Province is on small business – your megaprojects are going to have great things to do, but it is your small business that leads for the majority of this Province to keep our industry and our economy flowing. Through all of this, we have had projects here.

You think about the innovation projects that have been done in the last two or three years with the SubC group in Clarenville, you have the other guys who are making the snowboards in Western Newfoundland, and all these groups. As we invest in projects like that, we help diversify our economy.

Now, Mr. Chair, just for the last minute or two, to change. Four years ago I stood here and I completed my maiden speech. At that time I intentionally stood up and tried not to have a script. I had a few notes and I did something that I felt was necessary to go through. When you take a chance such as that on an idea like your maiden speech or whatever – I do not know what this speech may be called. If my first speech was the maiden speech, I do not know what term is referred to for this one, but in my maiden speech I forgot something very important. I stood up and I thanked family and friends and everything, but I forgot what I consider my personal maiden, my spouse. I thanked everybody as we went through, and I have been four years trying to think of a way to make that up to the point that I have been in this House, I have been living a dream, I have had to pinch myself – but I thank her immensely, I thank Jocelyn for the support.

I understand, Mr. Chair, that I have also been given – I do not know what term – the green light to continue. I guess that is a great thanks as well. When I look at it, maybe it is not a green light, it is not a red light, it is not a yellow or orange light, but it is a blue light to continue on; because as long as the blue light is in the distance and still continues to fire the dreams of Newfoundlanders like me, I feel that we are strong on this foundation.

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

**MR. CROSS:** So I take my seat today proud of what I have tried to do in the last four years, and hope that the great people of Bonavista North will let me continue for a few more in the new District of Fogo Island – Cape Freels. It is all in a name, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for the opportunity.

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

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

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

I would like to take the next ten minutes to recount where we have come or not come over the past twelve years. Let's look at where we were, where we have been, where we are, and how we got there.

Mr. Chair, twelve years ago we had three paper mills. Now we have one paper mill and an environmental disaster zone expropriated by this government. Had this government not been so careless to expropriate the Grand Falls mill, we would not have an environmental disaster zone that belonged to us. Successive owners were responsible and we are the final owner.

Nevertheless, we went out and spent a ton of money on legal fees in order to find out that, yes, it is our environmental disaster zone in Grand Falls. We still do not have a price tag. We do not know if we are going to restore it to a brown zone. We certainly are not going to restore it to a green zone, but it is an environmental disaster zone.

Mr. Chair, maybe we should turn to the fishery. What has this government done in the last dozen years for the fishery? They took over a billion-dollar fishery and they have managed to get it down to \$900 million in twelve years. That is no increase. How do you get a \$900 million fishery under this government? You start with a billion-dollar fishery, wait a dozen years, and all of a sudden you have less than you started with.

Maybe they have better results in education, because in education when our struggling Newfoundland and Labrador government was –

when we struggled in 2003, we were ranked midway in Canada under the program for international assessment scores. We were midway, and now we are struggling to stay out of last place. That was in math, that was in science, and that was in numeracy for fifteen year olds. We have gone from middle of the pack, a have-not Province, to struggling – and I say struggling instead of last place – as a have Province.

Maybe we did better in health, because health is certainly one of the most important issues in our Province. After a dozen years we find we have the unhealthiest population in Canada, in spite of billions of dollars spent on health care. Mr. Chair, in short we have the most expensive, least accountable government, which keeps on saying whenever you challenge them on an issue like education, or on health, or on any issue at all, they say, we have spent and we have spent and we have spent. The Auditor General agrees, yes, you have spent, and you have spent, and you have spent. Then he points out lack of controls, lack of oversight, and lack of accountability.

The Auditor General concludes, oh, but money sent out the door is not a measure of success. All we have seen for a dozen years is money sent out the door.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** That is a good one. Say it again, Jim.

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Money sent out the door is not a measure of success. So how do we get there?

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

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Mr. Chair, let's look at 2003 to know where we are because if you do not know where you have been you will only repeat history, which is what we seem to be doing with this government with spending.

In 2003, when this government took office we were in rough shape, no doubt about it. Everything they can say about 2003 was pretty much true, all the deficits, the infrastructure issues, and this government had no plan except put the government back on track financially. That would be prudent, conservative, fiscal policy if they were to do it.



They had no plan except to get the government back on track, get our Province back on track financially. So what did they do? They cut corners. They jacked up fees. Everybody remembers ambulance fees going up, a whole range of – scores and perhaps even hundreds of fees going up.

They consolidated health boards. They consolidated education boards, and they froze wages. All of the things that they said. Well, they did not actually say what they would do because back then in 2003 the only words I can remember hearing from the government in the pre-2003 campaign was, we do not know what we are going to do. We are in such a mess, we have to get in and take a look at the books. We have to get in and take a look at the books before we can tell you what we will do.

Then shortly after this government took office something happened. We got oil. Well, we had the oil all along but we got the oil money. The oil revenues started to roll in. Based on the work and sacrifice of people before them, based on nothing they did, the money started to roll in and roll in and roll in.

Mr. Chair, the money rolled in, almost like capelin rolling in on the beach. This is June, and I imagine in some places the capelin are still rolling. They are rolling, the little silvery things. This is how the money literally rolled in to this Province, the oil money, but the government still did not have a plan. The only plan they had in the first place was how to save money. Now they did not need to save money. They did not need to save money anymore. The one issue of government, from 2003, they did not have that issue anymore because they had money. They had more money than they knew what to do with, and they spent and they spent and they spent.

Mr. Chair, they took over a government that struggled to survive on a \$4 billion Budget in 2002 of the Grimes government. Now we have a government that struggles on an \$8 billion Budget. Twelve years later, with twice as much money as when they took over, we have a government that struggles on \$8 billion and still is forced to borrow and to borrow and to borrow.

Why does it borrow? It borrows to feed a bloated, unaccountable bureaucracy, all the while neglecting our people; all the while neglecting the people of this Province. We have double the rate of unemployment of our nation. We are an oil dependent, single-issue government that has done little over the past twelve years to diversity our economy. I say they have done very little to diversify our economy.

Mr. Chair, the government that pats itself on the back and points to stacks of cancelled cheques. Cheques that included \$20 billion or more of oil royalties and mineral royalties, created by a previous government and spent by this government with no new sources of wealth to replace the money spent.

Mr. Chair, the people in our Province are in despair with this government. I know because I travelled all over the Province in recent times and previously. They are absolutely in despair and they are afraid. They want change.

Mr. Chair, who are these people? They are realtors, they are contractors, and they are business owners. That is mostly in the Northeast Avalon and some areas of scattered prosperity. They are also ordinary working people, everyday ordinary working people who do not know where they are going to turn. They are absolutely paranoid of what is going to happen if this government stays in power. They are also seniors. They are also vulnerable members of our Province who must rely on Income Support.

There is fear and despair that this government will be re-elected. The government rewards this fear and despair. How do they reward this fear and despair? Well, they increased the HST. They jacked up the taxes some more. They came into power in 2003 with no money and they increased taxes, cut benefits, and consolidated. Today, they increased HST all over again.

Mr. Chair, if you can imagine, one of the least popular people in our Province is Stephen Harper. I think maybe Mr. Harper probably even acknowledges that himself; however, in his time in office he has rewarded our people. He has rewarded the people of this Province

because the federal portion of the HST has gone down twice. It has been lowered 1 per cent, then another per cent. The federal portion of the HST that used to be 7 per cent is now 5 per cent.

What is this government going to do with that? They are going to take back the money that Stephen Harper said we could keep. Stephen Harper said: no, no, we can get by on 5 per cent instead of 7 per cent. The 5 per cent and 8 per cent, that is 13 per cent.

This government has just jacked up the HST to 7 per cent plus. Actually, they have increased it to – if there is 5 per cent left, that is 10 per cent HST. I am afraid if I screw up my math I might be recruited to be a finance minister in the government. I would rather stay in the Opposition for now.

In any event, this is the most expensive HST in Canada. It is needed to be increased by this wasteful, out-of-control unaccountable government which is taking back what Stephen Harper let us keep. Mr. Chair, this is absolutely shameful. It is out of touch. This government is indifferent to the needs of people. If a government was ever ready to spend time in Opposition, it is this government right now.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi.

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

It is good to get on my feet again and have some things to say with regard to the situation in the Province dealing with Bill 6 today. It is what we call a money bill because it is a bill that deals directly with income for government, income that will come because of rises to the income tax rate, and the good thing the government did which was adding two more tax brackets to personal income.

However, they certainly did not, in doing that, in any way put a plan in place that would increase very much the income that will come from those changes. They created new tax brackets and

then did not use the opportunity to make sure that the highest-earning people in the Province would be paying their fair share of what needs to be paid. They missed a golden opportunity.

I am not going to talk specifically about the income tax brackets and the income raise, Mr. Chair. What I want to talk about, which I may talk about, are some of the things this government does or does not do with the money that they have, the decisions that they make, and the way in which the government is being run which really disturbs me.

I want to speak first very, very specifically. Both of the things I am going to talk about are things that have to do with my district. I came into this House in the fall of 2006 when I was first elected in a by-election. One of the issues that was an issue in the District of Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi at that time – and had been for, I think, it was two years before I became elected – was the whole issue of the need for a new school in Virginia Park.

The Virginia Park Elementary School is mainly made up of temporary buildings that were added on to the main structure. It has many problems. It was agreed upon for many, many years that the school needed to be replaced. My predecessor of course, Mr. Jack Harris, had been involved with the school before me. I came in knowing that this was an important issue.

One of the first things I did, when I became MHA, was to meet with the people in the school, the school council, get to know them, and get to know about the issue. I have been many years, with my predecessor before me, advocating for the school.

What I have learned, this government has a different interpretation of long-term planning in my books. Long-term planning for me would mean you set a date for something, you work towards it, you have a schedule, you have timelines, you stick with them, and you know when you are going to reach your goal. For this government, it would seem, when it comes to building the new school, for example, long-term planning is sometime in the future it is going to happen.

When we finally got to a point, as we did this year, where ground was broken in the new area and where the foundation has been laid, now we are finding that the long-term planning – which would be my kind of long-term planning – did not include making sure that everything in the construction phase is being done in a timely way.

We finally have the foundation in, we finally have steel girders in place, reaching to the sky already, and the tender for the second phase of construction has not even gone out – has not even gone out. I really think that people of my district and the people of Virginia Park Elementary were insulted today here in this House when no answer was given by this government when I asked why has the tender not gone out.

Here we are, we are heading into the last day of school, all the children will be gone, and this would be the perfect time for the exterior to start being built. Because unlike some other places, the new school is being built right next to the old school. In actual fact, you have this danger of construction, even though there is a fence around, et cetera, you have large vehicles, large trucks, and large equipment in and out of the site all the time. The school has to be extremely careful about the movement of cars and children. This summer would have been the time to start building the exterior of the school so that in September when the kids come back, the exterior would have been up and it would be internal work that would be done.

I really cannot understand the process that goes on inside of government and particularly inside of Transportation and Works. They cannot do two things at the same time? They cannot have more than one project having tenders going out, and they cannot make sure that things are being done in a logical way? Do they talk to the Department of Education and say to them what would be good according to the school schedule? What would be good for the kids? What would be good for everybody in that school community?

The lack of planning, the lack of departments working together making logical decisions really bemuses me. I just cannot understand the

thinking that goes on. That is one thing that really bothers me.

I want to use this opportunity to speak about another thing in my district that really bothers me as well. It could be – I do not know, because I do not know what government's plan is. We never know in this House what government's plan is with regard to our parliamentary calendar. This could be the last time I will get to talk on behalf of people who live in the Virginia Park area. Because of course with the changes to the boundaries, I will be running for the NDP nomination in St. John's East – Quidi Vidi, and the Virginia Park area will be no longer an area that I would represent if I am honoured enough to be re-elected by people to represent St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

This could be the last time I get to speak to the issues of Virginia Park Elementary and also to the issue of the long-term care facility. Neither one of these would be in the new district I would represent, if I become elected. I want to talk about the long-term care because I have found the government being very, almost disrespectful of the experience of people, whether it is people who are in the facility or the experience of families.

