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*Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA*

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The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Statements by Members**

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

Admit strangers.

If I may, I would like to – and on behalf of the House of Assembly – congratulate our law clerk, Ms. Kim Hawley-George, who has been appointed to Queen’s Counsel as of last week.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** If anyone has ever worked with Ms. Hawley-George they’ll know she’s extremely competent. We’re very happy to have her amongst our team.

In the Speaker’s gallery today, I am very pleased to welcome guests from the Salvation Army. They will be referenced in a Member’s statement today.

Firstly, we have Oliver Langdon, who’s no stranger to this House, a former MHA. Welcome to you, Sir. He is now the Major Gifts Representative in the Public Relations Department of the Newfoundland and Labrador Division.

Also with him are Major Rene Loveless, Divisional Secretary for Public Relations and Development NL Division, and Stephen White, Major Gifts Officer, Public Relations Department NL Division.

Welcome to all three of you, and welcome back Mr. Langdon.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** In the public gallery, I would like to recognize Ms. Glenda Power. She is the Executive Director of the Pharmacists Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, and she will be mentioned in a Ministerial Statement today.

Welcome to you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Today, we will hear statements from the hon. Members for the Districts of Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, Conception Bay South, Labrador West and St. John’s Centre.

The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

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

I rise in this hon. House today to congratulate and pay tribute to Colleen Dollimont for publishing her first book, *A Dreamer’s Life: Love, Loss and Winning the Lotto!*

Born and raised in rural St. Alban’s, with a long career as a provincial government statistician for over 25 years, Colleen has captured the hearts of readers, who, like me, were thoroughly captivated by her intimate memoir, her frank recounting of her struggles and heartbreak; as well as the importance of believing in yourself and relying on your own inner strength.

I particularly want to celebrate Colleen’s achievement at this time as many Women’s Day celebrations are still underway and to shine a bright spotlight on this brave and tremendously resilient woman for her steadfast determination to pursue her goals. No spoilers for those of you who have not yet read *A Dreamer’s Life*, but you will be as proud as my district’s residents are of Colleen who clearly demonstrates that hard work, determination and a strong belief in yourself does ensure that dreams can come true. Perhaps not the lotto for most of us, but we will be inspired by women like Colleen and commit to press for progress for all women to follow and achieve their dreams.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in celebrating Colleen’s wonderful achievement and talent. We look forward to reading more of her heartfelt stories.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the Town of Conception Bay South is home to many of this province's finest athletes.

On March 8, I had the pleasure of attending the 2017 Athlete/Coach of the Year and Sports Hall of Fame Awards Ceremony at the Manuels River Hibernia Interpretation Centre.

During the evening, their achievements were highlighted and it was noted the important role sport has played in the development of youth and adults alike within our great town. Mr. Speaker, all nominees for the five award categories were honoured and the following athletes were the recipients of the 2017 awards:

Coach of the Year, Mr. Robin Brown; Junior Male Athlete of the Year, Cameron Brewer; Junior Female Athlete of the Year, Hayley Dalton; Senior Male Athlete of the Year, Nathan Lake; and Senior Female Athlete of the Year, Jessica Davis.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to also congratulate the Sports Hall of Fame inductees: Peter Duff, Holy Spirit School Minor Hockey Association, Rita Kennedy, Neville Hackett, Don Bishop and Tony Cronin who have all contributed tremendously to our sporting community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of this House to join me in congratulating all recipients and nominees of the 2017 Conception Bay South Athletic Awards.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Thirty-two hundred kilometres across the ice and snow of Labrador in 118 hours and 28 minutes on snowmobile. That's the time it took Team Maine to repeat as winners of Cain's Quest 2018, followed an hour later by Team Innu Hawks and Team Southern Sno Racing.

Despite a broken hip, broken foot, sprained muscles and many damaged sleds, 17 of the 41 teams registered officially finished the race, a race that saw local, provincial, national and international participants. This year also saw a record number of indigenous racers from the Innu Nation, Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut.

From Labrador West to Nain to L'Anse au Clair and all checkpoints in between, over 400 people volunteered their services to make the race a tremendous success. The Cain's Quest committee under Chairperson Glenn Emberley has worked tirelessly to make Cain's Quest the premier snowmobile race in the world.

Cain's Quest Snowmobile Endurance Race has been described as the ultimate in extreme racing, a true northern adventure that gives racers the experience of a lifetime.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in congratulating the racers, the support teams, organizers and volunteers in making Cain's Quest 2018 a great success. See you in 2020.

Thank you.

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

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

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

The Salvation Army has reached a significant milestone and broke ground for construction of their new Centre of Hope, on Springdale Street in St. John's Centre. The centre will provide 20 affordable, supported housing units, a health clinic, food bank, mental health services and drug addiction programs for some of the most marginalized members of society.

At the ceremony, Major Rene Loveless said, "Some might have thought that this day would never come, but here we are, and it's a wonderful day. Today our hearts are bursting with gratitude as we reflect on the hard work, dreams and perseverance of our organization, our partners and stakeholders that will now transform the Centre of Hope from a concept into a reality."

Congratulations Oliver Langdon; Divisional Commander, Lt. Colonel Eddie Vincent; Major Hedley Bungay, director of the centre; and social worker extraordinaire, Denise Miller, and their whole team. Their work is the epitome of love and hope.

Thank you for this gift to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Bravo!

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

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

**Statements by Ministers**

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

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

I rise to acknowledge and remember a somber day in the history of our province. It was nine years ago, on March 12, 2009, that Cougar Flight 491 crashed into the cold North Atlantic, resulting in the loss of two crew members and 15 passengers.

All of those lost that day were simply doing what so many other people in this province continue to do on a daily basis – travelling to their worksites off our coast.

Events such as this serve as a stark reminder of the importance of a strong safety culture for those who make a living, both on and around our waters. We must encourage vigilance and work co-operatively with all of those who are involved in our offshore including other levels of government, regulators and companies, to prevent future tragedies from happening.

We must never take health and safety for granted.

Mr. Speaker, we honour and remember the lives of those lost that day and I offer my deepest sympathies to their families, their friends and co-workers. Our thoughts are with them.

I will be attending a memorial service later today at St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church on Craigmillar Avenue here in St. John's. It's a

public event which begins at 7 p.m. I encourage all Members of the House of Assembly to join us there this evening.

Thank you.

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I would like to thank the Premier for an advance copy of his statement today. Mr. Speaker, we join with the Premier, all Members of this House of Assembly, in fact, all Newfoundlanders and Labradorian everywhere, in remembering the tragic helicopter crash of Cougar Flight 491 nine years ago today.

I, as many do, remember this tragic incident. I clearly remember the very moment that I learned of it and how I felt, the shock of hearing what was taking place.

We as well extend our thoughts to families, friends and co-workers who have been impacted by this tragedy – this terrible, terrible tragedy.

I would also like to take a moment to think about the brave men and women who make a living in our offshore, in our fishery, in transportation on and around our waters. We must, as the Premier referenced, continue to keep safety of those people offshore top of mind at all occasions.

Mr. Speaker, we share in a moment today, together as Members of this House of Assembly, and I know we share our thoughts and prayers to all people impacted by this tragedy.

Thank you.

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

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

I do thank the Premier for the advance copy of his statement. We all remember where we were when we heard the tragic news of Cougar Flight 491, and the agonizing wait for news which just

got worse and worse. Nine years later though, we also remember that Judge Robert Wells, who led the offshore safety inquiry, said his most important recommendation was the need for a separate offshore safety authority.

In light of the recent Husky near miss, in the memory of those who died on the Cougar flight, we once again ask government to honour this essential recommendation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

**MR. HAGGIE:** Thank you.

There are more than 700 practising pharmacists in Newfoundland and Labrador today, and with March being Pharmacist Awareness Month, it's the perfect time to say thank you. These people are highly trained, capable professionals who provide front-line services every day to the general public.

Mr. Speaker, we often hear stories of the great work that pharmacists do in their communities and the helping hand they lend to people and their families, to seniors and to patients. They provide advice, information, education and support in encouraging people to manage their own health.

The Premier and I attended the Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador's opening reception for Pharmacist Awareness Month last week. It was a wonderful evening and an opportunity for us to reiterate our continued support for pharmacists. We want to make sure pharmacists have the ability to work to their full scope of practice and will increase their role in the delivery of primary health care. By expanding areas of scopes of practice, we are ensuring that people have greater access to primary care.

I encourage everyone to reach out to their local pharmacist this month. Have a conversation with them to learn more about the services they provide. I also want to acknowledge some other

partners for their part in our health care system including the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board, faculty and staff with Memorial University's School of Pharmacy and pharmacy technicians across the province.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to mention that the Executive Director of the Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador will be moving on from her position at the end of the month. It's been a pleasure working with Ms. Power. I wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East - Bell Island.

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. This side of the House also wishes to show our appreciation to the pharmacists in our province and to acknowledge the vital role they play in delivery of health care to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Ms. Power as the executive director of the Pharmacy Association of Newfoundland and Labrador. We're more than confident that she will continue to be successful as her career progresses.

Pharmacy is not an easy occupation, Mr. Speaker, but those who choose this path do so for the right reasons. The Official Opposition wishes to send a collective thank you for the great level of care and expertise that our over 700 pharmacists provide to the families of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy. I join the minister in thanking the pharmacists, teaching faculty, staff and pharmacy technicians for their excellent work in this province.

We need pharmacare to become fully a part of the universal accessible health care system in this country. I hope the province will be strong in arguing for this, especially in light of the watered-down version being talked about by the federal Liberal government.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, the Newfoundland and Labrador sporting community is celebrating again. Last night, Team Gushue won their second consecutive Tim Hortons Brier, the first team to do so since 2008-09. The final was electrifying coming down to the final stone.

Team Gushue has proven they are at the top of the curling world with strong performances from lead Geoff Walker, second Brett Gallant, third Mark Nichols and skip Brad Gushue. At this year's Brier, Brad also achieved the most wins as skip in Brier history. I know I speak for all of us in this hon. House when I say we are so proud of this team and all they have accomplished.

This back-to-back win puts Team Gushue in elite company. Since 1927, only eight skips have achieved this accomplishment, including greats such as Kevin Martin and Randy Ferbey. I think it is safe to say, Mr. Speaker, that Team Gushue will go down in curling history also as one of the greats.

Team Gushue will once again proudly wear the maple leaf as Team Canada at the World Curling Championships in Las Vegas starting on March 31. At the event, they will defend their world championship title from 2017.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, I congratulate Team Gushue

on their success. I also congratulate Team Newfoundland and Labrador, who captured the hearts of many at the 2018 Tim Horton's Brier and as a result skip Greg Smith was awarded the Ross Hartstone Sportsmanship Award.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. Member for the District of Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition, I would also like to extend heartfelt congratulations to Team Gushue on their second consecutive Tim Horton's Brier win last evening.

Like many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, I was very proud to watch Geoff Walker, Brett Gallant, Mark Nichols and Brad Gushue compete throughout the Brier and wish them all the best at the World Curling Championships in just a couple of weeks.

I am optimistic that the entire curling community from this country will join us in this province as we cheer them on while they compete in Las Vegas to defend their world championship title.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take a moment to congratulate Team Newfoundland and Labrador and skip Greg Smith on their first appearance at the Brier and for being awarded the Ross Hartstone Sportsmanship Award. Throughout the Brier, Greg Smith and his team demonstrated their true love for the sport of curling.

I am thrilled at their accomplishment and hope to see them compete again on the national stage. I congratulate Team Gushue and Team Smith on their Brier achievements and I look forward to hopefully having two more teams from this province compete again next year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** I thank the minister, Mr. Speaker.

All across Newfoundland and Labrador we are so proud of Team Gushue. Who could resist last night's game? Our guy, Brad Gushue, leading his marvellous team did it, and now on to the World's. And not to skip our own team and our own Greg Smith capturing the Ross Hartstone Sportsmanship Award for his heart and generosity in the game. It just doesn't get any better. Or will it? We'll all stay tuned.

Bravo to all, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral Questions.

#### Oral Questions

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the legalization of marijuana is just a few, short months away.

I ask the Minister of Finance: What analysis has government carried out to understand the financial impacts to our province?

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

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

There has been a great deal of work by officials from a number of departments in government looking at the social impacts, the impacts to the RNC, and the RCMP for that matter, for additional work in that regard. There are a number of impacts.

Until cannabis is actually legalized and the true impacts are fully understood, Mr. Speaker, it's difficult to put an exact dollar amount or an exact figure on the cost associated with the implications to the provincial government.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Mr. Speaker, I'd have thought, with the budget a short time away, that the government would have had some financial impacts or projections done on the cost to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

The minister has stated there will be significant costs borne when it comes to safety, when it comes to education, when it comes to health and when it comes to addictions.

So I ask the Minister of Finance again: After months of work, just sitting days out from the provincial budget, can the minister give us some details on what the cost will be to the province?

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

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

The budget is going to come down on March 27, Mr. Speaker. I would encourage the Member opposite – any funding that's put aside for any of these areas will be included in the budget and fully disclosed for the general public.

Mr. Speaker, as the budget is brought down we will have funding put aside for various areas within government to help deal with the implications. Again, at this particular point, Mr. Speaker, it's more of a best judgment by government as opposed to a finite number.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The minister is going to use his best judgment; an interesting answer from the minister.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister – the legalization of marijuana, which is only a few months away – if he can give some assurance to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that they as

taxpayers won't be subsidizing the roll out of legalization of marijuana in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Can he give some guarantee to people – it sounds like he probably can't – of the province that they won't be subsidizing those costs associated with legalization?

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

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

Cannabis was imposed on us by a decision of the federal government. Mr. Speaker, it's something that is being done to try and keep cannabis out of the hands of children by legalizing and ensuring that, for those who choose to consume the product, it's done in a safer manner than what potentially may be done on the street.

I can say, Mr. Speaker, that in an effort to try and keep the profits out of the hands of criminals, there's already a cost to the people of the province in dealing with this on a social basis and on a justice basis, as well as many other areas.

Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers of the province are already contributing to dealing with cannabis.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In November 2017 the Justice Minister said: "We don't think there's a tremendous amount of money in this for the provincial treasury, and there are certainly going to be spending priorities as well for public education and enforcement."

I ask the minister: Can you give us some indication of what kind and what level of funding will be given towards the education component of the legalization of marijuana?

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

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

I'd be absolutely delighted to share that information with the Member opposite on March 27. Mr. Speaker, the budget is only a couple of weeks away and we will be fully disclosing where funding is going in all aspects in every department through the budget process.

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

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

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We know that enforcement and safety is a major component of the legalization of marijuana. The Minister of Justice referenced that on November 2017 as well.

I will ask the Minister of Finance this – if he can't give us any numbers, we'll have to wait for the budget – what assurances can he provide to the people of the province that law enforcement in our province, both the RNC, RCMP and other law enforcement, will be adequately provided with the necessary tools, equipment and training available to ensure safety on our highways?