One of the big issues that we have brought up here and I have brought up here with regard to the long-term care facility is the understaffing of the long-term care facility and the impact of that on the people who are there, the impact of that on the residents in the long-term care facility.

I have here in my hand a document – I think it is about twenty-seven pages long. It was a letter that was put together by a woman – she has given me permission to use her name. Her name is Rosalind White. Her mother is in the St. John's long-term care facility. She began in Hoyles-Escasoni, and then moved over to the long-term care facility.

I am amazed by the patience of Ms White who has observed her mother's care for a number of years now and has made tremendous observations with regard to what is happening in the new facility. Her patience is that she fully understands that what is happening is not because of the poor care of the individuals who are working there, but because the whole facility

is understaffed. Because it is understaffed, then she is aware of both her mother and other residents, for example, being left in Depends for a long time, hours and hours beyond where one would expect them to be wearing what they have to wear for their personal needs.

She is aware of meals being brought in and left in front of residents who cannot feed themselves and because of the understaffing have to wait until somebody can come and feed them. This is not because the staff is incompetent, this is – and I am struck as I read through her twenty-odd page document how often she says, because she is writing the Administration, this is because of the understaffing.

So if there is anything that I want to lay before government today as the final stab at these issues is acknowledge that understaffing, do something about it, and for goodness sakes speed up the building of the school in Virginia Park. It has been promised for the fall of 2016. I will not be their MHA at that time, but I am certainly going to be observing and watching to see what happens. Is that school going to start on time?

Mr. Chair, it does not matter what government says about its broad fiscal policies, if they are not putting things in place to help people in the educational system and in the health care system, then we have a real problem.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

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

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

I just want to take a few minutes. I will not take all of my allocated time because I have spoken a fair bit already about this Budget. There are only so many good things you can say about a good Budget.

Mr. Chair, I do want to make a couple of comments, though. I want very specifically to respond to the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi. If she has not already read it, it is an interesting read. I bring her attention and bring

all members' attention, actually, to a document that was distributed as a part of the Budget. It is called *Solid Investments in Provincial Infrastructure 2004-05-2015-16*.

It is a really interesting read I say, Mr. Chair. It is interesting for a number of things. The first part of the document talks about the period between 2004 and today. We have talked many times in the House about the significant infrastructure investments that have been made in this Province and how successfully those strategic investments have advanced social programs in this Province and have contributed to significant economic activity in many parts of the Province. So this provides the highlights of how that \$6 billion has been spent over the last eight or ten years.

It is a very interesting read for that perspective. It is a stroll down memory lane of the last ten years and the number of investments that have been made by this Administration in strategic pieces of infrastructure throughout the Province.

The other part, which is important I think, and it speaks directly to the question that has been raised, all you need to do is turn yourself to page 36. Page 36 talks about Budget 2015, the provincial infrastructure investments, our strategic plan. For the first time ever in the history of Newfoundland and Labrador and the government of this Province the people have before them a master plan of infrastructure investments that are on the agenda right now today and very particularly, the school system, a multi-year K-12 infrastructure plan. We talk about what is going to happen in each of the next three or four years, what schools, what communities, the nature of the investment, and the timelines in which we are going to do this.

So when the member talks about schools that will be open in September 2016, that is the plan, that is the commitment, that is the track we are on; tender work, design work, those sorts of things that are prerequisites to having us meet that timeline are well in place. So whether it is Virginia Waters, or whether it is schools in Gander, whether it is schools in Portugal Cove-St. Phillips, regardless of where the school might be – new schools, Mr. Chair, that you might be very familiar with, obviously. There is a commitment to replace the school in Coley's

Point, something that has been a long-standing issue in your district, a long-standing issue for the people that you represent, and this Budget makes a commitment to ensure that becomes a reality.

I am sure that you have celebrated with your constituents and parents who have kids going to that school, or parents who will have kids going to that new school. I want to take this time to thank you for your contribution in lobbying for that new infrastructure for your district, a well-needed piece of infrastructure, and this Budget and this document lays that out and responds to those – that is just one example.

So I say to the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi, she need not worry about the successful completion of Virginia Park School, she need not worry about the successful completion of any of the schools laid out in this infrastructure plan, because they will be executed. Plans are in place, design work done, site work selected in many cases, cement being poured as we speak on some sites. So this is an agenda that we are committed to and we will deliver on.

So, Mr. Chair, with that few comments, I will conclude my comments about Bill 6, look forward to the vote in a few moments, and then as we conclude this one, we will come back and we will debate the loan bill, which is the second part of the bills we need to deal with today as a part of the Budget process.

**CHAIR:** Shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

A bill, “An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000.” (Bill 6)

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

**CLERK:** Clauses 2 and 3.

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

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 3 carried.

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

**CHAIR:** Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

**CLERK:** An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000.

**CHAIR:** Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, title carried.

**CHAIR:** Shall I report Bill 6 without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the Committee do now rise and report Bill 6 without amendment.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 6 without amendment.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Port de Grave and Chair of Committees.

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

The Committee of Ways and Means have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have adopted a

certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of Ways and Means reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred, and they have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to effect to the same.

When shall the report be received?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the resolution be now read the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that this resolution be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** Be it resolved by the House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows:

"That it is expedient to bring in a measure respecting the imposition of taxes on income."

On motion, resolution read a first time.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the resolution be now read the second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the resolution be now read a second time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** Second reading of the resolution.

On motion, resolution read a second time.

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

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

At this time I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to Consider a Resolution Relating to the Raising of Loans by the Province, Bill 10.

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

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

I appreciate your patience here.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, for leave to introduce a bill to Consider Certain Resolutions Respecting the Imposition of Taxes on Income, Bill 6, and that the said bill be now read the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. the Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce Bill 6, and that the said bill be now read the first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion that Bill 6 be now read a first time?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000. (Bill 6)

On motion, Bill 6 read a first time.

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

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

This time I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that Bill 6 be now read a second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 6 be now read a second time.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** Second reading of Bill 6.

On motion, Bill 6 read a second time.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that Bill 6 be now read a third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 6 be now read a third time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** Third Reading of Bill 6.

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 6).

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to Consider a Resolution Relating to the Raising of Loans by the Province, Bill 10.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole in order to consider Bill 10.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

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

### Committee of the Whole

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

We are now debating the related resolution and Bill 10.

### Resolution

"That it is expedient to bring in a measure to authorize the raising from time to time by way of loan on the credit of the Province a sum of money not exceeding \$2,000,000,000."

**CHAIR:** Shall the resolution carry?

The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

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

This is Bill 10, what this does it gives effect to decisions that have already been made in the Budget process itself. We debated the main supply bill. We debated the Budget itself and the resolution, and the House has endorsed this year's Budget. So this bill, together with the one we just finished debating a moment ago, Bill 6, are two pieces of legislation that we need to enact to give us the authority to follow through on decisions already made in the Budget.

Many have described bills such as these as money bills, because they relate to the raising of funds or the levying of taxes. No doubt, when members opposite stand they will talk about a range of things, about the budgets and government's policy, things we do and things we do not do. Much of it, no doubt, will be criticism of things we have done or criticisms of things we are not doing.

Clearly, Mr. Chair, this Budget this year was about balance, it was about choices. We needed to make some significant decisions around what the Province's fiscal position was going to be like over the course of the next five years. We have mapped out this year, Mr. Chair, a plan, and it is highlighted.

The Budget Speech was read into the record in this House, but this document here, the Highlights document is one that spells out in black and white – in fact, not just black and white, it is multicoloured. It spells out very clearly on a variety of fronts what it is government is going to be doing with money over the course of this year, what the plans will be for the next five years, how we plan to return to a surplus, and how we plan to have a balanced Budget in four years and a surplus in five. That



is what this plan does; it gives us a blueprint for that five-year plan.

One of the things we need to do – because in the next five years or the next four particularly, our revenues will be less than the expenses we need to have to run these programs and services for the people of the Province. One of the things we need to do is we need to borrow. That is not something we have done a lot of in recent years.

Mr. Chair, one of the things we are proposing to do this year is we are proposing to start – first of all, it will be four years of a borrowing plan to allow us to continue with much-needed and critical programs and services that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador get to enjoy daily. This builds into this master plan that we talked about. Over the next four years we anticipate borrowing some \$4.85 billion. This year we are going to be borrowing a couple of billion.

Let's look at why we are doing that, Mr. Chair. I said earlier that this document here lays out what it is we are doing. We need to borrow money this year for infrastructure. I just spoke a moment ago in response to the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi. We are going to continue to build schools. We are going to continue to upgrade our roads. We need to continue to enhance transportation infrastructure. We are building new ferries.

We are going to continue to make those strategic investments in much-needed infrastructure, but we are going to need to borrow for that infrastructure this year. This is the first time since 2003 and 2004 that we have had to borrow for infrastructure. This year we are going to start doing that.

The other significant thing we are going to be having to do this year, Mr. Chair, is we want to continue to make strategic investments in Nalcor. Over the course of the next couple of years we will make some strategic investments, building on investments already made in Nalcor.

One of the things that many have talked about is the value of that investment and when we are going to get a return. I want to bring people's attention to this Highlights document. On page 8 it talks very clearly about how this government has made, over a ten-year period, strategic

investments in Nalcor as an organization. Nalcor has a mandate on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to develop our energy resource, to develop oil and gas, to create an equity position in our oil and gas development, look at developing and the responsibility for developing Muskrat Falls.

This organization is going to be one of the key success factors as we move forward as a Province. So over a ten-year period, including this year and next year, and what we have already done, this Province will invest about \$3 billion in Nalcor over about a ten-year period. If you fast forward for eight years, by 2025-2026 we are going to have all of that back. The return on that investment we made in Nalcor will come back to us in eight years, and in 2024-2025 we will have it all back. From then on out, we will be getting about \$1 billion a year from Nalcor – \$1 billion on an annual basis coming from Nalcor.

If you think about the investment we are making this year – and some would say well, why are you are borrowing for it? Because it is important to borrow for that kind of strategic investment in an organization that is going to give us that kind of return and be one of the key economic drivers as we move ourselves into the future.

The second thing, Mr. Chair, we want to borrow for, we talked about infrastructure, how critical that is to enhancing social programs and providing us with the economic stimulation – the second thing we have to deal with is the day-to-day operational cost of government. We need to maintain our health services, we need to maintain our schools, and we need to maintain our transportation network. All of those programs and services that are going to be critical to the future and the well-being, the day-to-day lives, the quality of life of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, we are going to need to maintain a reasonable level of service.

We have made some significant program decisions and policy decisions around how we actually adjust the size of the public service and ratchet back some of our expenditure levels over the next couple of years. These are mapped out again in this five-year plan, but we need to

borrow to provide the offset for the revenues that we do not have this year, yet we have the commitment for those much needed programs and services.

The other big piece that is driving our borrowing, one of the things that we are very proud of as an Administration, very proud of because we are leading the country in this area, we have finally taken a grip the public sector pension plans. We debated last week in this House a piece of legislation that helps reform the teachers' plan. Last fall, we debated in this House a piece of legislation that will reform the public sector pension plan. So we now have two of the largest pension plans within the public service reformed.

That requires though, on our part, as an employer, as a part of government's contribution to that reform, we have made a commitment. We have commitments to make contributions and payments towards a promissory note that we issued and will honour to actually support the stabilization and future sustainability of those pension plans. So we have made those financial commitments and we need to honour those. So for the next couple of years, we are going to need to borrow to honour those commitments.

If you look at our infrastructure commitment, our strategic investment in Nalcor, our obligation to our pension plans and our obligation to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who desperately need and deserve the kinds of programs and services that we are going to be able to continue to provide for them as we work our way through these challenges times, that is what has given rise to the need to borrow this year. That is why we are aggressively pulling out a plan – and, as I have said, this is mapping ourselves out for the next four years, Mr. Chair.

Now, many have said – and in fact, there have been comments in this House by members in the Opposition – that is a lot of money. It is a lot of money. There has been much criticism by Opposition members about whether or not we should be borrowing that kind of money. Can we afford it? Can we afford not to?