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

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

One thing I can guarantee is that we'll always work with law enforcement, whether it's the RNC or RCMP, to do whatever they have to make sure that our public safety – not just as it relates to the legalization of cannabis, when it comes to absolutely anything. Our responsibility is to work with them.

This is an issue, as it's being driven by the federal government, that all provinces are dealing with right now. One of the issues is road safety when it comes to testing. This is something that's still ongoing.

We, like many provinces, are working with the feds, working with our counterparts in other provinces, to ensure that we will be ready for the legalization when it happens. I'm confident we'll have the best practices in place and that we



will do everything in our power to make sure that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are safe.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, on Thursday the Minister of Finance indicated that negotiations with CUPE have stalled because of the no-layoff clause. The minister said: "We want to ensure that the no-layoff clause does not extend into future contracts."

Minister, in the past you have stated your legal opinion guarantees the no-layoff clause does not extend beyond the current contract. What has changed?

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

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

What I can say is that we have assurances that this clause will not roll into future contracts. It's unfortunate that certain individuals in our province put any doubt on that without the full knowledge of what happened at the bargaining table and without the full knowledge of the assurances that we have. But I can guarantee the Member that we are looking for no more and no less from CUPE in this wording than what we have from NAPE. If they're prepared to come in this afternoon and sign that language, we'll be happy to sign it.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, on Thursday as well the minister said that the severance for all public servants is approximately \$600 million; 35 per cent, he

indicated, would come back to the province in possible personal income tax.

I'll ask the minister: In the upcoming budget, are there projections for that revenue of over \$200 million?

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

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

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have upwards to 35 per cent based on income tax and the retail sales tax that will come back to the province. We are booking slightly less than that because we cannot be absolutely certain that it will all come back, but upwards of 35 per cent is what we're looking at having returned to the province in income tax and retail sales tax.

It will be rolled out over the four quarters for the NAPE agreement, based on the fact that that agreement is now ratified. Other agreements, Mr. Speaker, may be ratified at a later date this year. Some of the payments may roll into next year.

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

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

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

I'll ask the minister: The severance number given of over \$600 million, will that include management, executive and include ABCs as well?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, all public servants is what the severance will be paid out to. What we're looking at, at this particular moment, is the NAPE contract that has been ratified. There will be an option for individuals, if they wish to postpone taking the severance payout until retirement or anytime between now and retirement, provided they give adequate notice to the Department of Finance.

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

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

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** Mr. Speaker, just to be clear with the minister, I'm just trying to clarify. So the payout of \$600 million and excess will be for all public servants and there will be a four quarter – I guess fiscal year to make a choice of when you would want that payout to occur. I just want to clarify. Is that correct?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is for all public servants, bargaining and non-bargaining, will be paid out the severance. This is something that other jurisdictions in the country have fought for. In fact, in Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, it was legislated because it is recognized that it's taking a liability off the books. It's something that not only lenders but bond rating agencies – in fact, I think the administration opposite had tried to take it off the books with NAPE and CUPE and others in previous rounds of collective bargaining.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the \$600 million number is a number that was just introduced on Thursday.

I ask the minister: In terms of funding this amount in the payout, will this be done through a loan, increase in taxes, a sinking fund, or how will this be used to find the funds meet these obligations?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Mr. Speaker, the amount will be acquired through borrowing. The savings to the province will be approximately \$35 million a year as a result of eliminating severance. Of that, \$10 million has been earmarked to repay the financing. So it's a net savings to the province, once the severance is all paid out, at \$25 million a year.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, Budget 2017 forecasted an increase in revenue collected through the sales tax.

I ask the Minister of Finance: Given the economy and that people are finding themselves with less disposable income, do you expect to meet your 2017-2018 target of revenue projection?

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

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

Again, the budget is coming down on March 27, Mr. Speaker, and all of those details will be accessible not only to the Members opposite, but to anybody in the general public in a very open and transparent way.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, some ago there was a long-term care facilities announcement and government publicly guaranteed provincial publicly funded staffing.

I ask the minister: Has the annualized costs of staffing, wage increases, pension contributions and benefits all been included in your fiscal forecast?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, they have.

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

**MR. HUTCHINGS:** What is that projection, Minister?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** I don't have that at my fingertips, Mr. Speaker, but I won't make the Member wait until March 27 to receive those numbers. I will certainly get those numbers and provide them.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, inflationary costs are a huge part of program spending for budgets and for fiscal arrangements.

I ask the minister: What inflationary costs have you used in the past and what will you use in the future, in terms of program spending?

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

**MR. OSBORNE:** All of our forecasts, Mr. Speaker, including oil, including inflationary costs and other increases will be certainly made public once we release the budget documents on March 27.

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

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

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

The Health Minister committed to increase the amount of health care money spent on mental health services to 9 per cent by 2022. When the minister made the pledge, the province was spending 5.7 per cent of our health care budget on mental health. The Canadian average is 7 per cent.

I ask the minister: What growth in mental health spending can we expect in the upcoming budget?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mental health and addictions has been a priority for this administration, and I don't think there's any doubt about that. Towards Recovery was very clear. It set itself a target to get to 10 per cent by the time five years was out.

All I can do, currently, in terms of next year's health care budget, is refer the Member opposite to the statements of the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board. The budget will be out on March 27 and it will all be in there.

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

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

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

How will the federal budget's targeted spending on such things as opioid crisis, indigenous mental health, corrections and public safety officers impact this province?

Can the minister provide details on how the money filters down to us on a provincial level?

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

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

I'd like to be able to say any federal funding that's provided to this province is 100 per cent entirely federal funding, but that's not always the case, Mr. Speaker. Oftentimes, federal announcements have a financial impact on this province. We talked about one of those just earlier with cannabis, for example.

Mr. Speaker, the officials in our department have very carefully gone through the federal announcements and have done the analysis on that. That will all be included in our budget to be released on March 27.

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

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

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

The All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions report outlined 54 recommendations.

Can the minister tell us if all of those recommendations have commenced and are in progress?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

We actually committed, as one of those recommendations, to have an update which will be out in June. A sneak preview of that shows that of our 18 short-term recommendations, five are complete. The other 13 will be met by the deadline of June. The update of the 54, 51 are in progress.

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

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

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

Minister, can you assure the people of the province and their families in need of mental health and addiction services that the barriers to access of services have improved as a result of this report?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** I'm delighted to be able to stand in this House, Mr. Speaker, and highlight some of the initiatives under the mental health and addictions program.

We now have doorways rolled out as of today to another three locations in Western Health including Port Saunders, Bonne Bay and Burgeo. Those are walk-in, drop-in clinics, no appointment necessary. I would suggest the evidence, for example from Grand Bank, would

show that we have actually eliminated wait times in that area for counselling.

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** I look forward to being able to make further announcements about that similar effect in those other areas.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. LESTER:** Mr. Speaker, given the relocation of Crown Lands from St. John's to Corner Brook has been completed, what was the total cost of moving the Crown Lands division to the West Coast?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the parliamentary secretary for the Department of Fisheries and Land Resources.

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

**MR. BRAGG:** Thank you very much for the question from the Member opposite. I'm happy to report the estimated cost for that move was in the vicinity of \$200,000.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member opposite for his response.

What is included in this cost? Can government give us a breakdown?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The parliamentary secretary for the Department of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BRAGG:** The cost, Mr. Speaker? I'm not so sure if I'm 100 per cent understanding the question because I'm sure there are numerous costs from a moving truck, to the cost of gas, to people going over.

I'm not sure how elaborate he would like to see the breakdown, but of the \$200,000, I can refer that to the department and get a report back to him as soon as possible.

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

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

**MR. LESTER:** Just to clarify that question, one of the elements within it would be we'd like to know was severance a part of that \$200,000 or was that a separate cost?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The parliamentary secretary for the Department of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BRAGG:** Thank you very much for the question again there, Mr. Speaker.

The original question was the cost of the move. The cost of the move was in the vicinity of \$200,000.

It's my understanding, there weren't a lot of people that lost their employment because people shifted from one job to another. If there's someone that went out, and if you're aware of someone that went out the door and you want to know what their severance actually was, by all means, let us know after this and we'll get back to you.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** In total, how many employees relocated from St. John's to the West Coast? How many new hires has the new Lands office in Corner Brook had?

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

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

I don't have the exact information here but we'll bring it on.

Mr. Speaker, one point we're missing here is the minister, I think it was two weeks ago, had a press conference in Corner Brook. He talked about how the Crown Lands application now is within the limit of 90 days. He was talking about the backlog, how we picked up the backlog.

The move affected very little people. Most people found an appointment here in the St. John's area that we found within the government, but the success and the intent has improved Crown Lands application processing to have it within the limit. The backlog is almost up to 100 per cent and now the date to get an application is within that 90-day period. That's something we should be proud of in Crown Lands and that was the intent of the move.

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

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

**MR. LESTER:** Further to question the status of the move, have all the documents now been scanned and digitized, and what is the plan to store the original documents which are still here in St. John's?

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

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

Part of the issue with scanning the documents is the date of some of the documents. Some of them do have, as we call it, to be kept in a secure vault with refrigeration to keep it to a certain level because of the date of it. There is a process in place to scan all documents.

I'm not sure if all of them have been completed, but I know they're in the process of scanning all documents and putting them into digital form. I'm not sure if they're all completed. I don't think they're all complete but I will get back to you on that answer.

Mr. Speaker, part of the process was to digitize all those documents because some of them are going back to the 1700s, 1800s which is very hard to keep the records yourself. The size of keeping the records these days is immense. So they are in the process of digitizing all

documents, Mr. Speaker, but I will get back if they're all completed by now.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** Mr. Speaker, while the minister called it a wonderful meeting, the concerned residents and council of Port Blandford thought something very different.

Will government commit here today to go back to the table with the community to resolve this issue immediately?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the parliamentary secretary for the Department of Fisheries and Land Resources.

**MR. BRAGG:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Thanks again for the question. Yes, it's very important what is going on out in Port Blandford and we're really concerned about what is going on there. Our door is open for conversation.

The minister met with the representatives from the town, the local service district and the MHA for the district. There are going to be some recommendations come back, and we look forward to the coming days to make a decision on what is going to happen out there.

Thank you.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** The Town of Port Blandford has stated that a plan is to rezone the area within the town boundaries that would cover portion of the forest plan for clear cut.

Will the Minister of Municipal Affairs commit to working with and supporting the council and community to ensure such rezoning occurs?

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

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

Just for the record, myself and the Member for Terra Nova had a press conference out in Clarendville probably about eight, nine months ago where we announced some funding for capital works. The mayor at the time from Port Blandford said it's the first time they received funding in seven or eight years and he said it's the best relationship they ever had with government.

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Those were his words, public words, Mr. Speaker. I could tell the Member and I could tell the mayor that the excellent relationship that he has with Municipal Affairs, which are his own words, will continue. We'll do whatever we can to help out any town in the province.

We have proven that, Mr. Speaker, over the last two years and a bit. To date, we have not received an application from the Town of Port Blandford but our door is open to deal with anybody, and I look forward to the excellent relationship with the mayor, as he stated that we already have, which I know will continue.

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

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

**MR. LESTER:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the relationship that the minister has extended to all the municipalities, but my direct question was: Will he be supporting this application to have this rezoned?

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

**MR. JOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the Member for Terra Nova attended a public meeting just last week I think it was –

**MR. HOLLOWAY:** Thursday night.

**MR. JOYCE:** Last Thursday night – Mr. Speaker, are you asking me am I going to support something that I haven't seen, that the town hasn't got in? What I'll do, what I'll

commit, as I committed to all applications that come in, we will do an evaluation of the application. We will look at the merits of the application, but there's only one thing I can guarantee you – the mayor stood up publicly and said he has an excellent relationship with Municipal Affairs. That will not change because we'll do whatever we can, whatever is right, whatever we can do under our regulations we will help the town.

The first year to get funding in seven years, that speaks volumes of how much we think of Port Blandford and the commitments that the town has and the people of Port Blandford. We stand by it and the same with the Member for Terra Nova, he stands for the people in Port Blandford.

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

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

**MR. LESTER:** In light of the MHA for Terra Nova's obvious frustration illustrated by his comments at last week's meeting, I ask the department now that you've had time to address this situation, who ultimately takes responsibility for this community not being properly engaged and included in the process?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Parliamentary Secretary for the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

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

Certainly thanks to the Member opposite for the question. I attended the meeting in Port Blandford on Thursday night, as was previously stated. Actually, I attend all meetings of this nature throughout my district; I've done it many, many times. It doesn't really matter what the issue is, whether it's been on St. Brendan's or Terra Nova, in Clarendville about Riverside Elementary, all those issues that have been raised by Members opposite, I have been there to listen.

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

**MR. HOLLOWAY:** And I did the same thing on Thursday night. There were a number of

things that were brought forward, including a potential request to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment of our rezoning, as well as could some accommodations be made to the five-year plan. I am working with the community to advance that and I'll continue to do that role.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition for a very quick question, please.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** A quick question.

**MR. P. DAVIS:** I ask the Minister Responsible for WorkplaceNL – she's doing an update and she's doing a review of workers' compensation rules, specifically to those who are impacted by post-traumatic stress disorder.

I ask the minister for an update.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Minister of Service NL for a quick response, please.

**MS. GAMBIN-WALSH:** Mr. Speaker, the draft on the mental health policy is ready to go. The WorkplaceNL website has updated the consultation process on PTSD.

Mr. Speaker, we are moving forward on the coverage of PTSD in this province. I ask the Member to look forward to the upcoming details.

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

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

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

The Minister of Health and Community Services was informed in his 2016 ministerial briefing notes that the 2012 Strategy to Reduce Emergency Department Wait Times would be coming to an end in 2017. The strategy identified five goals for improvement in emergency room wait times.

I ask the minister: Why has there been no final report with concrete results of that strategy?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Wait times in emergency departments are always a topical issue and always an area of concern. I would suggest this has become more of a living document than anything else.

Certainly, I have yet to receive the final report that the Member opposite references. What I have seen, however, is areas of innovation, in Carbonear for example and in Eastern Health, where clinicians themselves have taken ownership of the issue and have reduced significantly triage and wait times in those departments.

What we have done as a department is to try and bring those resources to bear so other areas in the province can benefit from those advances.

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

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

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

I'm continually hearing and receiving information about people, especially here in the St. John's area, spending several hours in an ER before seeing a physician or a nurse practitioner. I heard from a constituent just last week about a six-hour wait for a minor trauma. The national benchmark is one hour.

I ask the minister: What is he doing in follow-up to the 2012 strategy to get our wait times in line with national benchmarks and to do what he just said he wants to make happen?

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

**MR. HAGGIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I think some of the nuances that the Member's question revealed actually speak to our approach which, in shorthand, is that the problems you find in acute care, the solutions, are actually out in the communities.

We've been working very closely with the formation of primary health care teams. This will reduce the need for people with minor complaints to attend an emergency department. An emergency department is there as a safety net for those people whose clinical conditions cannot be managed anywhere else.

Unfortunately, currently we're still seeing 50 per cent of attendees in emergency departments with complaints or conditions that could be perfectly well managed out in the community, outside of an emergency department. That's where our focus is, Mr. Speaker, to reduce that demand and we're making progress.

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, the minister's deal with Canopy Growth includes a tax break of \$40 million, the right to establish four retail outlets wherever they want, \$100,000 a year to Canopy for unspecified research and an order for eight tons of cannabis per year, shutting out many local businesses and the opportunity for community economic development.

In this current fiscal climate where government cut the badly needed Adult Dental Program, cut the over-the-counter drug program and is cutting desperately needed home care hours for our seniors, I ask the minister how can he justify using the people's money to subsidize recreational marijuana and a huge, wealthy national company.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

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

We entered into a supply agreement with Canopy Growth Corporation. They're going to be investing in Newfoundland and Labrador.



They're going to build a production facility that's going to cost well more than \$40 million and create 145 jobs here in Newfoundland and Labrador. There's going to be \$1 million invested in research; support for small growers through their craft growing program.

This is about securing supply for Newfoundland and Labrador. There is no exchange of cash that's happening. What's happening is that any sales of cannabis that happens in Newfoundland and Labrador from a supply arrangement, there will be a commission of 10 per cent of sales.

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

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

**MS. ROGERS:** Mr. Speaker, the minister still has not revealed details of this deal using the people's money. All we know is that the NLC is offering a meagre 8 per cent commission to retailers. Really, what is government's business plan?

What will government be paying Canopy Growth for a gram of cannabis? What will be the retail price? Once the 8 per cent commission is accounted for and after the federal government gets their dollar, what is left?

I ask the minister: How will this offset the government's expenses, the people's money, and especially the \$40 million giveaway to Canopy Growth?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation for a quick response, please.

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

I think I counted six or seven questions for my 45-second response, but I'd be more than happy to give the Member opposite a full briefing when it comes to what's happening with Canopy Growth Corporation. There is no public money going into this deal when it comes to ensuring supply. So she is misconstruing what's actually happening when it comes to securing supply, creating 145 jobs, and also research and

development that is happening right here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We look forward to other suppliers and investors, whether it will be Argentinia Gold or others that are out there publicly going through a process looking to supply Newfoundland and Labrador. We're open for business. We see the market opportunities as well in a private setting when it comes to our work through NLC and what they're going to do for retailers.

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The time for Oral Questions has ended.

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

Pursuant to section 26(5)(a) of the *Financial Administration Act*, I am tabling one order-in-council relating to a funding pre-commitment for the fiscal year of 2018-19.

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

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

#### **Petitions**

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

**MS. PERRY:** 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 a year has passed since the tragic event of January 17, 2017, where our school was completely destroyed; and

WHEREAS we have 250 people in a building which is only equipped to handle 150; and

WHEREAS we do not have a science lab, library/resource room, cafeteria, computer room, student support suite, no wheelchair accessibility washrooms and no multi-purpose room; and

WHEREAS we have classrooms which require co-programming but this cannot happen because of space issues in the building; and

WHEREAS government has a legal responsibility to ensure our students have access to the best education;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to commit to a new state-of-the-art K to 12 school for the students of Bay d'Espoir, announce funding in the 2018-2019 budget to begin the design and tender process, and we would like the construction to be expedited.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I've risen several times in this House to present this petition on behalf of the people. We are all quite anxious to know that budget day is coming soon on March 27. We will hear what government has in store for the children of Bay d'Espoir.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the support of the Premier and the Minister of Education who were certainly there for us as a community when we lost the schools, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding that of the recommendations that have been put forward, one is a new school and one is a renovation, or I guess a renovation of a burnt 60-year-old structure that is wooden.

Mr. Speaker, I think I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that I believe there's recognition that our children deserve a brand new school, a brick structure that is non-flammable. Going back into a 60-year-old wooden structure to me is unfathomable that that would even be put forward as a recommendation because our children deserve better than that. They need to move beyond the nightmares and the memories of last year. Sixty-odd years since we've had a new school in that part of the province and it's time now to enable our children to have the same opportunities as every other child in Newfoundland and Labrador in a brand new school.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, for a response.

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

It's my pleasure to respond to the Member's petition – this is a good new format. As I mentioned before, we had to wait for the insurance policy matter to be all sorted out. I think one of the things I really want to impress on all Members of the House and to the general public is that this has been a tremendous inconvenience for the communities affected and for teachers and staff and students.

Likewise, the children and staff, teachers, who have been displaced as a result of the ceiling falling in down at Bishop Feild Elementary here in St. John's; similarly, a great inconvenience to parents, staff and to students. Luckily, in both cases we did have alternate facilities for students to go to. The former School for the Deaf here in St. John's and then the formerly closed school in St. Alban's for use in this case.

That's not always going to be the case when we have these situations, but I look forward to hearing more about this from my colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, on March 27.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

**MR. PETTEN:** 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 Newfoundland has the highest incidence of cardiac disease in Canada and we need to do what we can to improve our ability to save lives; and

WHEREAS implementation of a new registry can be completed for less than the cost of a new vehicle; and

WHEREAS after implementation the annual cost will be five cents per resident –

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

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

**MR. PETTEN:** WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to enact legislation requiring all AEDs in the province to be registered with an online registry. The registry must also be linked to the 911 system to enable faster response times in the case of cardiac emergencies.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's the second time I presented this petition. This is a follow-up to the Restart a Heart program that was initiated by the former administration and completed by the current administration providing AEDs in all of our arenas, rec centres, schools and public buildings.

It's a wonderful initiative that's designed to save lives and it has saved lives, Mr. Speaker. I think that, in conjunction with the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the government during the last number of years, this has been a very successful program.

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

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

**MR. PETTEN:** It's one that everyone should be very proud of.

But in saying that, there's still more work to be done. This registry, the best way I can describe it is tying it to – you have fire extinguishers. They get automatic – people come in and do inspections on them. They make sure they're up to date in case of emergency. There's no difference in an AED. Recent reports suggested there was a battery problem with some of these AEDs and needed to be replaced and what have you.

Right now, those AEDs that are out around public buildings and schools, as I say, and all our rec centres and community centres, outside of the people operating the building they're in, there's no one really going around doing inspections on them. Most people are not trained to do inspections. They know how to use them but they don't know how to inspect them.

This registry would tie it in to the 911 system. If you had an emergency you could call in. They would be able to tell you the nearest AED from that cardiac emergency which is a wonderful tool to have at your disposal. Outside of saving lives and first responders knowing where the nearest AED is located, it would also have another registry to make sure they're ready and accessible when the need be and we don't know when that's going to be.

It's very cheap in the scheme of things, Mr. Speaker. For government, it's probably looking at \$20,000 to \$25,000. I've worked with a constituent of mine, heart disease runs in their family. At present, he's going to be the subject of a Member's statement later on this month. He's awaiting a heart transplant now in Ottawa. His entire family is afflicted by this and he's very passionate about it.

I've also worked with Mary Ann Butt, and I have spoken to the minister on a couple of occasions on this, the Minister Responsible for Fire and Emergency Services. I want to keep this on the radar and I encourage government to

work with the Heart and Stroke and make this a reality.

Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Further petitions?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Yes, thank you.

I call Orders of the Day, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Orders of the Day.

### Orders of the Day

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider Order 2(a), Interim Supply.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House and that I do now leave the Chair.

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, the Speaker left the Chair.

### Committee of the Whole

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

We are considering the related resolution and Bill 36.

### Resolution

“That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2019 the sum of \$2,806,552,200.”

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

It's indeed a pleasure to get up here again today and talk on Interim Supply. Last week, when I got up, I spoke about my district and the great investments that were made in my district. Before I go any further, Mr. Chair, I forgot. I want to thank you very much for letting me represent the beautiful people and the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis. Imagine not saying that first when I started, Mr. Chair. I see you laughing there and I know it always comes up.

Anyway, last week when I did get up, I had an opportunity to talk about – like I said, I will soon be 10 years in the House of Assembly, and it's a privilege that I take very serious, and I know that I'm one of 40 individuals that have that privilege. So I take my privilege very serious.

I go back to the days of looking at representatives from my district that I had great respect for and still have great respect for. Two of the former Members are deceased now, both Jack Byrne and my dad; and Mr. Tom Hickey that I can remember also, Tom, is still around, and again a gentleman that I feel privileged every time I'm in his company to be able to speak to him and understand his feelings of the House of Assembly and everything else.

So it's a great privilege to be here. Also, before I go on, because I want to talk a bit about my district – and I always stay positive, as positive as I can in this House, and sometimes it's very difficult to stay positive. But last week during Interim Supply the Member for Harbour Main got up and gave us a great speech, one of the nicest speeches I've ever heard in the House of Assembly, and it really hit home. I want to just recognize her because sometimes it's not as easy

to be able to stand up and do what she did last week and talk about her personal situation that she finds herself in now.

We all have hard times in our lives and we all have issues, but what this lady is going through these days, my heart goes out to her and I want to give her full support. I know people on this side of the House of Assembly do support her. No matter what we are as individuals or people, family always comes first. That's who we are as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I just want to recognize her speech last week and it really hit home to me. Sometimes we all live in a society where we all got issues and we all got problems, but my mother always used to say, if you could reach into the bag and hand out your own you'd be okay. What that lady is going through now is a hard time for her, and I just want to assure her that she has my full support and if there's ever anything I can do for her, I gladly will.

She really touched my heart last week and I really wanted to recognize it, because that's not an easy thing to do, to be able to get up and talk about illness in a family and what she's gone through over the last couple of weeks. So I really want to commend her for the great job that she did here last week.

Mr. Chair, I'm going to go back to what my conversation last week was about. I just want to talk about my district. Like I said, I'm here 10 years now. I'm very fortunate that I only do have five towns, and I know that there are people in this House that probably got 300 towns in their district, but I got five. So I touched on Bauline, Pouch Cove and the Town of Flatrock and the different investments that were made over the last 10 years, which has improved the lives of those people in those districts.

I have another two towns that are in my district and I'm going to mention today also, one is the largest town in my district which is the Town of Torbay. Torbay basically is over half my district in size. It has a population of going on 8,000 now, so it's one of the larger towns in the province. I have to put kudos out to them; they have some great volunteer groups in the town. Recently the Lions Club down there did a

donation to the new school in Torbay of \$15,000 and I thought it was a great donation that they did. That's what that community is all about. It's about people coming together when there's a need there for help or whatever. They're a great community.

They have an outstanding volunteer fire department. They have 40 members in their volunteer fire department and the work that their fire department does is amazing. They do a lot of work – I don't know how many hours. I'll get the opportunity and I'm sure I'll be up in the House and do a statement when they finish in April; they have their firefighters' banquet and the stats that come out every year is almost amazing in what they do. They're a great volunteer organization.

The investments that were made in the Town of Torbay over the last 10 years, there have been some huge investments. We could talk about the Torbay Bypass Road which was unbelievable for what it's done for the whole area. One time everybody listened to the radio, either VOXM or CBC, in the morning to find out where the delay was and how much of a delay was on Piperstock Hill, but now you never hear it because of the investment of the Torbay Bypass Road.

The Bypass Road had about 20,000 cars a day travelling along it. As you can imagine, a two-lane highway, with a little bit of slippery conditions with the hills that are down there caused an awful backup; but today, with the investment of the Torbay Bypass Road, which is huge, government paid almost \$20 million to do the Bypass Road and it was a great investment for the area. It also had spinoffs to other communities. While housing starts are down and everything else in most communities, there's still some good growth in the area and it's because people are accessible to St. John's by just five or 10 minutes. It's a good investment that we made there.

The town also opened up recently – and the Minister of Municipal Affairs was with me and we opened up the new depot down there. It's a state-of-the-art facility. They have a great spot down there. It's off the Torbay Bypass. It was an investment of about \$5.8 million, which has just brought the whole area around. They were down behind the town hall with sand and salt, and the

area that they had was pretty ragged, but they're known for their snow clearing. Like I said, they have a lot of roads. It's one of the largest municipalities in the province to do the road network they do. They do a fantastic job. That was also a good investment.

There was some roadwork done down in the community, like Morris Avenue and Mahons Lane. All these places got upgrades over the last number of years; another great investment, investments that needed to be done.

Right now, we're in the midst of a new community centre that's going to be built down there. It's almost \$8 million by the time it's all said and done. We did some improvements to the new soccer field in the area. We did a new ballpark in the area. These are all great investments in the Town of Torbay. I know the people in Torbay really appreciate the investments that were made in that town over the last 10 years.

The other community I want to talk a little bit about today is Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove. This is a community that also has great organizations in it. It's a real sporting community. They're into their sports down there like you wouldn't believe.

This year it's going to be the 200th anniversary of the Royal St. John's Regatta and I tell you, that town is going to be buzzing down there. There will be fellows coming out of the woodwork who will row this year. The Outer Cove crew, as you can remember, Mr. Chair, goes back right to the 9:13 when they held the record for so many years. I'm sure there were people down in Outer Cove the day that it was broke with tears in their eyes remembering their grandfathers and everyone else that ran that.

That town had a lot of issues in its community with flooding. Most of the flooding was caused by the development in Stavanger Drive area. What happened is Stavanger Drive grew. You take all the new homes and everything that was down around Stavanger Drive area and all the new business came in, the flood levels of the rivers and everything came up. There were major issues down in the town with flooding. Every time there was a rainfall there were some huge flooding issues down there.

What needed to be done, first of all, is the Savage Creek bridge needed to be replaced at a cost of about \$5 million, which was shared with the City of St. John's. There was a new bridge built, a lower bridge down there that was about a \$2 million bridge. Plus, in the last five years, we've invested a lot of money in upgrades to all the culverts and everything in the town.

I believe they're very, very pleased with the investments that were made in that town. It has made a huge difference. Anybody who's ever had a flood in their home and is susceptible to floods, understands that every time that they hear tell of rain or snow or mild or anything like that, you can see that it puts a lot of stress on the family.

They're just investments that I wanted to touch base with. Those are the five communities. I'm going to mention a few more things if I get up later on.

I feel over the last 10 years, since I've been here, there have been great investments. The next time I get up I'm going to talk schools. I'm going to talk about the investments that were made in my district in new schools and stuff like that, really good investments because they're investments that we have to do as a government and everybody has to do.

Just in closing now, I'd like to again thank the great people in my district for the support they always give me.

Thank you so much.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Service NL.

**MS. GAMBIN-WALSH:** Mr. Chair, our government continues to make investments which are greatly benefitting the people of Newfoundland and Labrador including the constituents of my district, the District of Placentia - St. Mary's.

One of our government's priorities is to help our communities be safe and sustainable. We will continue to work in partnership with municipalities, including those in the District of

Placentia - St. Mary's to develop a strategic approach to the delivery of services, infrastructure and the protection of public safety.