I tell you, Mr. Chair, there is a couple of things that I want to share with you – and I know my

time is ticking by. If you think about the history of Newfoundland and Labrador, the history of this Province, we have gone through periods of time – in fact if we take you back to the late 1980s through to 2003-2004 period, that is a fairly long period of time, long before we came into government. Governments of Newfoundland and Labrador had to borrow on an annual basis.

In fact if you look at that period between 1988 and 2004, this Province was borrowing at a rate of about \$390 million-odd on an annual basis – annually, year over year over year over year. If you think about that for a moment, the accumulation of all of that over that period of time is only going to equate to what we are going to be borrowing ourselves over the course of the next four years. This level of borrowing over an extended period of time is not unprecedented for this Province.

One of the things, Mr. Chair, that is really important to appreciate. When people borrow, no different than anyone who lives in this Province – people in this House will buy a car, they buy a home, they get a mortgage, all of us need to ensure that what we borrow we can afford to repay. What we borrow, the debt servicing costs of what we borrow in our personal lives cannot put us in a spot where we cannot feed our children. You cannot do that. Governments cannot do it either. We need to be prudent in the level of borrowing.

One of the things that we have done, Mr. Chair, in this Budget we have mapped out – and I have said it in this House many times, and I want to repeat it. This is the first time in the history of this Province has any government ever brought down a Budget that had a five-year plan that mapped out year over year for five years what the expenses were going to be and what the revenue was going to be.

Equally as important – perhaps many would say more important – we have put together a series of performance indicators. We have said it is not responsible for any government to start talking about expending money, generating revenues, borrowing money unless you are able to establish some fiscal targets. What is a cap? How much would you be prepared to borrow? What is the absolute cap you would ever put on

borrowing? What is the absolute cap that you think that you will be able to service?

So we have said two things, regardless of what happens over the course of the next five years, we have a plan and we have set ourselves targets. The people of this Province can measure our success against these targets. I will just share two of them with you because they relate to borrowing.

These are the two targets that relate to borrowing. We have said that regardless of how much we borrow, regardless of how much interest rates become, whatever banks charge us for borrowing money, we will never find ourselves ever where the cost of borrowing becomes excessive. We have said, Mr. Chair, that we will make sure that we have built-in targets that make sure that our cost of borrowing, that our debt-servicing cost, the amount of interest that we pay, will never, ever go beyond 13 per cent of our gross revenue. So our debt expenses will never be beyond 13 per cent.

Mr. Chair, take it from those of us who have been around this House for a while – because it was not all that many years ago. In fact, 2003, when we came to power in this Province and we formed government in 2003, the Province at that time was paying twenty-five cents on every dollar it generated just to service the debt, just to pay the interest. We believe that is dangerous. We will never put ourselves in that spot. We will never put the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in that position. So that is why we have said we will never borrow an amount of money that puts us in the position where our debt servicing cost is greater than 13 per cent of our total revenue.

The second thing we have said, Mr. Chair, relative to expenditures and relative to borrowing money, we have said that we will never, over the course of the next five years, borrow more than \$5 billion – never. So regardless of how much we spend, how much demands may be made on us, we will never be borrowing that much.

Members opposite might think that is a lot of money – and it is a lot of money, in anybody's language. We as a Progressive Conservative

Party and as the governing party today are suggesting that we will borrow close to that over the next five years.

I doubt very much if anybody from the Liberal Party will stand here today and say, you know that is not all that bad because we borrowed that same amount of money when we were in power. No one is going to say that. No one in the Liberal Party will stand and say that today. No one would stand and say that. No one would ever do that, Mr. Chair.

They were borrowing at a rate of about close to \$400 million a year, but they were doing it year over year. It became a matter of course. It was pretty natural. Every Budget came down, oh yes, this is what we are going to spend, but we are going to borrow \$400 million. This is what we are going to spend. They did that year over year. Over a period of time they borrowed the same amount, but they will stand here today and say what a large amount of money it is and you should not be doing it.

Mr. Chair, this bill is about borrowing money. This bill is about borrowing money that is a part of a fiscal plan that talks about balance. It talks about a five-year strategy. It talks about growing revenues. It talks about reducing expenditures. It talks about providing balance. It talks about providing fairness. It talks about maintaining core government services and programs to support Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. It talks about a fair tax system. It talks about enhancing programs for seniors. It talks about a huge capital investment in education programming and transportation programming. It helps service in this Province.

That is what this bill speaks to, all of those things. They form a part of a balanced Budget where we had to make some choices to see ourselves through for the next five years.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Bay of Islands.

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

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

I will just stand for a few minutes to have a few words. I know the Minister of Natural

Resources is here. I just want to clarify something the minister said here on June 2, Mr. Chair. I like putting it on the record and having it all clarified.

When the minister was up giving a very animated debate about Muskrat Falls and this bunch over here – and he talked about me back here in 1999, Mr. Chair, and in 2009. The minister wanted to be animated. We all know the minister had to apologize several times here in the House. We understand that.

When the minister makes the statement about Muskrat Falls, asking me how I can support a \$20 billion-and-something project and I could not support Muskrat Falls – of course, and I am being fair to the minister, I actually sent it over to him. The actual cost was \$4 billion.

I know the minister is touchy on the subject. So for the minister to stand over here and say I would not support Muskrat but I will support a \$20 billion-and-something, I think was the exact words, Mr. Chair, it is factually incorrect. Then Muskrat Falls, what is it, 800? In 2009, it was 2,200 megawatts. So you need to put the facts out there before you can stand up and be animated.

I understand the minister does a lot of work. I even offered the minister a copy of the agreement. I just want to have the record straight on that, Mr. Chair. Any statement that I ever made in this House or anything I ever voted on, I have no problem standing up and defending. I know it was just a misquote by the minister. He can apologize again at any time, Mr. Chair.

I want to speak on something else – I have to give him credit. He has not apologized yet this week. So it might be the first time he is going to apologize this week, but that is fine.

Mr. Chair, I am going to speak on Coppermine Brook. I know the Member for Port au Port who was the Minister of Service NL, and I know the Member for St. John's West – of all my years in government, I never seen people treated in such a way as what happened in Coppermine Brook and Number Four Brook.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs, I have to give him credit, he took the bull by the horns when Crown Lands was transferred to him. He is making some commitments and he is putting out information to try to solve this problem. So I have to give that minister credit first, but the Member for Port au Port and the Member for St. John's West, who were Ministers of Service NL, I wrote them four times – and the Member for Humber West, a lot of residents from his district were never treated properly in this matter.

Mr. Chair, do you know they walked in, they had an area in Coppermine Brook, all the area was frozen from any transfer, any major work. They were notified for almost two years that there was a freeze on. No one would even speak to them. That is the way they were treated. It is an absolute shame.

I know the Member for Humber West said he met with a lot of residents from the area. I know a lot he never met with who are from his district. I think that is one of the hardest punishments they ever gave anybody that I dealt with in government, of putting a freeze on their land. They could not transfer the land. They could not do any major renovations to the land, and they were not even told it was in place. It is absolutely ridiculous.

I wrote the Member for Port au Port, he was the minister, and he would not even give the residents a courtesy of a response, not even a response, Mr. Chair. The Member for St. John's West would not even give a response. It is just absolutely ridiculous. I have to give the Minister of Municipal Affairs some kudos because he is getting to the bottom of it. At least he is working with the people, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, I will just say one more thing about that before I move on. They were at a meeting, get this now, who owned the land there. He was a constituent of the Member for Humber West. He stood up and said: I am going on a trip tomorrow, what happens if I and my wife get killed on the plane? Do you know what they were told? Do you know what they were told because a freeze was put on this land and no one was ever notified? Do you know what they were told? It will go in trust until the government decides what to do with the land.

It is absolutely shameful the way those ministers treated those people, Mr. Chair. It is absolutely shameful. If anybody across this Province wants to listen to this and want to know why people are disillusioned now and are getting fed up with this government, Mr. Chair, sit down and look at the file for Coppermine Brook. It is absolutely shameful.

Mr. Chair, I just want to speak on another issue that I attended on Sunday night. It was a meeting in Lark Harbour for St. James All-Grade for the schools. Then for anybody to stand up here and talk about how the cuts are not that bad, go out to St. James in Lark Harbour where they are cutting two units. Go out to St. James in Lark Harbour where they cut two units from 13.25 down to 11.25; go out there.

Mr. Chair, I do not know exactly how the system works, but they were told they were going to be cut two units. There is going to be an autistic child in the school who is going to be coming. They cannot put back the unit until this kid actually enrolls. They have to go through all this, making up the appeal, doing all the appeal system. I met with the school board and they said yes, we are holding teacher units back. I can understand that, Mr. Chair, but there has to be some way that you can sit down with the school council and say yes, but here is the other option that if this kid, or if you need special services for other children in the school, here is what is available.

I am not saying they should just walk in and say: Blanket, what do you need? I think they should be given the full information. They should be given the full information and then when the school councils – I am sure the administration at the school has some of it. When you give them the full information they can make an informed decision, Mr. Chair, but they never had the full information. They are getting parts of it now because the school board in a response to the media said yes, there are holdbacks – which I told them at the meeting. Yes, if they can make a case for it and an appeal, there are positions available, which is good.

The only thing I ask the minister or urge the minister somehow is to get the school board to inform the school councils of their options, their rights, and what is available. I am not saying

they should get everything they want. I am not saying that everything they ask for should happen. There has to be a limit. There has to be justification, I have no problem with that. Supplying people the information is very important for the school councils, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, another issue is transportation and works. I know myself and the minister is going to be chatting. My understanding from the minister is that there is work coming for the Bay of Islands. There was a little bit of a misunderstanding last week. There was an announcement made for Route 440. It was not the Bay of Islands, I say to the minister. It is not. It is Route 440. It is pretty close, but it is not the Bay of Islands.

So when you gave out this announcement saying that the Bay of Islands is getting this money – and people called me, well, what work is being done? It is really not the Bay of Islands, Mr. Chair. It is Riverside Drive. It will be part of Humber – Bay of Islands. I know the minister committed for some funds for the Bay of Islands. I know the minister read it and I know the minister was trying to arrange a meeting with myself to discuss it. I thank the minister for that.

On the South Shore of the Bay of Islands – and I have been trying now. The Member for Lab West can remember this because there was a flood back probably two or three years ago and they are still trying to get work done from that.

We hear about all this money being spent on the roads, Mr. Chair – and I know from Frenchman's Cove out to York Harbour, it is a major concern for a lot of the residents. That is why when I wrote the minister – and there are two major spots; one there in Coppermine. There was a slide there two years ago and it is still not paved. I have to be fair to the officials, the slide – they did not know when it was going to stop. I think it is settled now.

There is one over in McIver's, Mr. Chair, that has not been paved now for a year, the same thing. It has to be fixed. There are school buses. I know in McIver's there are school buses going over that. The one in Lark Harbour, the one in Coppermine Brook has been there

now two years. The one over in McIver's has to be fixed.

A lot of residents on Route 450 have asked me to express their concerns. I wrote the minister on three or four occasions. He agreed that there will be some work in the Bay of Islands this year – pavement. So I am very pleased with that. I thank the minister for that because we have to work together.

Mr. Chair, the last little thing I am going to bring up is the hospital in Corner Brook and the long-term care. I know the minister stood up today and said yes, there will be construction started. I have to see the details. I heard in 2007 construction was going to start. I heard in 2011 when the Member for Humber West, the former Premier, and the Member for Humber East got up and made the announcement at a public forum that construction will start. They had tractors going up there – the biggest dog park in Corner Brook. They had all the tractors going. When I got back in the House of Assembly, I found out that even the design was not even started. The pre-design was not even completed, yet they had the big announcements. I say to the minister I am sorry if I do not share all your excitement because I have been through this before.

Mr. Chair, on some good things, I am very proud for the people in Cox's Cove who got a fire truck, well deserved. They are at the lower end of Route 440 and it would be a long time for anybody to come there if there was an emergency, so I am very pleased with that.

The upper part now of Frenchman's Cove just received funding for water and sewer. The minister again seen the concern of that, and that there is a major improvement for the area. It is the only part now in that whole south shore from Frenchman's Cove up that do not have water.