I have had the privilege of being able to show my support to our emergency responders through the fire and emergency safety division, to the Placentia Fire Department, the Seaside fire department, the Branch fire department, the Whitbourne Fire Department and the St. Vincent's fire department.

Mr. Chair, I look forward to seeing a new rural response truck in Mount Carmel-Mitchells Brook. I also look forward to attending the Colinet-North Harbour-Harricott fire departments banquet; a banquet that hasn't happened in a number of years.

A key component of our governments focus on safety is our attention to road safety. Bill 68 amended the *Highway Traffic Act* and established tougher penalties for impaired drivers in the province. It also established new rules to help ensure our young people develop safe and sober driving habits. Those who choose to abuse this privilege by driving while under the influence of alcohol in Newfoundland and Labrador now face tougher consequences.

We now impound vehicles at roadside when drivers are found to have a blood alcohol content above the legal limit or when they refuse to provide a breath sample. We also introduced a mandatory ignition interlock program to prevent repeat impaired driving offences. We amended the act to acquire zero tolerance for alcohol consumption for drivers less than 22 years of age.

Mr. Chair, as I have said time and time again, we must continue to send the message that the time has come to end impaired driving in Newfoundland and Labrador. Hannah Thorne was a young girl from my district in the Community of New Harbour. Hannah tragically died on July 7, 2016. The Standing Together Against Negligent Driving Foundation was formed in Hannah's memory. Their mission is to work with families and communities in the prevention of harm and death associated with reckless driving. Hannah's family celebrated her birthday on March 4 without her.

Since I became the Minister of Service NL, the department responsible for the *Highway Traffic Act*, our government introduced Bill 27, which includes a number of improvements to the act to reduce excessive speeding, stunting and street racing and make our roads and highways safer. It includes a new offence for driving without due care and attention or without reasonable consideration for other persons causing bodily harm or death. Bill 27 also created a new offence for stunting on highways, Mr. Chair. Drivers who are charged with stunting on our highway now face a suspension of seven days, effective the second day after the notice of suspension is given.

Mr. Chair, continuing on our government's focus on communities and the delivery of services, the issue of accessibility is of great importance. We know citizens of our province still experience barriers on a daily basis, barriers that exclude people from taking part in their communities, from employment opportunities and even from public services.

Last fall, our government amended the Buildings Accessibility Regulations and the Designated Mobility Impaired Parking Regulations to enhance accessibility and inclusion for all persons in Newfoundland and Labrador. These amendments represent the first step in our approach to addressing issues around building accessibility in a thorough way.

It is important that, as a government, we listen to those who truly know and who truly understand the challenges being faced in our towns and communities. The amendments represent the first step in our two-phased approach to addressing accessibility issues. Work is underway on the second step, which is a comprehensive review of the *Buildings Accessibility Act*. It is important that there be ample opportunity for all interested parties to provide input into the act. This will involve a public consultation process. We will provide more information, Mr. Chair, on this in the near future.

I have stood many times in this House and spoken to the importance of constantly reviewing legislation to ensure it is meeting the needs of the people it serves. We are also committed to the review of the landlord

tenancies act and bringing forward amendments that protect the best interests of tenants and landlords. Consultations and a jurisdictional scan were completed in 2012, Mr. Chair, but no changes were made with the legislation at that time.

Since our government came to power in 2015, we have identified several areas that merit significant amendments, as well as the need to clarify the act's language and to ensure it is modern and clear, Mr. Chair.

On May 26, 2017, it was announced that Husky was moving forward with the West White Rose Project. This project is estimated to cost \$2.2 billion before first oil in 2022. The 25-year project is estimated to generate \$3 billion in economic benefits for the province in the form of royalties, taxes and equity payments. Upwards of 700 people will be employed at the Argentia site during peak construction. It will also create 250 permanent platform jobs and up to 1,500 more direct and indirect jobs.

The White Rose Expansion Project framework second amending agreement in 2017 included a \$60 million fund for the development of an innovation and business development. The intent of this fund is to make strategic investments for the future development and growth of the oil and gas industry in the province. The proponents will make annual contributions to the fund of \$6 million for a period of 10 years. The first payment is expected in 2018, Mr. Chair.

The port of Argentia anticipates unveiling of a portion of this fund to ensure they can create sustainable employment for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians into the future.

Mr. Chair, we have also turned our focus to other important issues for workers in our province such as post-traumatic stress disorder. Work-related mental stress conditions such as PTSD are impacting workplaces across Canada. Last fall, I met with stakeholders to seek input on the prevention of and compensation for work-related mental stress.

Mr. Chair, I can now inform the House that the new policy on mental health, in actual fact, has been passed by the board of director's at WorkplaceNL. That was a question I had just

five minutes ago in this House of Assembly. We initiated a review of WorkplaceNL's mental stress policy in order to explore the options to modernize the approach to work-related mental health issues including post-traumatic stress disorder.

Mr. Chair, this involved a two-stage process with the first being an immediate policy review, which has just happened and the second will involve a review of PTSD coverage across other jurisdictions.

Placentia - St. Mary's is steeped in history and tradition and is also renowned as a great place to do business. It offers tremendous opportunities for growth and success for businesses large and small. Our government recognizes the important role that business and industry play in driving our province's economy.

In November 2016 we introduced a new *Public Procurement Act* to modernize the purchasing process and to achieve best value. We recently published the regulations and the act will be proclaimed later this month.

Local suppliers will realize benefits through increased opportunities to bid on government services that were once excluded from procurement legislation. The new framework will increase transparency. It will also allow public bodies more opportunity to hold suppliers accountable for their performance. Our government is listening to the needs of business and industry in our province.

Mr. Chair, last year our government announced a multi-year plan for infrastructure investment. The plan includes over \$688 million for transportation infrastructure such as roads, bridges and marine infrastructure. My district has benefitted from a number of these projects. There has been roadwork from St. Joseph's to Riverhead, Ferndale Road and Beach Road near Veterans Way, Ship Harbour and Fox Harbour, Point Lance road and work around the Town of Branch, along with the replacement of Rocky Island Pond Bridge.

Mr. Chair, it is important to maintain good strong infrastructure in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.



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

**MS. GAMBIN-WALSH:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will now take my seat.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

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

I just want to take my time this afternoon to reference a story that I saw in the media in the last few days. It's a concerning one as someone certainly who, prior to getting involved in politics, I worked as a safety practitioner.

There was a story there in the media that talks about an individual, a gentleman who had worked up at the Muskrat Falls site. Apparently, because he reported some safety hazards to his employer, unsafe work conditions, he lost his job. He was let go. If you read the story, it talks about that this was not an isolated incident. There have been other people up at the Muskrat Falls site that has lost their job because they spoke out on issues of occupational health and safety.

While I have concern, Mr. Chair, about the safety of everyone working up at that site, the bigger issue is not just about Muskrat Falls, it's about the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and an obvious potential flaw now in the legislation that's been uncovered through this case. Under the Health and Safety Act and the whole principle of occupational health and safety, workers have three fundamental rights: they have the right to know the hazards they face in the workplace, they have the right to participate in occupational health and safety and they have the right to refuse dangerous work.

Now, based on what I've read in this particular instance, if this had to have been a case of a work refusal where somebody said I refuse to do this particular work, then under that there is a section in the act that talks about an employer cannot discriminate against a worker who has implemented their right to refuse. In other words, if it had to have been a case where the

supervisor on the site said I want you to do this particular task, the employee has the right to say, no, I refuse to do it. There's a work refusal process that kicks in with the supervisor, with the company and then eventually with OHS division of the Department of Service NL, if it comes to that.

If a worker initiates that right to refuse to do something dangerous, it is written in the act that an employer cannot discriminate against that worker. In other words, you can't fire someone because they refuse to do something that was unsafe; you can't get back on them.

This case outlined in the media was not a work refusal; therefore, that piece of legislation didn't kick in. It was a case of somebody simply pointing out to the employer on site that there's something unsafe happening here, I have concerns. I believe the individual, if I'm not mistaken, was actually on the safety committee or he worked for a safety company on site that had been contracted out.

I believe the story said he worked for a safety company that had been contracted out by one of the contractors to be the safety person on site. In doing his job, in reporting unsafe activity and bringing it to the attention of the company, that company allegedly let that safety company go. That particular individual was let go from the company because he actually did his job, which is absolutely reprehensible when you think about it.

Apparently, as the story goes on – I'm assuming it's gone through the courts or Labour Relations, whatever the case might be – it was determined that if that individual had reported this to the Department of Service NL, had reported it to OHS division of Service NL, then they would not have been able to lay this guy off or fire this guy. But because he had simply gone to the employer, versus calling in the government, this guy gets fired for doing his job. There is something fundamentally wrong with this.

I want to just think about it for a second. First of all, what are we saying? The only way to avoid this – there are two ways to avoid the situation. So every time something happens unsafe on a work site people have to refuse and say: I refuse to do it. You can't bring anything to anyone's

attention to try to correct it, you have to say: I refuse to do it and cause a work stoppage.

Or they have to pick up the phone and call Service NL OHS division. Every single time anything happens on any work site in this province, they're going to call Service NL at the OHS division. We're not going to try to work it out with the employer, as opposed to saying – which we've always taught workers, through safety training, you bring it to the attention of your supervisor first. You say to your supervisor: Look, I've been asked to do this but I don't have the training or I don't have the proper safety equipment; I'm not comfortable doing this. The supervisor would work with the employee to put whatever safety measures in place to resolve the issue.

That's where we need to be. Not every single time I see something unsafe I'm going to pick up the phone, I'm going to call Service NL. Can you imagine? How would we possibly have the resources at OHS division if every single workplace in the province, any time a worker saw anything unsafe they have to pick up the phone and call Service NL? They can't go to their own supervisor and they can't go to the manager without fear of being fired because they brought forward a safety issue.

While this particular story was related specifically to a situation that occurred at Muskrat Falls, this has implications for the entire province. It has major implications. We know with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* there's a statutory review, I believe, that occurs I think, every five years. I could be wrong – four years, five years whatever. I'm not sure when it's up again but I would certainly appeal to the government, to the Minister of Service NL, that this is an issue that cannot wait.

This is an issue that cannot wait. The implications for this are very, very serious, to impact workplaces all throughout the province. Nobody, I'm sure, wants people to go to work and work in an unsafe environment. I think we would all expect that if you go to work and you see something unsafe, you ought to, as worker, be able to go to your supervisor, go to your manager or go to your employer and say: This is not safe. Someone is going to get hurt here. Someone is going to get seriously hurt. Someone

could get killed here. Workers should be able to do that without a fear of being fired. Again, according to this story, that's what happened here.

I think it's very, very serious. I don't think we can wait for a statutory review process. Perhaps the minister is already on it. I certainly will be speaking to her personally to try – I'm sure she's probably aware of it. I would hope they're on it but, like I said, the implications on this are very, very serious. We cannot have people going to work, being forced to work in unsafe conditions. And if you dare – imagine, having the nerve – to go to your employer and say this is not safe and then they're going to fire you for it. There's something terribly wrong.

That was never comprehended in the health and safety act or the regulations. It certainly goes totally against everything that any worker who's worked on a construction site, or any work site, has been taught. I know. I've done the training. I've instructed hundreds of employees on health and safety, different aspects of it and, certainly, on the health and safety act and the regulations and everything contained within it. The intent is that nobody should be doing things that are unsafe. They should feel comfortable in reporting it to their employer.

Based on what is out there now, what has happened on the Muskrat Falls site with this particular person is that because he had the nerve to actually say – I think it had something to do with scaffolding, if I'm not mistaken, and the people weren't trained. Somebody fell off some scaffolding I think it was and there were no rescue procedures.

Under the scaffolding regulations there have to be rescue procedures. There were no rescue procedures and there was nobody trained according to the story. Because he brought that to the attention of the employer, they fired him for it. That is not right. It was never the intent, it's not the intent and it's something that has to be changed.

Once again, I certainly appeal to the government, I appeal to the Minister of Service NL responsible for occupational health and safety in this province to please have your officials look at this and find out what changes

we need to make to the act to close this very, very serious loophole.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Terra Nova.

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

It's certainly a pleasure to stand in the House today to speak to Interim Supply and represent my constituents in the District of Terra Nova.

Mr. Chair, I've been elected now for about 2½ years. I have an interesting or important milestone that's coming up. Just a week from today I will have had 29 years working for the people of this province. On March 19 I'll have 29 years total commitment to the people of this province.

I'm feeling pretty proud of that, Mr. Chair. I've done a lot over my lifetime and certainly having spent the majority of it in public service but, now, for the last 2½ years being the MHA for the district, I work very hard servicing all 14,000 constituents.

The boundaries of the two districts that came together, the old Terra Nova District and the old Trinity North District, it is 38 communities. It's very challenging to be going from all those communities. When the House is not in session and you're going into all those communities on a very regular basis trying to meet with constituents, trying to meet with community groups and town councils and trying to help them with all the issues they bring forward.

I spoke earlier in the House today. I talked about all the contentious issues that have come my way since I've been in office. I just think about things like the ferry to St. Brendan's island and I think about the trestle in Terra Nova. I think about the overcrowding at Riverside Elementary in Clarenville. Of course, the latest one is what we're talking about with the forest management plan in Port Blandford. I can tell you, Mr. Chair, that no matter what the issue I have certainly done my part to represent the interests of my constituents.

I just think back. I think I had been elected for about four months and the issue of the causeway in Port Blandford came up for significant discussion. I was getting calls from not only people living in the community, but also people who were coming from other communities in Bloomfield and Bunyan's Cove and Cannings Cove. There was no doubt that the causeway itself was starting to deteriorate. I can tell you that I was very pleased to be able to advocate on behalf of the people in all those communities within my district, as well as communities for the District of Bonavista who also use the causeway.

Quickly we saw in the next budget that there was an investment – actually over the last two budgets – of \$1.4 million to address the causeway. It's been repaired. We widened out the shoulders of the road because people in the community said that they'd like to be walking from one side of Port Blandford to the other and to be able to do it in a safe manner. We were able to bring those things forward.

We also saw, in terms of infrastructure investments, Mr. Chair, a new turning lane in Thorburn Lake around the overpass; another \$1.01 million investment that we've been able to do from our government. I've had people who have come up to me and have said: That has been needed for such a very, very long time. Thank you so much for getting it done. I'm pleased that our government – and I've been a part of that process to fix some things that have been needed for a very, very long time.

Earlier today, it was said in this House, we talked about investments into Port Blandford and around clean water and wastewater. It is accurate that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment stood up and he said: When we announced money to repair the pump house in Port Blandford, we announced \$254,000.

We did that in Clarenville at the time because we were announcing other monies for Hickman's Harbour and Robinson Bight, and we were announcing some money for around Clarenville. The mayor of Port Blandford, at the time, stood up and he said: We have a fantastic relationship working the MHA and with this government. We've gotten funding for the very first time in eight years. Eight years that

community has been asking for an investment from the government and we were able to address that.

Mr. Chair, I get a lot of requests for the Community Healthy Living Funds. They are funds that support small infrastructure investments in many of our rural communities. Most of my communities, actually, are local service districts. I have a few incorporated communities but many of them are local service districts. So they have to rely on applying for these grants in order to enhance some of the infrastructure in their communities, like walking trails and playgrounds.

I'm reminded that one of the ones that we've done down in the Southwest Arm area is around Abraham's Trail. Last fall, I had the opportunity to walk that trail to see it first-hand, what exactly is it that the people, the volunteers in the Little Heart's Ease area, what are they doing to try to enhance healthy living of the people who live in the area. I was pleased when we were able invest just short of \$3,400 into advancements into that trail so that people could use it and exercise and stay healthy.

I actually had a call before I came to the House this afternoon from a lady who lives down in that area. She talked about moving away from reactive health care and be more proactive. She's a senior citizen. We talked about two constituents in my district who just celebrated 100th birthdays. She said to me: That don't happen by happenstance. It doesn't happen because you got lucky. It is because people are taking better care of themselves. By investing in playgrounds for our kids, by investing in walking trails for our adults and for our senior population, it has been critically important. She felt that as we move forward, while we still need to be reactionary to some degree in terms of our health care, we need to find a way to put more money into a proactive approach so that people are healthier longer and they can stay living in their homes longer. I certainly was pleased to be able to support that kind of thinking that she brought to me today.

Mr. Chair, one of the groups I've been keenly interested in having a bit of a focal point for me as an MHA has been our volunteer fire departments. Over the past 2½ years, I've taken

every opportunity to go to their annual dinners and service award nights so I can just say to them: On behalf of the people of this province, thank you so much, you've put 20, 25, 30, 35 years' service. Now we've seen the changes that came last August in that we have volunteer firefighters who are volunteering in our communities for upwards of 50 years and those 50 years will be recognized.

This year, Mr. Chair, the Town of Clarendville will actually play host to the annual firefighter's convention. As I've been talking to some of the fire departments over this weekend I have reminded them that it's being hosted in Clarendville. I will be there as the MHA. I look forward to seeing many of them come out. There's training, there's camaraderie, there's an opportunity to celebrate the things they've done as fire departments over the past year.

Mr. Chair, I just have a little bit of time. I just want to talk for a second about agriculture in my district. We're seeing that agriculture is on the rise in my district, in particular, around the Glovertown area. Now we've seen that there are four new farms that are at various stages of proposal. They're really taking on their role to address the food security issue that we have in this province so that we have healthier food choices.

Ninety per cent of everything we consume in this province right now is coming in; it's transported in – so that we can lower that percentage point. We've identified that in the *Way Forward*. I'm pleased those farms are coming on the horizon. I'm helping them as best I can to advance their applications so that the people in the communities around them have access to quality, affordable really good food, nutritious food so that we're not worried about the shelf life, which we see many times as we go into the grocery stores.

I'll finish up, Mr. Chair, by saying that as an MHA I am 100 per cent committed to the people in my district. I have treated everyone with fairness and honesty and I certainly will continue to work very hard on their behalf. I know road infrastructure is still a challenge in some of my many communities in the district. I will continue to advocate that we find some solutions to that infrastructure.

Last but not least, I want to congratulate the Port Blandford Heritage Society on raising sufficient funds. I just got word of that. They're going to purchase two memorial stones commemorating those who served in World War I and World War II.

I know that's been a long-time project for the community. My grandfather served in the Second World War. I look forward to the fall when those stones are installed at the war memorial. I certainly hope to be there.

Thank you very much for the opportunity, Mr. Chair.

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

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

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

I am happy to stand and speak again in the discussion happening because of Bill 36, the Interim Supply bill. Interim Supply is extremely important because without this bill being passed there would not be money approved to run government after March 31; obviously, not having the reason that the US senators had to hold up the bill in Washington, DC. We don't have reasons like that here; we want our bills to go ahead. It is an opportunity to speak to the issues that we are concerned about with government services that get covered by our budget, the needs of our people.

Being an MHA here in St. John's there are a lot of issues that I don't have to deal with that my colleagues who are MHAs in rural Newfoundland and Labrador have to deal with. The roads in my district are all covered by a municipality. The municipality is a strong municipality working well with the province. There are a lot of issues, such as those, that I don't need to deal with. However, issues with regard to the services that people require for their health, that they require for education, that they require when it comes to having enough money to live, these are common issues in all of our districts. I think they're particularly strong, in some cases, in the urban district more so than in some of the rural areas.

In my own district right now, I have people from Bishop Feild Elementary school, parents, staff, concerned about what is going to happen to that school. When are they going to get the report of what is going to happen? Obviously, everybody wants that school to reopen but the silence is deafening. We see letters that go back and forth in emails but nothing coming out publicly, nothing being said publicly.

People are concerned. I'm concerned for them. That's why I ask the questions I ask in the House. They need to know that in some foreseeable future – that's all they want to know – their children will not have to travel any longer from the almost complete east end of the city to the almost complete west end of the city; the city goes a bit further west than that now but it's pretty far up in the west end. They have to travel that every day. They want to know that the foreseeable future is there when they'll be told their children are going back into the Bishop Feild Elementary school on Bond Street. That's an issue, Mr. Chair. There are issues, too, around inclusion. I'm not going to speak about that this afternoon; I'm going to save that for later on. We will get to speak again and I will speak to that later on.

Issues around health care, issues around emergency room wait times in our hospitals here in the city; we have the two largest hospitals in the province. We cover a huge amount of population. We don't only cover the population here in the greater St. John's area; many services happen at the Health Sciences, for example, that people have to come in front outside of the province to access. We have two of the major health facilities. I guess it's no surprise then that one of the areas I continually get calls about and get emails about have to do with health care and have to do with waits in the ER.

I asked the minister today in Question Period a couple of questions about wait times and there was one thing I was actually happy to hear. I don't have *Hansard* in front of me so I won't quote him, but I think there was agreement between the minister and myself on if there is a serious area for us to be looking at in health care, it is with regard to the emergency room wait times. I think he acknowledged that. That's very important.

We also need to know the things that are being done, that the steps that are being taken around the emergency wait times are just not going to be band-aid steps; they're going to be steps which – for St. Clare's Hospital and the Health Sciences Centre, for these huge hospitals – are really going to affect the care of people. Yes, there are various factors because of the wait times. One of the factors is definitely the fact that people very often are going to emergency rooms with issues that don't need to be in emergency rooms, but they are people who don't have doctors or their own family physicians, so they go to the emergency room because they have nowhere else to go.

I personally have a family physician who's amazing. If I call tomorrow morning and say I'm feeling sick and I need to see my doctor, the first question that's asked to me is do you need to see her today, Lorraine, or can you wait till later in the week? If I say I need to see her today, I get in. That's how she plans her schedule, and it happens all the time. That's not a guessing a game.

That should be the case for everybody in the province. Everybody should have that kind of service. If we did then we wouldn't have so many people in the ER, and I agree with the minister on that. We have to do something about having access to family physicians. That's a major issue.

Another issue is the issue of beds in the hospital being occupied in many cases by senior citizens requiring long-term care and people who are in beds in the hospital have nowhere else to go. I'm not going to dwell on that issue today. I'm going to speak about that issue later on but it is an issue. Some steps have been taken.

I know the numbers have gone down slightly over the last few years of the beds that are being occupied by people who are waiting to go into long-term care or waiting for other reasons for being in the hospital. That's an issue as well, and that has to be dealt with too. Besides all that, Mr. Chair, I think we have to deal with the fact that we do not have adequate resources in the hospital, in the emergency rooms; that the waits are way too long.

I had an email last week, a message from one of my constituents. She said you are my MHA, and I am writing you because I have a complaint. My husband had a bad tear in the muscle in the back of his leg Wednesday past which drove us to the emergency at St. Clare's. We haven't visited the hospital in years and when this had happened he was in excruciating pain. It was visible he could not walk on it et cetera. We arrived at 4:15 and left the hospital at 10. There were no X-rays taken or ultrasounds, just waiting for a doctor to have a look at his injury.

The lobby was blocked from the time we got there until the time we left; people standing in the porch as there was no seating left. It was ridiculous. Elderly people sick waiting and not complaining, but I was, as I have never experienced the likes of this before. One nurse came out at one point and said, call your MHAs – because they could not keep up, and that's a mouthful, Mr. Chair.

My constituent went on to say something has to be done about this situation, whether it is figuring out a better flow or having more staff available, no one should have to wait this long to be seen in an emergency room.

That's a real case. I have many others. I'm not going to read them, but this points out to us that it's not just people not having doctors to go to, it's not just that people are waiting there because they want to get into a bed somewhere else in the hospital, it's that, as the nurse said to them, they can't keep up.

Right now we know we're in the flu system. So maybe we have to have flexibility. Maybe we have to say in the flu system we have to have more staff in place because we know; we have the statistics that show us what happens during the flu system.

We have to have long-term planning that involves the department, that involves the nurses' union, that involves the physicians, everybody who is involved in the emergency room. That's the kind of thinking we need to have or else we will continue having people – I have other messages here of people who were 10 hours, people who were eight hours, people who left because they couldn't get taken care of. We

can't have our emergency rooms operating like that.

As we move forward, we're coming into a new budget. I'm hoping we're going to see some money there that's going to help the Minister of Health and Community Services deal with at least this issue.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Lewisporte - Twillingate.

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

Mr. Chair, it's always an honour to rise in this hon. House to represent the beautiful District of Lewisporte - Twillingate, and today to speak to Bill 36, Interim Supply.

Mr. Chair, before I talk about some of the great things happening within my district and also within the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development, which I've had the honour of serving as parliamentary secretary for the last two years, I want to start off by congratulating the Member for Torngat Mountains and Stephenville - Port au Port for introducing a very important private member's resolution last week.

As a government, we don't always stand together on issues and legislation, but I'm proud to say last Wednesday we stood united in support of the Moose Hide Campaign, making Newfoundland and Labrador the fourth legislation in this country to support the campaign and to work towards ending violence against women and children, Mr. Chair. I'm very proud to have been a part of that.

Mr. Chair, over the past week I've had the opportunity to participate in a number of events, but I'm going to bring forward two in particular. On Saturday, athletes from across this province travelled to Deer Lake to participate in the 2018 Newfoundland and Labrador Winter Games. Approximately 1,300 athletes will be competing for the right to call themselves provincial champions, to be the next Katarina Roxon, Brad Gushue and many other accomplished athletes in our province.

For many of these athletes, Mr. Chair, this is their first experience in provincial competition, but win or lose it will be an unforgettable experience for each of them. Many new friendships will be formed and lifelong memories created. The weeklong event will see 11 provincial sport regions competing in 12 different sports. With a contingent this year again from Saint Pierre and Miquelon and for the first time during the Winter Games Team Indigenous will also be competing.

Mr. Chair, the first half of the games, which will be running from Sunday to Tuesday, will see people competing in bowling, male hockey, volleyball, gymnastics, cross-country skiing and also curling. While the second half, which will run from Thursday to Saturday, will see Alpine skiing, wrestling, female hockey, badminton, basketball, figure skating and table tennis.

Mr. Chair, I'm sure that pretty well all of the MHAs in this hon. House have athletes competing in the games from their district. To follow your athletes you can visit [www.nlgames.ca](http://www.nlgames.ca) and follow the games throughout the week.

Mr. Chair, these games would not be possible without the financial contribution of many community-minded sponsors. I'm proud that our government, through the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development, is one of those major sponsors contributing to the games, investing more than \$540,000; \$200,000 going towards an operating grant for the town to run the games, \$265,000 to cover the transportation costs, and another \$75,000 went towards the regional play downs.

I would like to recognize the valuable contribution of Troy Croft, the Executive Director of Sport NL, and his entire team for the great job they are doing in organizing these games. The Town of Deer Lake and other close communities are also to be commended. Being a former recreation director, I was involved in hosting the 1990 Winter Games. It was actually when I first started with the Town of Lewisporte, and I know the amount of work, coordination and community support that goes behind organizing such games. I'm glad to say from the experience the other day the Town of

Deer Lake is well underway of putting together great games.

I wanted to recognize and congratulate co-chairs Krista Jones and Junior Pinkston along with Mayor Ball and the 500-plus volunteers for putting off an amazing opening ceremonies and a start to a very successful games. I was accompanied by yourself, Mr. Chair, also the MHA for Stephenville - Port au Port, the Member for St. George's - Humber and also the Premier brought greetings on behalf of the province to the games.

I want to wish all athletes a very enjoyable experience, for them to play hard, strive to be their best and be respectful to their teammates, coaches, opponents and officials. Whether they reach the podium or not, they're all true winners, Mr. Chair.

While talking about sports, the former Chair was there, sitting earlier, I want to congratulate the Twillingate Combines, this year's Central Newfoundland's senior hockey champions. The league is into its ninth season. This year teams were competing from the Exploits Blades, Northeast Sabres, the Lewisporte Seahawks, Springdale Braves and the Twillingate Combines.

The final were a three out of five series between the Twillingate Combines and the Springdale Braves. The Combines took the first two games at home with a score of 4-1, going to Springdale for game three and a chance to capture the championship. Again, in a score of 4-1, they swept the Springdale team, making them this year's 2017-2018 Central Newfoundland hockey team champions. I just want to congratulate the Twillingate Combines on that great award.

Mr. Chair, my colleague from Virginia Waters - Pleasantville had the chance to attend the ninth annual Rooting for Health event at East Point Elementary on Thursday of last week. Similar events were held at St. Anne's Academy in Dunville, Sprucewood Academy in Grand Falls-Windsor, Pasadena Elementary and A.P. Low Primary in Labrador City.

The event was sponsored by Kids Eat Smart, the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture, Egg Farmers of Newfoundland and

Labrador and the School Milk Foundation. Rooting for Health is celebrated as a part of Nutrition Month and is designed to help school-aged children in our province recognize the relationship between farming, food and health.

The children there were treated to a nutritious breakfast from locally produced eggs, milk and berries prepared by the chefs from the award-winning Raymond's Restaurant. After the delicious breakfast, children were able to go to the gymnasium, where local farmers had booths set up and were providing an educational session to the children and had the opportunity to answer any questions they may have.

During that event, I had an opportunity to speak to the executive director, Celina Stoyles, talking about some of the great work that the Kids Eat Smart program is doing. She was telling me about a story that last year one of the children asked the farmers. It was one of the dairy farmers. The farmer was telling the child about how the milk is produced and everything else. The child looked at the farmer with a serious look and said: Milk don't come from Costco? The farmer said: No, it doesn't come from Costco; it comes from cows. She looked at him again; Are you serious, milk doesn't come from Costco? It's just to demonstrate some of the great work our farmers are doing, Mr. Chair.