Again I want to say to the Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs that we are in negotiations with York Harbour and Lark Harbour over amalgamation. I am not sure how it is going to turn out. I know there are some concerns with the Town of Lark Harbour, legitimate concerns. I just wanted to put it on the record before I leave here that the Minister of Municipal Affairs has put his heart and soul

into this amalgamation issue. I just want to recognize that we have been working together now for the last six or seven months on this, Mr. Chair. If this does not work, it is not because there was not good faith from the minister and from myself and the councils, it is probably just some issues. So I just want to put that on the record that the minister has been working very diligently on this.

Mr. Chair, in closing, I am going to have my seat now and I said this before that some of us will not be back here next time. Some of us will not be back for different reasons; some will retire; some more may run and lose. I said it before and I will say it again. I honestly feel that the forty-eight people who are in this House really have the best interests of their constituents at heart. I really feel that. I know sometimes there are issues that come up.

So to everybody that I dealt with in the House of Assembly, the majority of people on both sides of the House, are great to deal with. We always get our own personal issues with people. We always get our own issues with the people, but the majority that we have work together.

So, in closing, Mr. Chair, the ones who are not coming back from retirement, we have created great friendships. The ones who may not be successful in the election – anybody who puts their name forth deserves a lot of accolades, because it is a demanding job when you are in the public on a regular basis and when you are dealing with all the issues of the constituents. It is a tough and demanding job.

So to everybody here, Mr. Chair, who do not make it back, and hopefully we develop friendships that we could always have and carry on with us over the years. I know sometimes it gets a bit hostile, but I honestly feel that the majority of people, the vast majority, if not everyone here is concerned about the district they represent. That is great to know.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible).

**MR. JOYCE:** I know some people are talking about my grey hair, but I had that since I was twenty years old. That has nothing to do with politics. That has nothing to do with that.

This is going to be my last chance to have a few words in this Legislature, so congratulations to everybody who makes it back. To everybody who do not run, and retires, keep up the good work for your towns and communities. It is a profession that you have to remember – there are only forty-eight of us are in this House, it is a privilege to be in this House, and it is a privilege for us to represent all of our towns and our people.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and all the best to everybody.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Port de Grave.

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

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

It is a great opportunity to get on my feet today and speak to Bill 10, the Loan Act. Obviously, when governments need to borrow, they need to come before the House and before the Committee and they to provide a resolution to go out and borrow for monies they are going to need to expend.

Mr. Chair, it is always a pleasure to stand on my feet here and represent the fine people in the historic District of Port de Grave. I never ever thought I would be in this position, to stand here and represent those people, and it has been a great four years. With the recent announcement and recent changes and recent reduction, as the hon. member opposite just said, there will be some of us who may not get the opportunity to be back in this wonderful place and be one of those elite forty.

Mr. Chair, I want to take this opportunity to thank the people in the District of Port de Grave who placed their confidence in me four years ago to elect me. I have worked with them, and I hope we have made the District of Port de Grave a little bit better place in the last four years.

Mr. Chair, with the reduction in the number of seats here in the House, it is going to be a new district. Like you, Mr. Chair, we are going to be looking at a new district. It is combining two

very historic districts, the District of Port de Grave and the District of Harbour Grace. I will be looking forward to seeking their support and representing that new district in the House of Assembly come the election in November.

Today, we are speaking about Bill 10. I just want to reiterate some of the points the Finance Minister made a little earlier today. He talked about it is the first time since 2003-2004 that we have actually borrowed for infrastructure purposes. Mr. Chair, that adds up to about twelve years. It has been about twelve years since this government has borrowed any money to do infrastructure development.

We hear it all the time, Mr. Chair, all of our districts, and every member in this House of Assembly hears it all the time about the infrastructure needs in our districts, whether it be roads, whether it be hospitals, whether it be schools, whether it be a day care facility. Whatever it is, Mr. Chair, we all hear about it.

I know as a Member of the House of Assembly, we all have some focus and we try to work with ministers and work with departments to improve the infrastructure in our districts. In my case, it has been no different, Mr. Chair. Many of our roads, when we go through the District of Port de Grave, Mr. Chair, in the last four years the main roads in particular, probably received no maintenance or no new asphalt in ten or fifteen years at least.

Mr. Chair, I am pleased to say that over the last four years most of the main highway through the District of Port de Grave has received some new asphalt, new ditching, culverts and all of the rest. Some of the side roads, thinking of Bareneed road going to Port de Grave, three kilometres of new paving, ditching and culverts there. Again, I have talked many times about the importance of that road and the economic benefits that come from that with the fish plant and the crab fishery in Port de Grave.

Mr. Chair, I digress once again. In Budget 2015, this Budget is asking to borrow up to \$2 billion. That is not saying we will need to borrow \$2 billion, but if we need to this Budget is telling us we can borrow up to \$2 billion. Again, it is mostly for infrastructure needs. Schools,

hospitals, roads, and those things that are critical in all of our districts.

The Minister of Finance mentioned earlier today about the commitment of this government to the new school in Coley's Point. That is one of many schools that this government has committed to over the years. I heard the member opposite talk about her school in Virginia Waters a little while ago. Mr. Chair, this commitment and this borrowing of \$2 billion, most of that is going to the infrastructure in our districts.

As well, it was very good news – for a long time we talked about pension reform in this Province and the need to get our pension and the cost of our pension reform under control. This government took that on in the last year and has reached agreements with most of the major unions. This pension reform will certainly improve the Province's deficit and net debt overall. It was something that had to be tackled and had to be done.

I remember being a public servant about fifteen years ago and many of my colleagues at that time were going out and trying to save some money to do some private investment because they did not believe they were going to have a pension to go to when their time came to retire, whether it was ten years, five years, or twenty years down the road. They were afraid the pension was going to run out of money. Many of my colleagues that I spoke with and worked with in the public service were going out and trying to make sure they would have some type of pension when they retire.

Mr. Chair, as well, we are borrowing at a time when interest rates are at an all-time low. Though, we are borrowing vast amounts of money – and, yes, \$2 billion is a large amount of money. Nobody is going to argue that. Nobody on this side or the other side of the House will argue that \$2 billion is a large amount of money, but when we are going to the markets today, we are probably going to the markets today in a time of the best, lowest interest rates probably in the last fifty years. I am not sure, but, again, interest rates are relatively low. It is a good time to go to the market.

As well, I want to talk just for a minute about – I know the critic for Finance stood up earlier on Bill 6 and talked about our children. He talked about the 25,000 children who were zero to four, and talked about our school-age children. Well, Mr. Chair, I believe we are in a good position. I believe the future for our young people is bright in this Province. It is bright because of investments like Muskrat Falls.

I remember sitting in this House – and you do too, Mr. Chair – of that great debate. I remember having some second thoughts. I will not lie, I had some second thoughts. I remember the Minister of Finance at the time standing up here and speaking for three hours on the importance and the need for Muskrat Falls and what that would do for our Province, making this Province 98 per cent with clean energy, renewable energy. I remember him talking about as long as the water flows we will have clean, renewable energy. Mr. Chair, what we have tried to do on this side of the House since we have been in government is take some of our resources that we had from the oil industry and the non-renewable resources that we have and invest them into renewable, clean, energy resources like Muskrat Falls.

Mr. Chair, we all know that Muskrat Falls is only the first step because whatever government in the future gets here, the next step is Gull Island. We are going to do Gull Island one day, and Gull Island will be the next major investment for whichever government on whatever side it is. I believe, with our investments in Nalcor, we have set this all up to be good.

As we debate Bill 10 today and as my time winds down, once again I want to thank the people in Port de Grave. I want to thank the people in Port de Grave for entrusting me with the responsibility for me to represent them over the last four years. It has been an honour to do it. Like anything I have ever done before, Mr. Chair, I have always worked hard day in and day out for the people in my district.

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

**MR. LITTLEJOHN:** I commit to working day in and day out for the people in my new district. While we are in this transition, I will not forget



the people in North River, Clarke's Beach, and Makinsons that I will be no longer representing in the House of Assembly the next time. Mr. Chair, they are here, and we will continue to represent them until the upcoming election in November.

With that said, again I want to thank the fine people in the district. It has been an honour to represent them, and I will sit down and let somebody else continue the debate.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Chair, it is my privilege to stand this afternoon and have a few words on behalf of the constituents of Trinity – Bay de Verde and follow on the heels of my good friend from Port de Grave and spend a few minutes talking about the District of Trinity – Bay de Verde and some of the issues that I have come across in my brief stint here from the by-election win back in November.

It has been an absolute privilege to represent the people of Trinity – Bay de Verde, and I will go into that a little bit further in a little while. Mr. Chair, we have some major issues in Trinity – Bay de Verde when we look at the district overall. I have raised the issue many, many times in this House, and my colleague for Mount Pearl South reminds me that he sort of knows when I stand up, I am going to say cellphones and I am going to continue to say cellphones –

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Because, at the end of the day, the people in rural Newfoundland and Labrador deserve cellphone coverage no different than the people in other parts of the Province's more urban centres.

We have a lot of local issues throughout the district, Mr. Chair. Continual issues around

summer maintenance, ditching, and brush cutting. They are all issues that impact daily routines for people, and issues that I think are very important for the government to follow through on.

Mr. Chair, on a more positive side when you look at the District of Trinity – Bay de Verde you look at the main industry which is the reason we settled there hundreds of years ago – would obviously be the fishery. The fishery over the years transitioned from the traditional groundfish fishery, to after the moratorium when 28,000 people lost their jobs overnight, we transitioned into a shellfish fishery.

Trinity – Bay de Verde has three processing plants and a large, large number of harvesters fishing out of ports like Bay de Verde, Old Perlican, Ochre Pit Cove, Grates Cove, Sibley's Cove, Winterton, Heart's Content, and Heart's Delight. Mr. Chair, we have a very broad, broad-based fishery in the district. Thousands of people are employed, hundreds more directly operating as harvesters putting their lives at risk every day to pursue a career that they chose. As the Member for Bellevue so eloquently pointed out this afternoon in his remarks about the fishermen who lost their lives just last week prosecuting the fishery, it is important we remember that.

When I come back to my district, Mr. Chair, and look at tourism, it is an ever-expanding industry in the district. We see it more and more every year with the quality of our restaurants, the quality of our accommodations, and our beautiful attractions. They are too numerous for me to actually start naming them here this afternoon. What will happen is I will start naming some of the attractions and I will miss somebody. I would invite everybody in this House and anybody who might be watching this afternoon, if they get an opportunity this summer to travel the Baccalieu Trail which is home to the District of Trinity – Bay de Verde, I certainly invite them. They certainly will not be disappointed.

Mr. Chair, I just want to quickly go to my critic's role for a minute. It is something that is near and dear to me and it is small business. I was raised in a family where we relied on small

business. It was our way of life. To some extent, it still is today.

When we look at some numbers from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business – just in a letter to the article today and realize the significance of small business to our Province. Mr. Chair, 46 per cent of our workforce in this Province are employed by small- and medium-sized businesses compared to 26 per cent in the public sector and only 28 per cent in large-scale businesses – over more than 500 people.

So even though oil has been good to us, Mr. Chair, the backbone to our economy – and this has always been said, and lots of time I think government loses sight because the employer that is employing one, two, three, four, five, ten, twelve people, they are the backbone of the rural economies. I encourage the government to take some heed to what the Auditor General said in his report just last week.

The Auditor General clearly points out that government has come to a point where they are measuring success in their business investment programs simply on the money out the door. It is not necessarily about money out the door, Mr. Chair. The CFIB points out in their letter today to the editor that only 50 per cent of businesses in this Province avail of programs that are offered through government. So I encourage government – government certainly, absolutely, has a role to play with small business development and business development in the Province.

I know back in the early winter I was asking questions from time to time about money that had been written off over the years and past due accounts. Coming from a small business, I realized the importance of making sure your accounts are current and making sure that money that we are putting out there for business investment, taxpayers' money – I do not care who lent it, if it was a previous Liberal Administration or a previous PC Administration – it is time we started to do it right and ensure that public dollars are absolutely spent in the proper way, Mr. Chair.

I am not going to belabour my remarks this afternoon, but I do want to thank the people of Trinity – Bay de Verde and come back to my

district for a few more minutes. In my maiden speech back in January, I talked about the length of time each of us as members are given to serve in this place. From the day I first walked in here on December 11 until this afternoon, being a person who always had a keen interest in politics, every single day I sat in my seat I looked up in amazement and humbled to have the opportunity to sit in this place.