Our government through *The Way Forward* have set an action plan to reduce obesity, increase consumption of fruits and veggies and, overall, improve the health and well-being of residents of our province. This will be achieved through the continued support from stakeholders such as Rooting for Health, along with other great organizations such as Food First NL, the School Lunch Association, Agriculture in the Classroom, Eat Great and Participate and many other groups that are doing valuable work for the residents of our province every day.

Mr. Chair, another initiative in *The Way Forward* is to increase food security. As my colleague behind me said earlier, we're going to increase our food source from 10 to 20 per cent by the year 2022. Mr. Chair, farming in my district is a very big part of my region and they are doing their part to make sure that we achieve that goal.



I have only about a minute and a half left; I'm going to talk about a couple of farmers in my district, Mr. Chair. Triple E Farms in Comfort Cove dates back to almost 90 years when Raymond Eveleigh, the father and grandfather of Junior and Dwight Eveleigh, started out farming. Junior and Dwight have now have taken over the business since 1993, turning at 10- to 12-acre farm into now what they have, 115 acres farming today.

They employ 30 people at peak season, and eight to 10 people for 10 months of the year. Today, they produce approximately 2.5 million pounds of products. Triple E Farms, recently, in the last year, added an additional 65 acres of land and in the next three years they will be doubling their production.

Triple E Farms has been awarded the CanadaGAP food safety certification into production and the packaging of beets, cabbage, carrots, parsnip, potatoes and rutabagas, being the first business in the province to reach this certification.

Another couple of farms I'll quickly mention: Hubert Porter's Farm, which have been in business since 1875 and has over 130 acres of farm in Porterville. Campbellton u-pick is another striving business in my district, Mr. Chair.

I'm sorry I'm out of time, but I look forward to speaking a little more on this a little later.

Thank you.

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

**CHAIR (Reid):** The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

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

It's a pleasure to once again rise in this hon. House, as my colleague from Cape St. Francis likes to say, on behalf of the people of the beautiful District of Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune. It's also a pleasure to rise after my colleague from Lewisporte - Twillingate who today spoke about some of the positive things that are happening in Newfoundland and

Labrador. I will continue on that train of thought as I get up and speak here today.

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

**MS. PERRY:** Because there are wonderful things happening right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. In the district of Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune we, too, have agriculture potential. My colleague and I actually were talking earlier about some of the things that used to happen back in the days in Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune. We've had a number of farms over the years for root crops, and the soil quality actually in Bay d'Espoir area, that portion of the district, has a pH of 6.0, which is comparable to the Codroy Valley. It's an area of the province, second to the Codroy Valley area, which has the best potential for farming. We certainly would be very supportive of seeing any expansion of the agriculture sector.

As well, Mr. Chair, we have a booming aquaculture industry in the Coast of Bays region. We are still, though, in the growth and development stage. We certainly haven't reached the maturity level. Significant potential remains for expansion, and a significant need remains for investment in infrastructure in the Coast of Bays region.

I raise this because things like biosecurity wharves are a crucial need for us. We're almost there, but we still have in the Belleoram area a wharf that hasn't been completed to fully complement the biosecurity needs that we have. So a little a plug in there that we're hoping to see some news in the budget pertaining to enhanced infrastructure in the Coast of Bays region to support the continuation of the 1,000 people who are employed in that sector in the Coast of Bays region.

Without the aquaculture industry complementing the wild fishery, we'd be in trouble on the South Coast. We saw mass outmigration. When I first started working in Community Economic Development, there were 14,000 people living in the Coast of Bays region. Today, there's a little less than 7,000. So our population has dropped by half, even with an industry that has great promise for the future.

It is crucial that the industry continues to be supported in the Coast of Bays region and I certainly look forward to working with government as we endeavour to do that.

Mr. Chair, I also wanted to talk about two items in the social sector and that would be education and health care. In my past 10 years as a Member of the House of Assembly, one thing that has become very evident to me is that these are the two sectors that are sacred to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. In hard times the two areas that people do not want to see cuts to, more than any other, are health care and education.

In rural Newfoundland, in particular, Mr. Chair, I want to encourage government to continue to support direct primary health care, front-line health care, to residents. We understand the concept of regionalization and for things like cancer care treatment, for things like broken bones and broken limbs, for surgeries. We fully appreciate regionalization and that we will have to travel two to three hours to Grand Falls.

We are also strong, strong proponents of maintaining, directly in communities within reasonable drive distances that are safe, Mr. Chair, the maintenance of clinics and doctors and nurse practitioners – front-line nurses and doctors and front-line emergency services. There is nothing and no price that we can put on a person's life.

We have experienced in Hermitage the loss of a clinic, which has been absolutely devastating for the residents of that portion of our district, Mr. Chair. We certainly hope that consideration will be given to restoring those services in the upcoming budget because, again, I will say there is nothing more important than saving a life. There is no way that we can do that any better than by maintaining the services of doctors and nurse practitioners in communities within reasonable and safe drive times.

Anyone who has ever travelled to the Coast of Bays knows our roads are not safe. There is no snow clearing after 7:30 or 8 at night. There is no cellphone service. There are a lot of potholes. There are a lot of narrow roads. There is a high volume of transport trailers travelling that road. So it's important that within each of the sub-

regions, health care is maintained and emergency services are maintained.

We look at the Coast of Bays region as being broken up into several distinct regions: Fortune Bay North Shore, the Connaigre Peninsula and the Bay d'Espoir area. Mr. Chair, I also have the unique privilege of being home to four isolated communities. I call it a unique privilege because these are beautiful communities with beautiful people. It's like going back in time; towns that still don't have roads, Mr. Chair. Everyone has a trike or a Ski-Doo but there are no cars in these communities. I would encourage every single Newfoundlander and Labradorian, and certainly every tourist who comes to the province, to visit these communities to get an appreciation for the way life used to be.

I will tell you as well that some of these people are far worldlier than a lot of people I know. They're master mariners, they travel all around the world and they always come home to their isolated communities and some of the best food that you will ever get to enjoy. There's nothing like the homemade treats that the ladies and gentlemen make when there's a time in these communities.

Mr. Chair, I'm quickly running out of time. I also want to address in my speaking this afternoon to the Interim budget the crucial need for a brand new school in Bay d'Espoir. I know a new school is important to a lot of people in the province, Mr. Chair. The education of our children, along with health care, are the two areas I believe are sacred. It has been over 60 years since residents of the Bay d'Espoir area have had a new school. There's one thing that there's a clear consensus on, by all residents on both sides of the bay, and that is a new school is the only acceptable solution as we move forward for the children.

In fact, prior to the school burning last year in 2017, it actually started in 2014, the school council of the day had invited me, as MHA, to go to the school and tour the building, where they relayed their concerns about the buildings safety. It was a wooden structure over 60 years old. The science lab is located in the basement. There are three levels to it. No elevator, Mr. Chair, and we do have children unable to climb those stairs. The corridors are very, very tight. A

very dangerous fire hazard, Mr. Chair, not to mention that a building that sustained fire like that, there's no way, we feel, that you would ever be able to restore it to its former glory.

We feel that our children certainly deserve better. They deserve a brand new school and we will continue to lobby government until such time as we hear the announcement of a brand new school. I do have confidence that is recognized by all Members of this hon. House that the children do deserve a new school. One that will equip them to be able to face the modern economy of the 21st Century and give them the skills they need to excel in a changing world, with all the bells and whistles of the internet capacity. We have a fabulous drama group down there and fabulous musicians down there. We truly hope that in budget 2017-18 there will be announcement for a brand new school for Bay d'Espoir.

My time is up and I look forward to speaking again.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation.

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

It's a pleasure to follow my colleague for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune. I had the pleasure of being down in that district last summer and had the opportunity to visit all communities, with the exception of McCallum and François. Being in a place like Gaultois and getting to see and experience the concrete roadways where everybody is going on ATVs was something different for me, and a real gem.

Going into places like Wreck Cove and seeing the fiords, it's almost like going to Gros Morne National Park. There's real tremendous opportunity, I think, and it has tremendous tourism potential. That's why we invested, with our partners, in doing some restoration at Sunny Cottage and seeing the work and the improvement after being on top of the Widow's Walk and seeing what a gemstone it truly is.

It was my second time there at that property and great piece of our heritage and history. Harbour Breton has a great connectivity to the port trade and the Newman Wine Vaults that are here in St. John's. As Tourism Minister and responsible for heritage, I take quite an interest in that area, as well as seeing the incredible opportunity it has for aquaculture and continued growth.

Now, I want to take some time to talk about my own district. There's a lot of excitement happening there today, Mr. Chair, as two contestants from the Cain's Quest, Boyd Lavers and Tyson Ryan, are being paraded and saluted and celebrated for their completion as rookies in the Cain's Quest, doing over 3,100 kilometres of all the terrain and placing sixth. They were the first Island team to cross the finish line. It's pretty exciting for them and all the people in my district that are giving them the kudos and allocates that they truly deserve. I wish I was there to be able to celebrate with the entire community. We were all glued to our screens as we were watching them.

I also want to give some allocates to Team Gushue, for Team Canada from Newfoundland and Labrador, winning back-to-back Briers. Our department supported the sponsorship of the Brier last year and got to see them – with numerous colleagues here – as they won last year. To see them do that again is quite a piece for the history books.

*Maudie*, as well, something that we invested in as a film in Newfoundland and Labrador; a story of Maud Lewis being a Nova Scotia folk artist. That film was written and produced by Sherry White and Mary Sexton here in Newfoundland and Labrador in the Goulds and in Keels. Much of the production happened right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. I say to the Member for Ferryland: Lots of great excitement and investment that created jobs here that were valued and a positive return to the Treasury.

When I talk about all the awards and gold that's being won, I want to bring it to my district. There has recently been an announcement and excitement – the Minister of Natural Resources would tout – seeing Minfocus looking at zinc production there in and around the Main Brook area. We've also seen interest for copper and gold, whether it be around the Gunners Cove

project around St. Lunaire-Griquet; multiple properties have been staked. There are other properties that are staked out for exploration and development, whether be Altius Minerals, whether it be the dormant marble mine that's existing around Croque.

We look at all the activity. I was with the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay and we had been to the lowest elevation where you could see the sun at the Anaconda gold mine there. The impact that Anaconda is having on the economy in mining, whether it's Anaconda or Rambler, these are hundreds of well-paying jobs in and around that area, all through the supply chain. We would like to see that type of investment, that gold vein going right up the Great Northern Peninsula and seeing more economic development.

Another thing that's very sustainable is our tourism industry that's happening. If I take the Port au Choix National Historic Site, they saw a 60 per cent increase last year, Mr. Chair. More than 15,000 visitors had gone to the National Historic Site to learn about indigenous culture. They had a food festival there and there were investments made by Parks Canada.

I have to give accolades to the MP and to Parks Canada for making that investment, paving Point Riche Road out to the lighthouse where we have the resident caribou that are there, that are hanging out and that are iconic for tourists as well. To see, as well, L'Anse aux Meadows had 36,000 visitors, a 31 per cent increase last year. Red Bay, as well, saw a significant increase.

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

**MR. MITCHELMORE:** When we look at the opportunity for a pathway of three UNESCOs, we have tremendous opportunity on the Great Northern Peninsula and in Southern Labrador.

Tourism numbers were up all across the board in various areas in my district. The Viking Trail Tourism Association highlighted a 15 per cent increase. That's quite significant.

When we released our tourism numbers, last year was the busiest year in history for non-resident spending. There were 553,000 people, \$575 million just from the non-resident visitor

spending. We're still tabulating resident spending, but in 2016 our tourism between resident and non-resident saw \$1.13 billion. That is a significant increase. We're seeing growth and that is something we're going to continue to work on, Mr. Chair, to reach our ultimate vision of \$1.6 billion by 2020.

I want to talk about broadband investments, Mr. Chair, where \$1.5 million was leveraged from the provincial government, \$40 million from the federal government, private sector and from the providers. I saw in my own district areas like Conche that's going to be seeing upgrades and Cook's Harbour. This is very important for these communities – so important. Upwards of 30 communities in my district will see and experience some form of Internet upgrade.

When you look at infrastructure into road paving, Port au Choix road will see paving this year. That's important. I thank the Minister of Transportation and Works, both the former and current, for seeing that. There's a tender released where Port au Choix and Port Saunders will see investments. We can continue to see that growth in tourism. We continue to see that growth in fisheries activity.

L'Anse aux Meadows Road had a carry-over of work that's going to be done and Route 430; this year Conche Road that's something that's been heavily lobbied for by constituents and also a road that has never been paved in the history of this province; and upgrades to Route 433 from Roddickton to Englee. These are important investments, Mr. Chair.

Also important is the plow tracker program for snow clearing. They're going across the province. I think that's phenomenal. It's great to see the Minister of Transportation have that vision to implement technology.

From an innovation side of things, we held a tech summit, Mr. Chair. We held an agriculture summit and an aquaculture summit. We're making Crown land available for agriculture use. These are opportunities for private sector job investment.

There are good things happening in our economy. Good things like the affordable housing project announced in St. Anthony for 10

affordable housing units at \$1.25 million; to see a new rescue unit happen in the Town of St. Anthony to support that investment; the removal of the harbour rock when you have crews and we have international shipping opportunities out of there. This is opportunity to expand and create new jobs and new opportunities.

When you look at municipal infrastructure, my colleague, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment, when we're investing in roads and water and waste water; when we're using municipal capital works that we have or the Small Communities Fund and we use federal funds to leverage to the greatest capacity. We're working smarter, Mr. Chair, than the previous administration ever did with its investments when it comes to leveraging federal funds.

We're doing the hard work, Mr. Chair. We're working smarter, we're working harder and we're making sure we get the economy back on track to where it needs to be. We're seeing great things happen over the last couple of years when it comes to investments in infrastructure, when it comes to where we're headed in tourism. When we see the opportunity of big investments in production that's happening in the technology sector, you have 165 companies, 4,000 people employed and over a billion dollars of investment. When we see these companies they're competing, they're exporting and they're doing great work.

I take great pride in being the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation because I see firsthand, Mr. Chair; I've seen firsthand great investments made in your district and that there is opportunity as we go along in agriculture, as we look at the highway, the connectivity, the growth that Marine Atlantic for year over year passenger traffic being over 100,000 in rubber tire traffic.

These are big accomplishments and they can't be done alone. They're done working together. They're done working with our partners, working with the provincial government, our colleagues here in this House, working with municipal players, the federal government and private sector and all of the Crown agencies and corporations. Together, if we start and finish something, we can achieve many great things.

I'm so proud to stand here today to support the Interim Supply.

Thank you.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

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

It's a pleasure to get up again to speak on Interim Supply. It's always good to get up and speak about our districts or provincial issues or pretty much any topic, which is kind of nice, Mr. Chair. Sometimes we're restricted on our – based on legislation, sometimes we haven't got that leeway. It's kind of nice when you can get up and pass a few comments more broadly.

The minister just spoke, TCII, and referenced that they were smarter than we were in our administration. That's subject to – I'm not sure where he gets that, where he did that poll, but I'll leave that to everyone else's imagination.