I spoke a few minutes ago with the Member for St. John's East. Myself and the Member for St. John's East go back quite a ways. We conversed about the fact that over time, both of us, this was something we always wanted to do. I wish the Member for St. John's East all the best in his retirement. I am not sure it is going to be a long retirement. I expect that someday in the future we will see him back.

Again, Mr. Chair, I want to take the opportunity to thank the people of the District of Trinity – Bay de Verde. I look forward to offering myself in the coming nomination for the new District of Carbonear – Trinity – Bay de Verde. There is one thing that always stands true to me when it comes to politics: The people will make a decision; I thoroughly and truly respect the decision of the people, Mr. Chair.

Again, thank you very much to the people of the District of Trinity – Bay de Verde for the opportunity to have served them in this Parliament, and I look forward to serving again in the next Parliament.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

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

It is indeed a pleasure for me to stand on my feet here again today and speak on behalf of the residents of Carbonear – Harbour Grace. I just want to take up a little bit of time here today to speak about the fishery in general. There are many strategies that have been left on the table. We have been asking for the cod strategy and many others here and, of course, to no avail.

One day I asked the Minister of Fisheries questions here about the fishery and about that strategy and there has not been anything done here. I tell you, Mr. Chair, it is so sad that you had a vital fishery here in Newfoundland and Labrador that was worth \$1.1 billion and now it is \$948 million or something like that. It is a shame that it is falling back and there is not enough interest from the other side put into it because of the oil.

Mr. Chair, while we enjoy the oil –

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

**MR. SLADE:** Mr. Chair, can I have a bit of protection here? Not that I need protection, Mr. Chair, I can assure you.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. SLADE:** Mr. Chair, they do not like to hear you say what is true here, and this is the problem. The crowd across the way do not like to hear you talk the truth. There has been very little interest put in the fishery here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Chair, I am just going to explain that a little bit to you; \$948 million and back in 1992 when the moratorium was called, the value of the fishery was \$1.1 billion. All of a sudden there is slippage. It is not slippage forward; it is slippage backwards. You guys lost interest in the fishery, a once proud department here with a budget of \$51 million gone down to \$21 million. That shows the interest that this crowd across the way have in the fishery, I can tell you that. It is nothing, Mr. Chair; they have no interest in it.

Now, Mr. Chair, even the Minister of Finance can tell – \$51 million and then it drops back to \$21 million, the Minister of Finance can even add that up, \$30 million. It is unbelievable, absolutely unbelievable. There has not been any interest shown in the fishery by you guys. You guys over there, you had interest in the oil revenues. Like I said, God bless the oil that came because you guys over there would not have been able to do anything over there – nothing, absolutely nothing.

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

**MR. SLADE:** It is unbelievable. I could not understand it.

Mr. Chair, when I came here two years ago I was amazed that those guys over there, hardly either one of them ever opened their mouth up about the fishery.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Hardly one of them.

**MR. SLADE:** Hardly one of them, Mr. Chair. When I started getting to my feet here, the then minister, Minister Hutchings was there and –

**CHAIR:** I remind the member, we do not call them by name.

**MR. SLADE:** I am after going through two now, Mr. Chair, two fisheries ministers. Just as you get a little bit of a relationship here with a minister, in the blink of an eye he is gone, rotating door, revolving door, Mr. Chair. It is the same thing with every minister.

**MR. KING:** Elections are like that.

**MR. SLADE:** I would say to the Minister of Justice, yes, elections are like that – which he is soon going to find out. He is certainly soon going to find out, elections are going to be like that. Elections are just like that, Mr. Chair, you never know.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. SLADE:** Mr. Chair, I say to the minister, he should go over and explain it to the people over in Fortune, the plant workers in Fortune. That is what he should do.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Sit down.

**MR. SLADE:** Come on now, you are not going to tell me to sit down, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. SLADE:** Mr. Chair, there is nobody over there who is going to tell me to sit down. I am going to stand up here and speak my mind.

Mr. Chair, they know they did nothing with the fishery. They never did a thing for the fishery and it is going to come back now and it is going to haunt them.

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

**MR. SLADE:** Mr. Chair, I am so proud to be able to stand on my feet here and have that conversation with those guys over there because they have done absolutely nothing for it.

I have a lot of respect for the Member for Cape St. Francis, I have to tell you, because he knows what he is talking about when he stands up and speaks on the fishery. He does not do it often enough, but when he does stand – we had a great crab season. The fish harvesters had a great crab season. The money was well up there. I am sure the shrimp industry this year will be the same. That is good.

So instead of going backwards, like \$956 million, we should be coming forward. Mr. Chair, they may as well face one thing, the cod strategy they are supposed to be doing –

**MR. J. BENNETT:** Tomcod strategy.

**MR. SLADE:** Yes, a tomcod strategy.

Mr. Chair, the strategy they are supposed to be doing, I hope they have it done because we have some serious issues that is going to face Newfoundland and Labrador in a short period of time. I will tell you what it is going to be. I saw it when I was fishing. It is still out there. The problem is still there. The fish are back. There is no marketing strategy over there. Absolutely nothing, and if we do not take care of it, if we do deal with the issue at hand right now, the crab industry will collapse.

Do you guys realize over there the only safe crab stock right now is in 3L? The only safe crab industry right now is in 3L. I am going to tell you something; you better start dealing with it.

Mr. Chair, I have to say one thing. I tend to believe that I can actually stir those fellows up over there. I can actually stir those fellows up, and I am so proud of it.

I say to the Minister of Finance, if he could only learn how to count, we would be all right here, Mr. Chair.

Anyway, I am not going to say too much more, but I will say this to you, I can certainly stir those fellows up over there.

Mr. Chair, I am going to speak now about the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. I am going to tell you, I have sat in this House for two years. When he went to be the Minister of Fisheries, I said to the Speaker one day: Mr. Speaker, is there anything here, like are there any plugs or anything here because he speaks really, really loud? He really speaks loud. Lo and behold, he never spoke this evening, but he did answer a few questions today, or he tried to answer a few questions I should say.

I could not believe it, the Member for Port de Grave district, it was the same thing. He is starting to bawl at us now too. It is absolutely unbelievable.

Mr. Chair, I am going to tell you, I really certainly hope that those strategies come out during the election, they need to happen, and I am sure you guys will be able to use it as a platform because you really need to go deep, deep, deep in the heart and the soul of rural Newfoundland and Labrador now to sell yourselves. You really do. I am going to tell you something, the fish harvesters out there lost faith in you. The plant workers out there lost faith in you.

Just imagine, it is a brand new set of standards here now. There is a brand new set of standards here. I did not realize it until I came here. Full-time now in Newfoundland and Labrador in the fishing industry is twenty weeks a year – twenty weeks a year. That is what the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture said is full-time. The people over in Fortune have a full-time job – 110 of them have full-time jobs.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Shameful.

**MR. SLADE:** Twenty weeks a year, my God, Mr. Chair, how shameful indeed.

Mr. Chair, I would just like to say one thing. It has been indeed a pleasure for me to stand in

this House and to work with all hon. House members. It has indeed been a pleasure for me. I would say that I will be also fighting for the same district as my colleague for Trinity – Bay de Verde. I will tell you guys, I hope I see you back here; but not on that side, on this side.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** I recognize the hon. minister from his district – the Member for Grand Bank.

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

It is indeed a pleasure and an honour to follow the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace. I accept his challenge. In his commentary, he asked me to speak about the people of Fortune and I am going to do just that, Mr. Chair. I applaud the member for his speech. It is not all accurate, not all that I agree with, but I applaud him for getting up and giving a good political speech.

I am going to remind the member because the member was not sitting in this House when we dealt with the issue of the Fortune fish plant. I am going to remind the member of a number of things that transpired. The people of Fortune went through a very serious time in their life where they were represented by a Liberal Cabinet minister at one point and then an Opposition member during the days where the fish plant closed, very sad time in the lifeline of Fortune – my home community by the way, born and raised there, graduated high school there.

It was after 2007 that myself and at the time Conservative MP Bill Mathews started negotiations and discussions with OCI and others about the possibility of reopening the Fortune plant. I am going to help the member understand a little bit some of the details that maybe he does not understand. We had a number of obstacles to overcome – and two would be his colleague the Member for The Straits – White Bay North who happens not to be onside with Fortune.

I can show the member the front page of *The Telegram* where my picture and his was there

and there was a finger pointing and a lot of arguing on Confederation steps. My colleague the Member for the Isles of Notre Dame happened to be the minister at the time. We were trying to find a deal for Fortune, Mr. Chair, while his colleague, the Member for The Straits – White Bay North, accompanied by the Member for St. John's North, asked the people of Fortune what the trouble was and what the problem was, and what is the fuss about and why should we do a deal for the people of Fortune.

That is two members of the Liberal Party, I say to my colleague from Carbonear – Harbour Grace, two members of the Liberal Party against the deal for Fortune, while I, as the member – and I have heard you say it many times: Where is the Member for Grand Bank? Well, I am highlighting for you where the Member for Grand Bank was –

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

**MR. KING:** – standing very clearly for the people of Fortune, and I continue to do that.

Mr. Chair, then we went through an era where, guess what? Captain Kipper arrived on the scene; the Member for St. Barbe arrived on the scene. Guess what? The people of Fortune were no better because what they got from him was the same as the NDP: the big goose egg. Not one iota of support for Fortune, nor St. Lawrence, nor Grand Bank when we were transferring licences. Not one iota of support.

So I say, with the greatest of respect to the Member for Carbonear – Harbour Grace, I fully appreciate your position. Unfortunately, you are arguing from a position of weakness because your colleagues around you, who engaged in that discussion, all objected to the deal in Fortune.

Today, what we have in Fortune is not the best of deals – absolutely, because today not everybody is working, but what we do have is about fifty people working who went six or seven years with no jobs. Not one job, not one income in a family. So it is because of the efforts of our government and the strength of my colleague for the Isles of Notre Dame, followed by the Minister of Municipal and

Intergovernmental Affairs in fisheries, because of the fortitude of this government that we stood with the people of Fortune, not only against the Liberals and the NDP, but against the FFAW and the new Leader of the NDP, I might add. It is not all about the Opposition. It is also the new Leader of the NDP who stood forcefully and said that he would never, never, never support the people of Fortune in the deal that was being proposed.

Now mind you, as my colleague for Carbonear would know, the yellowtail fish had not been fished for years. It was my colleague for the Isles of Notre Dame who said to the public: Fair enough, you think there is a better deal; we will make the fish available. We made the quota available to the Province. Guess how many offers we had? Guess how many harvesters came forward and wanted to fish that quota? Have a guess, anybody – have a guess.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Goose egg.

**MR. KING:** The big goose egg again, Mr. Chair. The moral of the story is we do not support Fortune. We recognize that there is no deal for yellowtail fish in this Province. We realize nobody wants it, but to heck with the people of Fortune said the NDP, Mr. McCurdy, and the Liberal Opposition. It was only the Conservative government and me as the member that stood with the people of Fortune and said in spite of the opposition, we are moving forward with a deal.

I challenge the Member for Carbonear and I challenge the members opposite who are heckling me today, come down in Fortune. If you really believe what you are saying, come to Fortune when the election is called and stand on the wharf in Fortune and you ask the 150 people whose families are affected by this whether or not they support this government for the deal, or support the opposition you provided. I say, come down –

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

**MR. KING:** – and I will stand with you. I say to the Member for Carbonear who is pointing at me, I will stand with you and if you really believe so strongly that the deal was a bad deal and that they have not been represented, you are

in a bit of quandary. You come down and run against me and let's see who the people of Fortune want to represent them, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. KING:** I offer you that challenge.

With that, Mr. Chair, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak.

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

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

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

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

The Chair has recognized the Member for St. John's East.

**MR. MURPHY:** Before I was elected, Mr. Chair, a long time ago I used to be a bouncer and it was also retro for me – I thought they were going to get into it, but anyway let peace reign I guess within the House again.