One thing the current administration takes great pride in is something that was brought in by the former administration, which is the Find Yourself Campaign. The award winning tourism campaign that's after getting our department, our government, our province hundreds of awards and continues to do so. It was one of the most brilliant advertising campaigns across this country, and probably North America.

As a matter of fact, recently I was watching, I think it's Yukon, and it's a mirror image of the Newfoundland and Labrador tourism ads, and it's no greater compliment than that, that they're copying us. That's how good that campaign is that they're copying us. Other provinces have tried to do the same thing, Mr. Chair.

It's something I know we, as the former administration, are very proud of. I know the residents of this province felt very good about. It's something that I know a lot of staff who worked in that department previously and are still there took great pride in that campaign, as well as Target Marketing and all the partners that were involved in the campaign.

Me, I had the fortune of being involved with that in my previous life and the former administration. It was something that I take great pride in and it was a lot of fun, and it's something they should all be commended for. I'd like to commend them, and the government should take pride in something we created. We'll take the credit, but they can also enjoy the rewards of this administration.

If you look at some crowning achievements, it's one of the biggest crowning achievements of the former administration. It wasn't just the tourism ads. Everyone looks at them and they are wonderful and they're beautiful. I tell you, they're something to behold. It's how we felt about ourselves. I've said it many times before; it's the bounce we used to have in our steps. How we felt as being Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. There was a lot of pride.

Last night I know a lot of people were up late watching curling, the Brier, me included, and that's that feeling. What a proud feeling when you saw them win the Brier last night. I'm sure everyone of us in this House, everyone who watched, it's a proud moment for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We experienced that almost on a regular basis, a daily basis, over everything we did. That's not there where it should be. That's not there where it used to be.

Last night was a great example of the way we felt on a daily basis. Now we only feel it on certain occasions, whether it's Kaetlyn Osmond, Liam Hickey, Katarina Roxon, Brad Gushue, all of our great accomplishments and some good news stories that will happen from time to time. It's something we feel proud of and it's something that makes us feel good, but they are only certain times, Mr. Chair, certain events.

On a day-to-day basis we can all fool ourselves and we can listen to some of the conversations across the way, and I understand. If I was there, I'd probably be doing the same thing. There's not a lot to be proud of on the other side, Mr. Chair.

Listen, I say this in all honesty, don't ask me. I'm the politician. Don't ask any of us. Go out and ask the general public. Go out and ask them what they think. They'll tell you. It's not hard; I

mean most people can't wait to tell me. Most people can't wait to tell me what they think.

Ask them what they think of the insurance tax. A prime example, what do they think of the insurance tax. It's strange, you know, if you keep talking low and don't bring up anything that's anywhere a controversy, you don't hear anything across the way. Then they wake up, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. PETTEN:** I hear them over there now. They're chirping, and that's fine. I'm not saying anything that you're not going to hear in any coffee shop or in any mall or any household in this province. People tell me that on a daily basis, whether they're die-hard Liberals or PCs, they tell me it.

Actually, a lot of Liberals tell me too. I hear a lot of Liberals talk about they're not pleased with the taxes, Mr. Chair. The taxes are killing people. It's a burden on their financial means in every household; people feel they're being taxed to death.

Recently, we spoke about the carbon tax and we feel we pay our fair share. I think that's where we need to be because we are paying our fair share. The general public don't look at this, that's just another tax. We understand the emissions and carbon footprints and doing what's better, but if that tax comes in, it will be another tax that will go into government coffers. What will happen? People will just add it on to their daily lives like they've done with everything else, whether it be the levy or the insurance tax. It's all another tax.

Mr. Chair, like I said last week and I'll say it again, now we have 301 new taxes and fees. It's not 300; it's 301 when you add on the carbon tax.

Now, people can have objections on the other side, Mr. Chair, but I'm not saying –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. PETTEN:** I didn't create this. This is public documentation. This is out to be read. I'm not creating that it's 301 taxes – soon to be. Everybody – it's been said thousands of times since 2016 and it continues to be said.

Members opposite get up and they try to say the wonderful things they've done. They've done some good things, but you can't sugar coat it, Mr. Chair. It is what it is. People see it for what it's worth. People read the newspapers. They watch what's happening; they know. They don't have to do any of that, Mr. Chair. All they have to do is go and look at their personal financial situation and their buying power is decreased massively in the last two years. It's amazing.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. PETTEN:** Mr. Chair, I'd like to be able to finish my conversation.

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

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

This stuff is not created stuff. I never reinvented the wheel. This is all public knowledge, but it's something that I –

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

**MR. PETTEN:** Unbelievable. I hope they paid more attention to putting out a decent budget this year than what they are paying attention to me.

Mr. Chair, in my last couple of minutes, I want to bring up something – and I brought it up in Question Period and I think it's worthy of mentioning. This affects people in my district and I'm sure every district in the province. It's access to mental health and addiction services. I was part of the All-Party Committee. There was a lot of great work done *Towards Recovery*. As the minister referenced today, all but three recommendations are near completion or in the process. That's all great. The problem is getting through that door, Mr. Chair.

I sat in a lot of conversations; we listened to a lot of people. Getting in to access the services is one of the biggest challenges. When you get in, there are a lot of good things there and there are a lot of improvements happening. Getting through the door is your initial problem.

I heard Members from the Third Party reference emergency wait times and what have you. I know I had a constituent of mine who was in dire need. There was detox; there were addictions issues. The family was crying out. It was kind of like an intervention; she wanted help. Anyway, it was a really sad situation. They were running into all kinds of roadblocks. I got involved through our health and addictions officials in Health. They were great. Tried to navigate the way to get this person the services they needed. I commend each and every one of them.

When they laid the road map out of what this lady had to do, we put it in motion, but she hit a roadblock on the first step of the way. It was going to an emergency room to get registered in our health system. That was the first step. Everything else fell into place fine. Twenty-two hours this couple sat in the emergency room waiting to get in the system. When they got in everything was laid out for them: Yeah, you go here, here and here. Everything was perfectly laid out; the problem was the door, getting through that original door. It was a huge impediment.

I hear that story from lots of people, Mr. Chair. That's part of our mental health and addictions strategy *Towards Recovery*. Access to services is one of the pillars; it's one of the main things. We can have these recommendations and it looks fine on paper. I'm sure we're doing great things and we're going to continue. I have all the faith in the world the minister can do that and his officials. There's a major problem. This only happened a couple of weeks ago.

I heard another story somewhere in the media, a similar occurrence. People are still having trouble to get the access to the services they require. The best example I can give in the general public – and we talk about stigmas and mental health and addictions and what have you. When someone is experiencing a situation, whether it be through mental health, addictions,

a combination of, the general public does not know what to do in that situation, how to deal with it.

If you break an ankle, get you to an X-ray or get you repaired; if you have a mental health or if you have a serious addictions issue, most of the public still does not know how to handle it. That's a huge gap in our system, Mr. Chair. I think that is the crux. Of all the good stuff we've done in *Towards Recovery*, one of the biggest gaps in our system right now is people do not know where to turn. We can say we have this here and that there and we have a coordinator, we have a navigator in mental health. These people are great and I depend on them, I refer them to constituents of mine, but there's still a lot of work to be done, Mr. Chair. I look forward to seeing some more initiatives being taken on by the Department of Health and Community Services in mental health and addictions.

Thank you very much.

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

**CHAIR:** The hon. Minister of Transportation and Works.

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

It's always a pleasure to stand here and represent my District of Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde, Mr. Chair. I'll take a few minutes a little bit later in my time to speak a little bit around what the previous Member for Conception Bay South had to say. He weaves a good tale.

Mr. Chair, first of all, I'll start off and talk about some of the activity in my district. Over the last number of weeks I've had the opportunity to attend many winter carnivals and other events in the district. It's always a pleasure to get out and meet with people – whether it's for a breakfast or a fireman's banquet or whatever events are happening in the district – and hear the concerns of people.

Mr. Chair, I do want to mention a couple of individuals. This past weekend I was in my hometown of Heart's Delight-Islington for a

firemen's awards night. There were two gentlemen there that were recognized for their service to the town and to the fire department; one is Melvin Harnum. Melvin has over 40 years' service to the Heart's Delight-Islington Volunteer Fire Department. He also served about a dozen years as Region 1 director on the federation of firefighter chiefs throughout the province, so thank you to Melvin.

The other individual was Mr. Calvin Legge. Calvin also had over 40 years' service on the fire department. He was actually one of the original members and the only original member left serving today with, I think, over 43 years' service, Mr. Chair. Any time we're in our communities and we have an opportunity to send a thank you to these people, it's very important.

There are some exciting things happening in the district. Just recently, the Heart's Content Cable Station, which celebrated its 150th anniversary just two summers ago, was placed on the UNESCO nominee list for UNESCO status. Mr. Chair, this is a tremendous opportunity for that site and for tourism in the entire region.

Like many parts of the province, tourism in the Baccalieu Trail area is becoming very important and very key. But one of the things we never forget in my district or the district that I represent, Mr. Chair, would be the fishery. It is what the district was built around and it is today, if you look at it; the activity in Old Perlican and the new state-of-the-art crab plant in Bay de Verde. We're very well positioned going forward when it comes to the fishery of the future.

As Minister of Transportation and Works, there are a few exciting things happening in the district this summer. We're going to actually finish the Heart's Content Barrens. It's a project that's been ongoing for quite some time now. I think, maybe around six years. We're going to see some activity in the Melbourne ridge area this year with some pulverizing and repaving. We're going to start this year to do some work in the Old Perlican area.

As well, we're going to, this year, be putting a focus on the Veterans' Memorial when it comes to some mill-and-fill operations. That's a highway, Mr. Chair, that not only services my



district, but I know the neighbouring District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave and, as well, the District of Harbour Main. This road is very important to the entire region.

Mr. Chair, there are lots of exciting things. You look at just recently in the fall the Minister of Health and I and the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave were in Carbonear to announce the opening of the remaining 28 beds at the Carbonear long-term care facility. That facility is a new facility but now it will be fully utilized to represent or to help with the needs of the people in the area.

Mr. Chair, as well, we have some great harbour infrastructure needs and projects ongoing throughout the district. I very much look forward to working with the new Member of Parliament, MP Churence Rogers, on those needs.

Mr. Chair, that's a highlight of some of the things happening in Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde, but I want to quickly move into some of the things happening in the Department of Transportation and Works. Last year, we saw over 600 lane kilometres of pavement throughout the province and 180 kilometres of the Trans-Labrador, Mr. Chair, so great strides forward with the Roads Plan. The Roads Plan is one of the things the Member opposite referenced being proud of. Well, I can assure you, this government is proud of the Roads Plan.

Mr. Chair, I must be hitting a nerve over there now. They're starting to chirp.

Mr. Chair, I stood up in a news conference a few weeks ago with the Construction Association. I stood next to the Construction Association. The Construction Association said one of the achievements of this government was taking the politics out of pavement. That's a very important thing we've done with our Roads Plan.

Our Roads Plan; again this season we've started our tenders. We will complete early tendering – by March 31 we will have completed the tendering for this year's Roads Plan. This should afford us the opportunity, Mr. Chair, for some additional work later in the season, as it was last year.

When you look at some of our infrastructure achievements, Mr. Chair, they spent years and years and years – I think they announced the Corner Brook hospital seven times. We're bringing that to fruition. We've already gotten to a point where there's construction ready to start. There's equipment on site for the Corner Brook long-term care facility. We're working toward the acute care facility in Corner Brook, Central long-term care. We're working to our commitment towards the new Waterford Hospital replacement.

Mr. Chair, infrastructure in Harbour Grace - Port de Grave. A commitment to Coley's Point, a school that's also been announced a dozen times, but this is the government that will fulfill that commitment; a new K to three in Gander. The investments in infrastructure have been strong. We'll see great work done – the Hugh Twomey Centre in Botwood.

One of our former speakers, the Minister of Tourism, raised the Plow Tracker. We're very proud of the Plow Tracker. Just this past Friday, Plow Trackers are now available for all highways depots throughout the province.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Talk about the highway cameras.

**MR. CROCKER:** The Member just reminded me this season we've been able to add two important highway cameras: one in Terrenceville and one just this past weekend in Whitbourne. Mr. Chair, that's a network we're planning on expanding.

Mr. Chair, I'm getting short on time so I wouldn't want to sit down until I have an opportunity to reference some of the remarks of the previous speaker, the Member for CBS, getting up and talking about bounces in steps. I reference a document and it's *Budget 2015: Balancing Choices for a Promising Future*.

It's interesting, Mr. Chair, he talked about bounce and steps. You can imagine where this government was when we came into office in 2015 and found – this is what would take the bounce out of anyone's step. They had told us they had a \$1.1 billion deficit. Guess what the real deficit was? It was \$2.7 billion.

Mr. Chair, if you follow their numbers – and this is interesting. If anybody at home would like to, you can still go online and get a copy of *Budget 2015*. If you want to follow a road map to disaster, you follow this road map. They had predicted oil at \$85 by this year. I'm not sure who was doing their forecasts.

I see they're really getting excited over there now because the road map they had for the people of this province was a little more than a road map to disaster, Mr. Chair. There's no doubt about it where we are headed.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Talk about the ferries

**MR. CROCKER:** Yeah, the Member references the ferries; \$50 million in tariffs for ferries built in Romania, ferries that could have very well been built in Marystown.

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

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

**MR. CROCKER:** Mr. Chair, they bought the ferries and forgot the wharves.

**CHAIR:** I remind the hon. Member –

**MR. CROCKER:** Anyway, Mr. Chair, I'll get a chance to speak again.

Thank you very much.

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

**CHAIR:** I remind the hon. Member that his speaking time has expired.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** Well, it gives me great pleasure to rise in this hon. House to speak to my own district, being Mount Pearl North, and the great people of it.

In Mount Pearl North, we're fortunate to have had a very strong, progressive council over the past several decades, which has planned out the development and maintenance of infrastructure and, fortunately, that has served the people well.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Point of order.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. K. PARSONS:** Under what? What's the number?

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

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

**AN HON. MEMBER:** (Inaudible) point of order.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

No point of order.

The Chair recognizes the hon. Member for Mount Pearl North.

**MR. LESTER:** I'll not start over, I'll continue on where I left off.

Mr. Chair, in speaking to the people's interest of Mount Pearl North, I'd like to point out the mass contribution of private business to the people of Mount Pearl North. Many of it is perpetrated by actual owners and entrepreneurs within Mount Pearl North.

You know entrepreneurs are basically the driving force behind our economy. When we see the ebbs and flows of megaprojects and employment within government; it's private business that keeps our economy going. Right now, our private entrepreneurs are facing big challenges and one of them is the cost of doing business in this province. When people are under duress, economically at home, they're bringing it to their work, they're bringing it to their businesses and it's the entrepreneurs who are often the counsel of these employees.

We need to make our province more affordable to do business and we need to attract more businesses. That's not just on this government's watch; it's been on the watch of every government since Confederation. We seem to be finding ourselves in the same economic doldrums over and over again. I think, collectively, as a Legislature, we have to do better, not only for our current citizens but the citizens of the future.

Many of the people in my district are now approaching or are in retirement and are seniors on fixed incomes. I think another thing that we need to do, collectively, as a Legislature, would be to lobby the federal government to enable the recipients of Old Age Security to work part-time without claw back. There's a deficiency of part-time workers in my district.

You walk along Commonwealth Avenue and you see help wanted signs everywhere. I think the prime source of employment and filling this space would be the seniors who are on income security, whose incomes have been fixed but yet the cost of living and surviving has continually increased. Not only would it contribute to the businesses and the community in the form of filling a void, I think that it would keep our seniors involved in our communities much longer. We need to do that.

Not only are the seniors a valuable part of our community through mentorship, but it would keep them healthier, it would keep them active. A lot of our seniors today are finding themselves alone. If they have a purpose of a job to go to every day to feel part of a contribution, I think our seniors would be much healthier, especially when it comes to their mental health.

We often think of our seniors, due to their age, that their physical health is declining, but I think that mental health, again, in the seniors profile is something that definitely needs more attention. Keeping them involved in the community, talking to them when they're out in the community is a big part of keeping them overall healthy.

One thing I'd like to speak to – one of my mottos in life is: Don't live in the past but learn by it. I'd like to bring up a subject that is probably relevant to today and that's the Hibernia construction project which occurred in the 1990s. I remember being in high school and many of my friends couldn't wait to graduate so they could get a job putting fries in a container for \$15 an hour. That was a big wage back then.

I can remember conversations on all sides of the government, when it came to the construction of the Hibernia concrete structure, and that was that it was such a white elephant; we'd be better off bringing it to deep water and sinking it. We

stuck through it. We completed the project, but because the public's faith in that project had been so severely damaged, when Petro-Can pulled out and the percentage came for sale, there was no appetite in this province to buy that percentage.

If we had to have invested in that percentage at that time, we'd be hundreds and hundreds of millions ahead of where we are today. We wouldn't be enviously looking at the federal government and hoping they're going to be Santa Claus and sign it over to us, which I kind of doubt they ever will.

That's something that we can look at when it looks to our own megaproject today, that being Muskrat Falls.

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

**MR. LESTER:** Yeah.

Well listen, I can remember when Hibernia was over budget. Can you remember that, Members opposite? We said: No, let's give it up, let's mothball the project.

That's something that we can learn from. We can't sell –

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

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

**MR. LESTER:** We can't sell off Muskrat Falls at this point. I know it's not a popular subject to talk about, but we have to make the best of the project and make sure that the dividends that are on the horizon do come back to us and it's not somebody else that benefits from it.

Now, I'll talk to agriculture. I know pretty well everybody who got up to speak today was speaking of agriculture and I commend them for it. Agriculture is something that holds huge potential here, but if you look at the evolution of the agriculture industry, unfortunately, other than the supply managed industries, the number of people participating and producing in agriculture continues to decline. That's not only here in Newfoundland, but that's right across the whole country.

That's something that we all need to work hard to reverse because, as I said before, we're the last place in the whole entire North American continent to get food and we'll be the first ones to suffer for it.

In our efforts to develop the agriculture industry, we have to be extremely careful not to damage or hamper those already involved in it. We do want new entrants into the industry but we want to make sure that the entrants that come into our industry are doing it on a non-competitive manner with producers that are already here. We want to make sure that they're going it in a legal and socially acceptable manner.

We have a great food safety security system in Canada. We have to make sure that all new entrants are adhering to that in order to provide a consistent food supply because, unfortunately, if we do have an issue with food security or food supply or food safety, it affects the whole industry, it doesn't just affect that one individual producer. We need to make sure that the industry development and expansion is done such in a sustainable manner that our food safety is maintained and our existing food supply is not comprised.

One of the big, I guess, highlights of our agriculture industry is the upcoming CAP program which is the Canadian Agricultural Partnership between the federal and provincial governments. Unfortunately, as it stands right now, we do not have any producer representation on these committees which will administer these funds. That's something I think this current administration needs to look at and make sure that there is industry representation.

We need to have a blend of bureaucrats, ex officios and producers in order to administer these funds, to make sure these funds are going to the true benefit of the industry expansion and the producers themselves.

The opportunity has always been there and why hasn't it – because we've always talked way up here about agriculture and never ever actually put boots on the ground. Hopefully, we'll start doing that in the very near future.

In order to develop any industry, agriculture or tourism, it's always a, I guess, multi-government

approach. You have to keep working on government's initiatives from the past, no matter what the political affiliation.

If the government does happen to change in 2019, which I'm hopeful; no disrespect across the way, but I look forward to carrying on the initiatives of this government that have made a positive difference. I commend the government Members for carrying on the previous administration's positive efforts. That's how we can turn around our province. I think all of us, as a Legislature, that's what we really want to see happen.

Thank you.

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

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 36 carried without amendment.

**CHAIR:** The motion is that the Committee rise and report the resolution and Bill 36 carried 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, the Speaker returned to the Chair.

**MR. SPEAKER (Trimper):** The hon. the Chair of Committee of Supply.

**MR. WARR:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply 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 Supply reports that the Committee have considered the matters to them referred and have directed him to report that the Committee have adopted a certain resolution and recommend that a bill be introduced to give effect to the same.

When shall the report be received?

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Now.

On motion, report received and adopted.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, 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 the motion?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

This motion is carried.

**CLERK (Barnes):** "That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the granting to Her Majesty for defraying certain expenses of the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 2019 the sum of \$2,806,552,200."

On motion, resolution read a first time.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the resolution be now read a 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?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

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

This 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. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, for leave to introduce the Interim Supply bill, Bill 36, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is moved and seconded that the hon. Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board shall have leave to introduce Bill 36, the Interim Supply Bill 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.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2019 And For Other Purposes Relating To the Public Service. (Bill 36)

On motion, Bill 36 read a first time.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the Interim Supply bill be now read a second time.

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

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

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against?

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2019 And For Other Purposes Relating To the Public Service. (Bill 36)

On motion, Bill 36 read a second time.

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

**MR. A. PARSONS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board, that the Interim Supply bill 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?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those against?

The motion is carried.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2019 And For Other Purposes Relating To the Public Service. (Bill 36)

**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 Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2019 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service," read a third time, ordered passed and its title be as on the Order Paper. (Bill 36)

**MR. SPEAKER:** We will take a brief recess while we wait for the arrival of His Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor.

#### Recess

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has arrived.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Please admit His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** All rise.

(His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor takes the Chair.)

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** It is the wish of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor that all present be seated.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Your Honour, it is my agreeable duty on behalf of Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, Her Faithful Commons in Newfoundland and Labrador, to present to Your Honour a bill for the appropriation of Interim Supply granted in the present session.

**CLERK:** A bill, An Act Granting To Her Majesty Certain Sums Of Money For Defraying Certain Expenses Of The Public Service For The Financial Year Ending March 31, 2019 And For Other Purposes Relating To The Public Service. (Bill 36)

**HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR (Frank F. Fagan, CM, ONL, MBA):** In Her Majesty's name, I thank Her Loyal Subjects, I accept their benevolence and I assent to these bills.

**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 Labour Standards Act." (Bill 29)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Workplace Health, Safety And Compensation Act." (Bill 30)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Order Of Newfoundland And Labrador Act." (Bill 31)

A bill, "An Act Respecting The Newfoundland And Labrador Centre For Health Information." (Bill 32)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act, 2015." (Bill 33)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Legal Aid Act." (Bill 34)

A bill, "An Act To Amend The Public Inquiries Act, 2006." (Bill 35)

**HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR:** In Her Majesty's Name, I assent to these bills.

**Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:**

The Second Session of the Forty-Eighth General Assembly of the hon. House of Assembly is about to be prorogued.

Before releasing you from your duties, I wish to express gratitude for the care and consideration that you have given to important matters brought to you by our ministers.

During the second session, 27 pieces of legislation were debated and passed in this hon. House.

In this session, our legislation was focused on advancing better outcomes from residents throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, and on maximizing economic opportunity.

### **Maximizing Economic Opportunity**

In some cases, this meant bringing forward new legislation to ensure we are prepared for unprecedented new developments, and to maximize the opportunities that they bring.

For example, amendments to the *Liquor Corporation Act* were brought forward in this session to grant the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation the necessary authority to ensure there will be a ready and safe supply of cannabis available in our province upon legalization.

Amendments through Bill 23 specifically enabled the NLC to: buy, import and sell cannabis; control the possession, sale and delivery of cannabis; establish, maintain and operate cannabis stores; issue licences for the possession, sale and delivery of cannabis; and set prices of cannabis, in addition to various administrative measures.

This legislation made it possible to issue a Request for Proposals to identify private retailers interested in selling cannabis.

As a result of this agreement, the province secured a supply of up to 8,000 kilograms of cannabis and cannabis-related product annually. In addition, Canopy Growth Corporation committed to build a production facility in this province, which is expect to result in the creation of 145 new jobs, and help deliver on commitments in *The Way Forward* to foster private sector job creation and economic diversification.

With this legislation, and additional legislation to be pursued in the next session of this House of Assembly, Newfoundland and Labrador will be ready to maintain and promote public safety and maximize the economic benefit when cannabis is legalized.

Another example of legislation that adapts our province to new realities, and positions the province to pursue new economic opportunity, is Bill 11, An Act To Amend The Proceedings Against The Crown Act.

With the former Agreement on Internal Trade being replaced with the new Canadian Free Trade Agreement, new opportunities were created for businesses through the promise of an increase in the flow of goods and services between provinces.

At the same time, opportunity was created for consumers to enjoy a better selection of products and better prices through increased competition.

These benefits could only be realized if provincial legislation was amended to acknowledge and enforce the new Federal-Provincial Agreement.

With the passing of Bill 11, necessary changes to legislative language, penalty provisions, and dispute resolution mechanisms, are now reflected in provincial law.

This, in turn, allows the business community and provincial consumers to maximize the benefits they can pursue through freer interprovincial trade.

Legislation passed in this session also gave special recognition to the important role artists play in contributing to the cultural, social, and the economic well-being of the province.

Bill 22, An Act Respecting The Status Of Artists In The Province, encourages everyone, with government departments and agencies leading by example, to pay artists fairly and equitably based on existing industry pay scales for their genre.

This legislation was developed through consultation with representatives from the various art sectors including: visual arts, craft, music, literary and publishing, dance, theatre and film. In addition, 256 professional artists provided their perspective through an online survey.

The legislation is reflective of a broader overall approach by the provincial government to

engage those who are active players in our economy take responsive actions to address their needs and deliver on commitments set out in *The Way Forward* to give Newfoundland and Labrador a stronger economic foundation.

While some legislation has supported the pursuit of new economic opportunity, other legislation restored income to residents by delivering on the promise to remove temporary taxes – taxes that were made necessary by some of the most challenging fiscal circumstances ever faced in the history of the province.

With the passing of the amendment to the *Revenue Administration Act*, the temporary gas tax was reduced by 75 per cent as of December 1, 2017, fulfilling the government's promise that temporary measures would truly be temporary, and removed at the earliest possible opportunity.

### **Advancing Better Outcomes**

The provincial government also delivered on its promise to advance legislation that enhances the quality of life in our province, and respects and protects the rights of individuals.

Bill 20, An Act To Amend The Vital Statistics Act, which removed the requirement to include a statement from a designated professional with an application for a change of sex designation for a person who has reached the age of 16 years, making it possible for individuals who identify as non-binary to apply for a gender-neutral birth certificate. This important amendment promotes an inclusive society that respects self-expression.

The provincial government also strengthened road safety in our province with significant amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act*.

Bill 13 resulted in increases in fines for a number of offences under the *Highway Traffic Act*, with an aim of increasing compliance and enhancing public safety. The offences include infractions such as: driving without a valid licence; failing to provide proof of insurance; illegal vehicle modifications; and driving without clearing snow from a windshield.

Bill 27 also amended the *Highway Traffic Act* by putting in place provisions to reduce excessive



speed, stunting and street racing by adding licence suspensions and vehicle impoundments as new penalties.

The safety of first responders has been enhanced by requiring drivers to reduce their speed by 30 kilometres per hour below the speed limit, and move to an adjacent lane when approaching law enforcement or other emergency vehicles stopped at roadside.

Additionally, a substantial addition to the *Highway Traffic Act* through this bill is the inclusion of a new offence for driving without due care and attention or without reasonable consideration for other persons causing bodily harm or death.

New and unprecedented measures were also put in place through legislation advanced this session, which will enhance oversight that directly affects the safety and well-being of the public.

Bill 24, the *Serious Incident Response Team Act*, established for the first time in our province, a team that will investigate all matters involving death, serious injury, sexual offence and domestic violence as well as other matters of significant public interest that involve police.

In preparing this legislation, the provincial government consulted with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the RNC Association and RNC Public Complaints Commission, all of which were supportive of independent police oversight.

With this legislation, society benefits from an increased level of transparency in the administration of justice and increased trust in our justice system.

Bill 25, the *Prescription Monitoring Act*, addressed the inappropriate dispensing of at-risk drugs, such as opioids and supported the creation of a Prescription Monitoring Program in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The program, and its supporting legislation, was developed in consultation with the Prescription Monitoring Program Advisory Committee, which was compromised of people from

regulatory bodies, law enforcement, community organizations and government departments.

Working with stakeholders, the provincial government advanced this new legislation which enhances and complements the provincial Opioid Action Plan, as well as *Towards Recovery: A Vision for a Renewed Mental Health and Addictions System for Newfoundland and Labrador*. In doing so, the provincial government is delivering on commitments stated in *The Way Forward* to enhance services and outcomes for residents throughout the province.

Better outcomes for injured workers will also be achieved with the passing of Bill 30, An Act to Amend the Workplace Health and Safety Compensation Commission Act.

This legislation will enhance benefits available to injured workers and their families by increasing the income replacement rate for injured workers in Newfoundland and Labrador, or their dependents, from 80 to 85 per cent.

The increased income replacement rate will help improve benefits to injured workers and dependent spouses, without increasing the average assessment rate charged to employers.

Most importantly, it will help reduce the financial, emotional and physical impacts workplace incidents are having on injured workers, their families and their communities.

### Summary

In summary, the legislative initiatives advanced in this session have advanced the provincial government's vision of a strong, diversified province that offers a high standard of living for its residents.

I thank you for the large measure of Supply you have granted. I assure you the appropriations you have granted have been and will be expended by our ministers with care and efficiency.

It is my pleasure that the Second Session of the Forty-Eighth General Assembly of the hon. House of Assembly now be prorogued, and it is prorogued accordingly.

Thank you very much.

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** All rise.

(His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor leaves the Chamber.)

(Mr. Speaker returns to the Chair.)

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

Pursuant to the Speech from His Honour, this House now stands prorogued.