Mr. Chair, I want to take this opportunity to thank you again for this opportunity to get up and speak to this particular piece of legislation. I wanted to give a couple of minutes to that and, at the same time, sum up my very short political career, as everybody is saying.

When I look at the budgetary plans of the government, I have to bring this into context of what this Province is going to be dealing with in the future. One of the big things that we are concerned about of course – and all the parties talk about it. The government side will talk about it, the Official Opposition will talk about it, and our party will talk about it too. The importance of seniors in this Province and looking after our seniors in the next coming years, I call this one of the biggest crises that this Province is ever going to face.

I want to talk a little bit about the statistics I have been looking at over the last little while. This is not the first time that I talked about this.

One of the first times I talked about this I think was probably within the first time I ever dealt with a budget.

Mr. Chair, I am going to come back to the 2011 Census of Statistics Canada just for a minute and talk about what Statistics Canada is actually telling us about this crisis that we are probably going to be facing in the next little while – that we have not seen any plans for so far yet – because really the numbers are alarming. I will bring this forward to the government's attention, I guess just to put it on the record here.

Right now, Mr. Chair, as of the 2011 Census, the population of this Province that are between the ages of seventy-five to seventy-nine is 14,620 people. We have problems now in dealing with senior's homes and where we are going to be placing seniors. If I can go back to the particular age group who are right now between fifty and fifty-four years old, a projectile of what we are going to be seeing by the time they catch up to those ages, we are going to be needing senior's care, and extensive senior's care.

I am looking at a population of 43,180 people, approximately four times that number, or about three-and-a-half times the number actually. We have a crisis situation where I think government is going to have to deal with it, but government cannot go it alone when it comes to dealing with that situation. Government has to consult with the people of the Province on this.

One of the important points I would like to bring out, and I guess summing up the budgetary talk, in this particular case the money talk, is the simple fact that I think besides talking with the people outside about how we are going to address that situation in the future – and I guess in this particular case their population growth strategy. I would also like to bring forth the simple fact that I think this is probably a very good time for government to consider bringing back the committee structure so that we can have an in-depth discussion, indeed, if not an inquiry into how we are going to be dealing with this particular crisis in the future.

The numbers are really quite alarming. If you look at the age group of forty-five to forty-nine, for example, 42,220 people right now; if you

look at the fifty-five to fifty-nine age group, 42,645, we are going to be swamped. We are going to be swamped with people needing care, and we do not really have a solution to deliver. We have to look onwards, of course, a little bit farther than that, a little bit deeper into statistics.

If you go right down to the age group of fifteen to nineteen year olds right now, anywhere in between the high population figure that I gave of 43,180 between the fifty and fifty-four age group, leading on down to the fifteen to nineteen-year-old age group, Mr. Chair, those numbers decline. So we are going to have some erosion that is going to be happening too in our tax base. Government has some significant challenges here that they are going to have to face. It is probably one of the most important issues of our time that we are going to have to deal with, next to how we are going to be paying off the debt. So you can see where the challenges come from.

Mr. Chair, I see my time is winding down. I have several people to thank at this particular point when it comes to how I have spent the last four years.

The first thing I am going to do is thank my wife who has been my rock and has been my stalwart supporter. She has been a cornerstone of how I have been as a person over the last several years and she continues to remain one of my chief advisors in how life carries on. She was the one I consulted with when I came up with the final decision not to run at this particular time around. I know at this particular time, not only do I owe my children a few years, but I owe her a heck of a lot. So I am going to be taking some time off, obviously, away from the House. I am going miss it.

It is a very emotional time, I guess, because it is not everybody who gets to come in and dictate the history. Some people sort of look at it – it was one of these things that was on my wish list, I guess you could say, ever since I was a kid. I would come in here into this House of Assembly and walk through these front doors for the first time and look around at the place where the likes of Joey Smallwood used to speak, and Steve Neary amongst others, and Ank Murphy. I look at the wall here, at the people who kind of dictated my direction.

I look at the picture of Len Simms, former Speaker of the House. I can still remember the day he came in and spoke at our youth Parliament at Gonzaga. He kind of pushed me off in that direction; the same as some very important teachers in my life, Kevin Rumsey and Wayne Parsons. They are just great people.

I remember first coming in here and being sworn in as a Member of the House of Assembly. I remember the words of Bill MacKenzie, when he used to be the Clerk of the House here. He told me what my job was. I can only hope I fulfilled it to the best that I possibly could at the time, for a fellow who really, in essence, was a rookie first stepping out onto the ice of the House of Assembly and actually practicing the craft that I learned all the ways back in high school, watching people preform in the House, or on the House of Assembly channel. That is how I learned it, getting mixed up in provincial politics.

I will tell you something that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador should know. Do not ever discount yourself because of the job you are at, how important you are to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Do not ever consider that you cannot have your name on a ballot just because of the job you are working at – do not ever think that. You are just as important; you have just as important a say as what any of us in this House of Assembly do. I would expect and the people of this House of Assembly would expect that you would use your voice in whatever way you can to get your message out. To let government know what direction you want the Province to be taken in.

I think everybody in this House of Assembly would agree with that too. They want you to speak. They want to be heard. They need direction given to them at the same time. It is not all about government setting policy. It is about the policy being set by the people so that government can take direction on your behalf. I think that is one of the most important lessons that I ever learned, but be yourself too. Like I said, do not ever expect that you can never have your name on the ballot because you can. If you have that dream, pursue it, whatever it is. It does not have to be about serving in government. You could want to be a taxi driver, if that is your dream. Somebody has to pull their

weight at that particular job in order to help keep an economy going. Do not ever discount your career choice.

Mr. Chair, I want to thank as well my sons Aaron and Lewis, my daughters Krista and Bailey for being there as well and supporting their dad. Sometimes kids are a little bit too young to even understand. When kids call out and they are wondering where dad is to, or how come he was not there to pick them up at school today, sometimes that plays on my mind. I am a very human person and a dad, and it was a big part of the role in choosing not to run at this particular time and spend time with them.

I want to thank my constituency assistant especially, Ms Brenda Murphy – I am going to name her. I will put her up against any other constituency assistant who is working for any of the other member in this House. She was the best. She was the other Member for St. John's East. She was the one who pulled on the ropes when I could not be there to pull them. We all know the roles of our constituency assistants, how much of a load that they carry, whenever those phone calls come in, and they deal with a lot of these calls. I want to thank her for her commitment over the last couple of years. I tell you, it really meant so much, and it is still going to be meaning a lot over the last five years. So I wanted to thank her.

I want to thank you, MHAs. As much as what we are divided on political lines sometimes, I think that we are still kin in keeping this Province going, for better or for worse sometimes. When a government comes out with policy, we will always differ on policy, and there is a reason why for that. It gives people options and we come up with the best solutions.

That is why we are here, the democracy that we have, but I want to thank you for the learning experience that I got off some of you. I can remember one of the stark, staring lessons that I had as a rookie MHA coming in here for the Muskrat Falls debate, which was great. It comes back to another point too: How many people actually can crawl out of behind the wheel of a taxi, stand here in this House of Assembly and look over at one of the best lawyers in this Province in the form of the Natural Resources Minister of the day, Jerome Kennedy, and



actually go toe-to-toe and talk to him, debate with him on a natural resources issue. That is all part of the dream, but that happened for me and I am so thankful to the people of St. John's East for that.

Just getting back to the point about a learning experience when you are a rookie MHA –

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

The member's time has –

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Leave.

**CHAIR:** The member, by leave.

**MR. MURPHY:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for the leave from the House. I will not be too much longer. I know that we have been here a long time now, and I do not want to keep you here all night at the same time.

One of the first learning experiences I ever had during – I think it was the Muskrat Falls debate and I walk into this House one night and of course the filibuster is on and there are people having a bit of a nap sometimes, I guess, in the Speaker's gallery and everything. I got kind of disgusted and I called them out on it. Apparently, it is one of these lessons that you do not do in the House of Assembly is call out another member on something like that when you are in the middle of a filibuster. It was a learning experience for me that you did not do that to another member. I think after that, I went on the straight and narrow and learned a few things.

Some of the other things that you could say that I learned in this House of Assembly too is that you can get along with the government members, work on an issue, get it done and sometimes get it done real quick. I will come back to the Move Over legislation on this. At the time, the Member for Labrador West was the Minister of Transportation. I wanted a meeting with him to talk about Move Over legislation. I think that we probably sat down and both agreed on that in about fifteen or twenty minutes. It must have been record time. After I did my research and everything, I think it was the week after we had that Move Over legislation passed. I think it was pretty much the next week. I say

to the member and I say to the House here that you can get things done when you need to get them done and there is a spirit of co-operation.

Some of the other things I think that I can take pride in was giving government some notice that we had an alarming environmental issue hitting this Province called fracking. There were some grave concerns about it. I want to say to government at the same time thank you for listening when it came to our party asking for the fracking moratorium. Because they did that – they listened to the people who presented their petitions to me at the time. They allowed me to speak for them when it came to that issue, but I call that kind of a personal victory again where you actually argue with government and you put your case forward.

This is one of the most alarming things, I guess, that is happening to the Province right now. We are at a point in history in our Province where we have to pay attention more than ever to the environment because there are that many pressures on it. Certainly, with the progress of industrial development and what has been happening. I consider those things kind of historic little pieces and little mementos that I can mark along the way where I had some influence on government policy and everything.

When it comes to the municipal funding formula, I think when you are in Opposition you make suggestions to government. So when it comes to municipal funding, I think government heard the need for that because of course taxpayers do not need the added pressure of having to see a tax burden dropped on them. There is still work to do when it comes to transportation planning, when it comes to roads and bridges. We will continue to do that over the next five months, here on my side of the House anyway when it comes to that.

Mr. Chair, let us not ever forget those who feel they are being left behind. I want to talk about that for a bit, it is playing on my mind. I went down and had Christmas dinner with people who are I guess lower on the poverty end of the scale. Christmastime I keep thinking about those people. Can we do better for them? Certainly, we can. We have to work harder to end poverty in this Province and to take these people out of the situation they are in.

I think about the people out there with mental health issues. We have our fellow members of the House right now who are out there on a committee level looking for answers when it comes to dealing with mental health, but the people who are dealing with mental health issues cannot afford to wait for a hospital to be placed where the old hospital is now.

The old hospital was built in 1855. It is older than Canada itself. The time for the old ideas behind treatment at that hospital have to be changed to new ideas around treatment when it comes to dealing with a new hospital. We have to have modern facilities to look after our sick. It is as plain and simple as that for me. We have to make sure government, the Official Opposition, and our party keep working towards that end, and let's keep the committee going and let's hear what the people are saying on that.

Mr. Chair, I think I am probably going to end it there. Again, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I will leave you with a couple of lines from one of my favourite Stan Rogers songs, where I will be going:

“Sun is rising high, burning into the day,  
I will say goodbye, I will be going away,  
Brush away my doubts, what tomorrow will hold,  
Feeling fine for now, going down the road ...”

Thank you for your time, and I thank the people again for their support.

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

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

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

I will just take a few moments to wrap up the debate on this bill. This represents the last piece of discussion and debate with respect to this year's Budget.

It has been an interesting discussion around this Budget. Many people have complimented us on having a Budget that is visionary, a Budget that looks into the future, a Budget that is balanced, a Budget that is about choices, and that is exactly what we set out to do. We approached this

Budget recognizing the Province was facing some unique challenges for the next four or five years and we needed to develop a map. We needed to develop a map to guide us through the next five years, and that is what this Budget did.

We have heard a lot of debate and commentary in the House. There have been some criticisms about some of the things we are doing in here that people do not like. Members of the Opposition have raised some issues that we should be doing, that are not included in the Budget. That is what Budget debates are about. Not everybody will agree all the time about all the things that are in a budget, but this Budget is about choices. This Budget was about making choices in difficult times, making choices that were going to map a course for the future.

I want to repeat something I had said earlier in this Budget debate. Inasmuch as Opposition parties have been critical of what is contained in this document, one of the things I would urge the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to do – because this will be the last Budget that will be delivered in this House before the election on November 30.

This Budget reflects a significant part of our party's fiscal platform for the next five years. This is our blueprint for the next five years – fiscal guidance for this Province. Inasmuch as Opposition parties have stood and said this was wrong, these were not the right choices, you should have done something different, you should have done it in a different way. One of the things we have not heard much about, though, what would their five-year plan look like?

So I am going to repeat something I said here a couple of weeks ago in this same debate. As people look to different political parties this fall, they will be asking themselves: Which party do we want to represent us and to govern this Province for the next four-year term?

Regardless of what choice you make – and I encourage everybody to participate in that process because it is important. It is important for all Newfoundlander and Labradorians that we do participate in that process, but when you do, recognize that you too are making a choice, as we have to do here.

Whatever choice you make, make sure there is one thing that you have in mind. Whatever party you think needs to government this Province for the next four years, the four-year term, they need to have a plan. They need to have a fiscal plan that will guide us through the next four years.

So I suggest to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and to members of this House if you take the Highlights document in our Budget this year, you take out this roadmap, you take out the forecast for five years, you look at the standards that we have put in place, the measurements, the criteria that we are going to use to measure our performance, those performance indicators, you ask yourself what party is able to provide a better blueprint for the next five years, what party is able to provide you a fiscal plan to guide us through the next five years, and then you make your choice. Do not make your choice until you have seen all of those options in which you can choose from.

This is the one that we are offering. This is the one that we believe that will guide us through the next five years and return us to a balanced budget, return us to a surplus, and do it in a fiscally responsible manner. Anyone else who would like to have your support in the fall, make sure they too are able to produce a document such as this that maps out the next five years. If members opposite want to use this one as their plan, I encourage them; in fact, we have some extra copies that we could give them as a part of their campaign literature.

I say, Mr. Chair, in all seriousness to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, make sure that as you evaluate the debate that we have had in this House and recognize that this is our government's fiscal plan for the next five years, as you make your decision going into the fall, make sure you too understand what options and what other alternatives are being provided to you and that future needs to be mapped out in that same way.

With that, Mr. Chair, I am going to take my seat. I want to thank all members in this House for their contribution to the debate on this year's Budget. To members opposite, as I have said, if this is not something that you believe is the right path, then show us an alternative.

Thank you very much.

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

**CHAIR:** Shall the resolution carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Contrary?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**CHAIR:** Carried.

On motion, resolution carried.

A bill, "An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province." (Bill 10)

**CLERK:** Clause 1.

**CHAIR:** Shall clause 1 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**CHAIR:** Carried.

On motion, clause 1 carried.

**CLERK:** Clauses 2 through 6 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall clauses 2 through 6 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Contrary?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**CHAIR:** Carried.

On motion, clauses 2 through 6 carried.

**CHAIR:** Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and House of Assembly in Legislative session convened, as follows.

**CHAIR:** Shall the enacting clause carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**CHAIR:** Carried.

On motion, enacting clause carried.

**CLERK:** An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province.

**CHAIR:** Shall the title carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**CHAIR:** Carried

On motion, title carried.

**CHAIR:** Shall I report Bill 10 without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**CHAIR:** Carried.

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

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance that the Committee rise, report Bill 10 and ask leave to sit again.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise, report Bill 10 and ask leave to sit again.

Is it the pleasure the Committee adopt this motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

Carried.

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

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

The hon. the Member for Bonavista North.

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

The Committee of Ways and Means have considered the matters to them referred and have directed me to report that they have adopted a certain resolution and a recommend a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Chair of the Committee of Ways and Means reports the Committee have considered the matters to them referred, they have adopted a certain resolution and recommend a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

When shall the report be received?

**MR. KING:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that the resolution be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the resolution be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** Be it resolved by the House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened, as follows: "That it is expedient to bring in a measure to authorize the raising from time to time by way of loan on the credit of the province a sum of money not exceeding \$2,000,000,000."

On motion, resolution read a first time.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that the resolution be now read a second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that this resolution be now read a second time.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** Second reading of the resolution.

On motion, resolution read a second time.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, for leave to introduce Bill 10 and so moved that the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. Government House Leader shall have leave to introduce Bill 10 and that the said bill be now read a first time.

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

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

Motion, that the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board to introduce a bill, "An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province," carried (Bill 10).

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province. (Bill 10).

On motion, Bill 10 read a first time.

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

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

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that Bill 10 be now read a second time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 10 be now read a second time.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** Second reading of Bill 10.

On motion, Bill 10 read a second time.

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

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

Once again, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the said bill be now read a third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that Bill 10 be now read a third time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion that Bill 10 be now read a third time?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Division.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Division has been called.

Summon the members.

### Division

**MR. SPEAKER:** Are the Whips ready?

All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

**CLERK:** Mr. Davis, Mr. King, Mr. Hutchings, Mr. Kent, Mr. Dalley, Mr. Sandy Collins, Mr. Felix Collins, Mr. Wiseman, Mr. Jackman, Mr. Granter, Mr. Littlejohn, Mr. Cross, Mr. Brazil, Mr. Forsey, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Dinn, Mr. Cornect, Mr. Kevin Parsons, Mr. Little, Mr. Peach, Mr. McGrath.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against the motion, please rise.

**CLERK:** Mr. Ball, Mr. Andrew Parsons, Ms Cathy Bennett, Mr. Jim Bennett, Mr. Slade, Ms Dempster, Mr. Edmunds, Mr. Kirby, Mr. Lane, Mr. Reid, Mr. Hillier, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Crocker, Ms Michael, Mr. Murphy.

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

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

**CLERK:** Mr. Speaker, the ayes: twenty-one; the nays: fifteen.

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

I declare the motion carried.

This bill has now been read a third, it is ordered that the bill do pass – I must check, though, with the Clerk; did we already read the bill a third time?

**CLERK:** No, we did not read the bill.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Okay, I will ask for third reading.

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province. (Bill 10)

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

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 10).

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

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

I understand that the Administrator has arrived to visit the House.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you.

We are just waiting for His Honour the Administrator to arrive to provide Royal Assent on the bills.

Admit His Honour the Administrator.

All rise.

[His Honour the Administrator takes the Chair.]

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** It is the wish of His Honour the Administrator that all present be seated.

**MR. SPEAKER:** May it please Your Honour, the General Assembly of the Province has at its present session passed certain bills, to which, in the name and on behalf of the General Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

**CLERK:** A bill, "An Act To Amend The Canada-Newfoundland And Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Newfoundland And Labrador Act." (Bill 2).

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Works, Services and Transportation Act." (Bill 4)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000." (Bill 6).

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Revenue Administration Act." (Bill 7)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Services Charges Act." (Bill 8).

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act." (Bill 9)

A bill, "An Act To Authorize The Raising Of Money By Way Of Loan By The Province." (Bill 10).

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Health And Community Services Act." (Bill 11).

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, 2000 No. 2." (Bill 12)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Regional Service Boards Act, 2012." (Bill 14)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Teachers' Pension Act." (Bill 15)

**HIS HONOUR THE ADMINISTRATOR (Chief Justice J. Derek Green):** In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these bills.

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** All rise.

[His Honour the Administrator leaves the Chamber. Mr. Speaker returns to the Chair].

**MR. SPEAKER:** Please be seated.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

As we are nearing the end of the session I think probably it is appropriate if we would invite our party leaders, starting with the NDP, to have a few words to close out the spring session.

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

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

It is always an honour to stand and speak when we come to the end of a sitting. I think that is what we are doing here today. The session began on April 21. We came into the House in the earlier spring, but this session began on April 21. We are in the fourth session of the forty-seventh General Assembly I think – getting all my facts straight and getting the language straight is always complicated. We have the Assembly, we have the sessions, and we have the sittings. I think this is the spring sitting.

Will we sit again in this Assembly? That will be, of course, at the call of the government, the Government House Leader, and the Lieutenant Governor through the government whether or not we come back in here. We know that we have a general election on November 30, but that is over four months away. We all know in politics too that anything can happen in politics. A day is a long time in politics, we all know.

What always happens when we are in session is that the time flies. We have been here now seven weeks, I think, since we started this

session. We have done a lot of work. We all know that we do not agree on everything. We did bring in fifteen bills this time; some of them we all voted for, and some we did not. That is the way it goes because we all recognize the fact, and respect the fact actually, that we are here representing different positions and representing different positions not just as individuals in this room, but the positions of people who voted for us, and the parties that we are a part of.

We have to be faithful to that. All of us, I think – and I know all of us are here because we are here for the good of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and we are all committed to that. We sincerely believe that people who voted for us voted for us because of what we stand for and the policies that we may represent here in this House. I think it is good that in spite of the heat that sometimes gets generated – and we all know that heat gets generated – that we also respect each other and respect the differing opinions. The important thing is that we work together for the good of the people.

Having said that, I will not belabour it. We have a summer ahead of us, which is a summer prior to a general election; but, as I said, it is also the summer of a general election that is far away. We all, too, will have to be part of the federal election, I guess. Being the small population that we are, I know that our supporters and our members do not differentiate between being supporters federally or provincially.

They are totally involved politically, those who work hard for our parties, all of our volunteers, et cetera. It is going to be quite a few months ahead of us, people working on the federal election, and then a slight break before I presume the writ will be dropped for our own general election, the provincial election.

Before closing this sitting, I am very grateful. I want to express that to the people who support all of us here in this room. Our Table Officers, of course; the special Office of the Speaker of the House and the Deputy Speaker. The people we do not see, sometimes we forget them. The people who record everything we say and do here, Hansard. The people in the Broadcast Centre. They are probably grateful we did not have any filibusters this session because it is

very hard on them when those things happen, but we do what we have to do in the political system. We are very grateful to the work they do.

The work of the Legislative Library. That work really is behind the scenes, the Legislative Library. They do a tremendous job when we are all doing research on various issues that come up during a session. We are very grateful to them, and the Pages who take care of us so well here in the House of Assembly. Then the people in our caucus offices. I know we all would like to have more people sometimes. Our caucus staff work very, very hard. I think we need to be grateful to them for everything they do.

Having said that, I wish everyone well for the summer. I am sure we will all be bumping into each other throughout the summer. Although, with the new position I now play in my own caucus and party, I will not be travelling as much around the Province this year. I am going to miss that a bit. I have enjoyed it because I got to know the Province so well.

I wish everybody well. Have a good summer. I hope the rest of summer will be better than the second day of summer is proving to be today.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I want to take a few minutes too, obviously to thank all of those who have supported us in the last ten weeks, in the spring session in particular.

One thing, listening to the House Leader for the Third Party, I am certainly glad she is not able to travel as much this year because typically she showed up in my district at Strawberry Festival time and was always very active in the dunk tank. Fortunately, she happened to put me in that dunk tank a few times. So the fact that you are not travelling in the district this summer is real good news for me. Some of those nights have been very cold and I have been left shivering there looking for a warm place to be.



So you stay right where you are. I would appreciate that, I say to the people in this House.

On a more serious note, I, too, want to reach out and thank a lot of people. As we just heard, who knows where this will be, if we will be back in this House at all before the next election. Certainly, that is not our decision. It will be the call of the Premier and government at this point.

In reflecting on this, I do want to make mention – just in case we are not back here. Some people will not be coming back to this House. I reflect and remember back in 2007 when I was in a similar circumstance, and I look no further than the Speaker who has already made his commitment that he will move on to the next step of his life. I want to recognize the great work the Speaker has done, and we wish you all the best in the future, Sir.

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

**MR. BALL:** Realizing the Speaker always gets great support from his deputies, we recognize those people too. In this particular case it was a different sense of scrutiny on our Speaker, as we had the former Speaker actually sitting as the Minister of Finance. So that was an unusual role and turn of events we have seen in this session of the House.

To our Table Officers, our staff throughout the House of Assembly, I, too, want to say thank you and repeat many of the comments the House Leader for the Third Party just said. To our Sergeant-at-Arms, our commissionaires that we run into every day as they patiently wait for the debate inside this House to finish, then they go on their own way and home to their families.

Our Pages who have gone over and beyond, I have to say, the great work you have done. We have been able to recognize some of you for the personal achievements you have had. We really appreciate you being here and supporting us on a day in, day out.

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

**MR. BALL:** For those of you who will not return, we wish you all the best in your future endeavours as you pursue educational opportunities right here in our Province. I

encourage you to do that. So thank you very much.

To Hansard and the Broadcast staff, who are always there, hidden in some of the darker corners of this building but always there when we need them and producing some great information for us. It becomes very useful to us on a day-to-day basis that we do the work here.

To the media, who are usually there waiting for us on a daily basis. We do appreciate the work they do in getting our messages out and helping people across the Province become more informed of what we do in this House of Assembly. So we want to thank you, too.

The Legislative Library, that we lean on, on a regular basis, providing us information to help us as we prepare for the long hours of debate here.

Recognizing our Third Party, I want to thank you for your co-operation that we have seen in the past. A lot of what happens in this House comes with a fair amount of co-operation from all MHAs. As a matter of fact, most legislation that goes through this House of Assembly comes with all three parties supporting it. So I want to say thank you to you as well.

To our government members and your staff who provided the technical briefings on occasion, helping us prepare to have a proper, informed debate in this House of Assembly.

Of course, my own team here standing behind me, what can I say? This is a group I will say that I feel the support of everyday, great chemistry, great teamwork here. As they head out into this election year facing nominations in some cases, I want to thank you for the support you have given me and your support for the people of the Province. Thank you very much for that.

We have a fabulous staff who are actually supporting our group as well. They were there, and often they meet personal challenges. It is no different than many people across the Province. They had to deal with personal challenges, yet come to work and support the role of the Opposition. It is great to see that.

With that, I will just conclude my remarks by saying we have had great support. For the first time in this session for sure we have seen two very functioning, what I call all-party committees. We had one on the shrimp allocation, the other one on mental health and addictions. It is great to see that kind of support. It is a great message, I believe, as we send this to the people of the Province who are always looking for a non-partisan role for politicians in our Province.

As Leader of the Official Opposition, I am really looking forward to getting around this Province. It is something I enjoy very much, meeting people in their own communities. It is there that we get a real good flavour of what the challenges are facing families, our seniors, our young people, and people with disabilities. It is there in their own communities that we get a real good sense of where we can make a difference. We really appreciate the challenges they have to meet on a day-to-day basis.

Also to that, as we travel the Province we get a reassurance of the beauty that this Province has and we are able to promote to all parts of the world, not only just the fact that – the landscapes are so breathtaking. Again, we still have a great group of people who are there to provide service to our tourists who are visiting our areas and providing that hospitality that only Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are known for.

It is an election year, as we say. I guess for all of us in this House, as we know, the election is on. So those of you who will return in the fall, I will look forward to seeing you. Those of you who will move on to other parts of your life, I want to wish you all the best on whatever that next step is.

I wish you all good health, safe journeys, and we will see you over the summer.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

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

I would like to thank both the Member for Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi, the former leader now I guess, the House Leader for the Third Party, for the New Democratic Party, and also the Leader of the Opposition for their very kind words. I join them in the very kind words they have expressed, especially to the people who make the operations of the House and government happen on a daily basis throughout the year, Mr. Speaker.

I know that both members have mentioned several of them, including yourself, Mr. Speaker, people who work in your office, your staff around you, the Clerk, as well as Table Officers. Also, a lot of people do not realize it – we see it as members of the House from time to time the work that goes on behind the scenes, from Hansard, as an example. Every day we receive – this is the draft from Question Period from this very day. The work is done efficiently, very well, and then the official transcripts come after that and are available publicly. As well as the Broadcast Centre who every day broadcasts the activities of the House of Assembly and do it with what I believe is a professional broadcast and an opportunity for people of the Province to tune in and to watch what happens here in the House of Assembly, in the people's House of Assembly.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to identify some of the roles that take place in the House here from members as well, but before I do that we all also rely on the assistance and support from the people who are around you, Mr. Speaker, and our Pages. These are young people who want to come and experience the House of Assembly. They come here and they want to have an opportunity to see it first-hand. They also – very similar to what we do – come here to serve as well. They do it professionally. We are proud of them. We appreciate the work they provide to us, the assistance and supports throughout –

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, in the House as well the elected members have a variety of roles. We have in parties House Leaders, as was talked about, and during the sitting of the House

they meet regularly. The Opposition House Leader, as well as the New Democratic Party House Leader, and the Government House Leader meet on a daily basis. They have discussions about activities in the House and the schedule.

So it is not all what people often see in the House because there is work and cohesiveness that happens behind the scenes to make sure that we have an efficient and effectively operating House of Assembly. I want to thank all of them for the work they do because I know it is a lot more – I know the Government House Leader has many responsibilities while the House is open. I know it is one that puts additional pressure on him, the same as members opposite as well. So I thank them for their additional roles.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the Whip. I know our party Whip and the Whips for the other parties as well – I cannot speak for what happens within their own parties, but I can tell you ours. I think he actually thinks he has a whip some days that keeps us in shape.

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** Whips do that, Mr. Speaker. The role of the Whip is lengthy, but on a daily basis they are very focused on who is where and they are orchestrating the coming and going of members in and out of the House for one reason or another, and also activities around caucuses outside the House as well, so congratulations to them.

The member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, mentioned committees and there is a significant amount of work that happens with committees as well. Committees, quite often, is through the Budget process. Committee work happens in the mornings and in the evenings. Members come to the House of Assembly here to hear from departments. They are done in three-hour blocks. Most all of them use three-hour blocks. Some of them go longer than three-hour blocks. That happens during the course of the sitting as well. So not just during the regular House of Assembly sittings in the afternoons, there are other sittings that take place here in the House with committee work and I want to thank all members of committees.

As the member opposite referred to the all-party committees that have taken place, and I have said and I am a supporter of a larger role for all MHAs in the House of Assembly. I know members opposite are as well. I think they are good examples of how the House can be more effective, have greater input from all members of the House. My belief is that when we have greater input from all members of the House, then we will have better results as a result of that. I thank all Members of the House of Assembly on both sides and all three parties for their participation and work in all-party committees this year. I think Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are better because of that, and I thank them for that.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a few moments to also acknowledge members who have spoken up about their future. While we do not know yet if there is going to be a fall sitting of this particular session – and there could very well be a fall sitting of this particular session. In knowing that some members have expressed a future for them – we heard this afternoon from the Member for St. John's East.

I just want to take a moment to congratulate him on his contribution to Newfoundland and Labrador. We may see him again here the fall, but I do want to take a moment because he did have his speech this afternoon and I just want to thank him for that, thank him for sharing his very personal comments, background and history, and his deep appreciation for having had the privilege to serve here in the House. We all serve with a level of privilege that is provided to us by the people of the Province, so congratulations to you and I wish you all the best, Sir.

Also the Member for Gander has indicated his future desires, and we do not know how the future is go, but we wish him all the best in the future, as I do you, Mr. Speaker, wish you all the best and all Members of the House of Assembly. We come here every day and we run for office, all of us do, because we want to make a contribution to our Province. We want to make our Province better. We want to make improvements to the Province. We want the people of the Province to benefit. We want Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to benefit from the work that we all do here in the House.

We cannot do that without support mechanisms around us. We all have staff that assist us. We have political staff that assist us in our offices, from constituency assistants who work in our districts when we are here in the House of Assembly and we are tied up with work of government that keeps us busy. We rely heavily on constituency assistants. It is important that we acknowledge and recognize them, as the Leader of the Opposition has done.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the public service – I cannot be prouder of the people who work for Newfoundland and Labrador than I am proud of our public service. They come to work every day; they work really hard.

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

**PREMIER DAVIS:** They work very, very hard for the people of the Province. They are the ones who deliver programs and services on a regular basis. They are the ones who are on the front lines quite often, face to face with Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are having contact with government. It is public servants who do that

We are blessed to have a hard-working, dedicated – I know some of them who are so well educated, that want to work in public service, could work elsewhere, could work in private practice, could work in private business, could in their own businesses, but choose to work in public service. In many ways it is a calling to itself and as all members of the House just did in expressing our appreciation to them, I join them in expressing that appreciation to all members of public service.

We also have around Newfoundland and Labrador groups of supporters. People who are not employed by government, people who are not directly related or employed by government, but people who support elected members and form teams around elected members so we can continue to advocate and work for the people of the Province. We all have those around throughout Newfoundland and Labrador and it is important, I think, to acknowledge the assistance and support they give us.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not take a moment to reference family. The

Member for St. John's East talked a fair bit about family just a few moments ago this afternoon. I live in an area where I can drive to the House of Assembly in less than thirty minutes from my home in Conception Bay. I can come here in a very short period of time but many members who come from all around Newfoundland and Labrador – I know members who spend countless nights living in hotels.

While on the surface it may seem oh, that is nice, you get a chance to stay in a hotel; but once you have done it for 100, or 150, or 200 nights a year, it gets a bit tiring after that. It also means that you are away from your family, away from your home and your community while you are doing that as well. I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, to reference the most important people in our lives, being our family, because quite often when we do the work that we do, they make sacrifices on their own selves. I know I speak for all members on our side of the House in expressing our appreciation to our partners, our children, our families, our extended families, friends, and neighbours who quite often play a role in our own lives, but we lose that somewhat by the career paths that we choose. So my sincere appreciation to all of them.

Mr. Speaker, as I conclude and wind up this afternoon, I just want to acknowledge once again, as elected members there is nothing that we appreciate more than our love for Newfoundland and Labrador, our love for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, the people who live in this great Province. We do the best we can for all of them. We make decisions that we believe are right for them. We come in here and have open debates.

That is the beauty of having a society of democracy where we are elected by the people. We come here and present our views, take our positions, and we have our debates and our discussions. I am sure those discussions will occur and continue to occur outside the House throughout the summer.

I wish all Members of the House of Assembly a safe summer. We are going to continue to work hard and we are going to continue to do what we were elected to do, representing the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I do wish people a

safe summer, safe travels to all, and good health to everyone.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you to all three speakers, from the NDP, the Official Opposition, and from government side, the Premier. Thank you for your comments.

As has been already said, of course, this potentially could be my last day sitting in the House of Assembly, and as Speaker you do not usually – well, you do not get a chance to speak.

I remember the Minister of Finance, when I was Deputy Speaker he said to me one time – I said, would you like to go back in Cabinet? He said, yes, I think I would. He said being Speaker is like being on the team but never getting a shift. I can relate, because you never get to have your say in the House of Assembly other than to say over the proceedings.

I want to say thank you to my district and the people who elected me in 2007 and again in 2011, the great people of Lewisporte District. I thank them from the bottom of my heart for doing that and placing their confidence in me.

I want to say a special thank you to my family for their support. I want to say to the people who make this place run, and you do not really give them a full appreciation for it until you sit in the office. We have a great, a super group of Pages. This group is phenomenal.

The people who sit at this Table every day, they soon become your friends. You have alluded to Hansard and the Broadcast, and all these people who make the place work. They are super people. I want to thank them for all they do.

For those of you who are retiring, I do wish you from the bottom of my heart good health and happiness as you face whatever stage in life you are going to be facing from here on in and whatever bend in the road brings you. For those of you who are offering for re-election, I want to say thank you. As a citizen of this Province, as a member, thank you for putting your name

forward again to offer for re-election and being willing to lead this Province.

I think you are good people, I really do. Sometimes politicians get a hard knock, but I think you are good people and I think your heart is in the right place. I really want to thank you for stepping forward. Despite the criticism, despite the late nights, despite time away from your family, despite all the personal sacrifice you make – yes, we get paid. We get paid a pretty good salary, but there are a lot of people sitting in here who could make an awful lot more money doing other things. It is not all about the money. I really genuinely believe you people have the desire to do what is right. So from my heart, I say thank you. I wish you all the best.

Those of you who are re-offering, I wish you good fortune, good luck, and lots of energy on the campaign trail. Thank you for your co-operation to me as I presided over matters for the last few terms in this House, the last couple of sessions. Thank you, I wish you all the best.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

With that, I move, seconded by the Member for Port de Grave, that the House do now adjourn.

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

I assume, Mr. Government House Leader, it is adjourning to the call of the Chair?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. KING:** Yes, that would be correct, Mr. Speaker. We will adjourn to the call of the Chair.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The House stands adjourned to the call of the Chair.

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

The motion is carried.

This House now stands adjourned.

On motion, the House adjourned to the call of the Chair.