



Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

FORTY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Volume XLVIII

THIRD SESSION

Number 1

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

Tuesday

March 13, 2018

The House met at 2 p.m.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Please be seated.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Mr. Speaker, the Justices of the Supreme Court have arrived.

MR. SPEAKER: Admit the Justices of the Supreme Court.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Admit His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise.

(Mr. Speaker leaves the Chair.)

(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.

HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR (Frank F. Fagan, CM, ONL, MBA):

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

I am very pleased to open the third session of the 48th General Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our Government's priority is to ensure Newfoundland and Labrador remains an ideal place to live and raise a family; a place that has the conditions necessary for economic growth and job creation; and a place where people are supported by responsive, innovative and efficient programs and services. *The Way Forward* is our vision for sustainability and growth; a roadmap guiding our future to a

province that is diversified, prosperous and with a high standard of living.

Our Government's plan is focused on the future and on making choices now that are necessary for the betterment of this province for our children and our grandchildren.

We have been steadfast in our commitment and today we reflect on the progress that has been made over the past two years and to chart the course for the year to come. An ambitious plan will encounter challenges, and such challenges are amplified when the circumstances are difficult. We recognize these challenges as opportunities to do better. Our Government will bring the perseverance and commitment that is so characteristic of our province to bear as we tackle our immense fiscal difficulties.

Our answer to these fiscal challenges continues to be balanced. We strike a balance with strong fiscal management while supporting sustainability and growth through the responsive, innovative and efficient delivery of programs and services, advancement of provincial infrastructure and focus on creating new jobs.

Our Government is committed to creating long-term conditions for growth in the province. The path we set out in *The Way Forward* will encourage and elevate the talents of our people, ensure responsible development of our abundant natural resources and support innovative industries to promote economic growth and build for our future.

Our plan has been strengthened through the ongoing engagement with the people of this province. We have listened attentively and learned much. We have forged new relationships and we are working to reconcile with others.

INDIGENOUS GROUPS

Reconciliation with Indigenous people of this province is of fundamental importance to our Government.

To that end, our Government convened the first provincial Indigenous Roundtable last year, which included all Indigenous governments and organizations in the province, including

Indigenous women's organizations and friendship centres. Our Government is committed to holding the second Indigenous Roundtable this year.

As we reconcile with Indigenous people, we must learn from and atone for the mistakes of the past, so that all present and future generations in our great province can grow in the spirit of reconciliation.

Therefore, we will continue to strive to have the remains of Beothuks Demasduit and Nonosabasut returned to the province from Scotland.

As well, our Government will undertake its own apology to residential school survivors, in consultation with the survivors of the former residential school system and the leaders of Indigenous governments and organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our Government remains committed to implementing the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in collaboration with Indigenous governments and organizations and the Federal Government.

There must not only be atonement, but there must be action to achieve a lasting reconciliation.

ADVANCING THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Raising standards and expectations for how our society treats women is an important focus for our Government. Violence against women and girls is one of the most serious issues facing society today. Unfortunately, many women continue to experience violence. Fifty per cent of women over the age of 15 have experienced or will experience at least one incident of sexual or physical violence in their lifetime. The likelihood of experiencing violence is tripled for Indigenous women. Violence, in any form, is unacceptable.

Tragically, the victimization of Indigenous women and girls remains a national scourge. Our Government issued an Order in Council to fully establish the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls in the province. We were encouraged that

the National Inquiry held sessions in Labrador, and we will continue to fully cooperate with the National Inquiry to finally halt the violence against Indigenous women and girls in this country.

Our Government will continue to work in collaboration with community stakeholders to find long-term solutions to eradicate violence. To complement the work of the Minister's Committee on Violence against Women and Girls, a committee of ministers representing multiple departments has been tasked to address the issue of violence in our province. Ending violence is not the work of any one committee, community group or government department; we recognize that it requires a collective response. While government is taking a strong stand against violence and harassment, the prevention of violence and harassment in our homes, schools, workplaces and communities is everyone's responsibility.

Victims of violence must be well informed about their legal rights. In collaboration with the Public Legal Information Association and the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre, our Government is developing a program to offer legal support to victims of sexual violence. Trained staff will assess and work with an individual's particular needs and experiences, provide general legal information, supportive referrals and trauma-informed responses to help people who have experienced sexual violence.

Our Government will introduce amendments to the *Family Violence Protection Act* to better support adult victims of family violence and their children as Bill 1 for this new session. These amendments will expand the current definition of family violence to clearly include acts of psychological, emotional or financial abuse. These changes will send a strong message that all forms of violence are unacceptable, while supporting victims who are experiencing family violence to obtain an Emergency Protection Order to help protect them and their children.

Our Government will strengthen the capacity of departments and agencies to understand and apply gender-based analysis to policies, programs, services, legislation and budgets in

order to ensure equitable outcomes for women in our province.

As part of Government's commitment to provide safe learning and work environments for everyone, but especially girls and women, legislation and policy including the Safe and Caring Schools Policy, the *Residential Tenancies Act* and the *Municipalities Act* are currently being reviewed using gender-based analysis.

While some progress has been made to recruit and retain women in male-dominated occupations, there is considerable work still needed to reduce systemic barriers. Our commitment to advance the economic status of women and reduce the gender wage gap remains steadfast. To improve the economic status of women, we will continue to develop Women's Employment Plans for new infrastructure projects. Later this year, we will invite women leaders to a forum to help develop initiatives aimed at increasing the number of women in Newfoundland and Labrador in leadership roles. We will continue to require Gender Equity and Diversity Plans for all large resource development projects. These plans improve training and employment opportunities as well as business access for women across a wide range of occupations.

Our Government values diversity in the workplace and is an equal opportunity employer. We recently announced a harassment-free workplace policy to ensure all employees are safe at work. We will continue to work towards gender equality by evaluating our workforce practices to ensure that we advance the social, economic, legal and cultural status of women and girls.

FISCAL SITUATION

As we strive to improve economic conditions in the province, we cannot ignore the province's fiscal situation. Quite simply, we must continue to do better with less and build on the work that we have undertaken over the past two years. The challenges are real and we must make every fiscal decision by balancing the provision of critical programs, services and infrastructure that our residents need and deserve with the

requirement to eliminate our deficits, return to surplus and pay down our debt.

Our Government is committed to getting Newfoundland and Labrador on a solid financial footing. That involves new and innovative ways of doing things, smarter investments and stronger partnerships with community groups, industry and other stakeholders.

Improving our fiscal position is also dependent on establishing a stronger economic foundation. Through the continued implementation of *The Way Forward* and the Cabinet Committee on Jobs, our Government is committed to improve the conditions necessary for private sector investment, job creation and sustainable economic growth. While our economy remains moored to the development of renewable and non-renewable resources, the growth of our knowledge resources through innovation and technology presents one of our greatest opportunities.

We look forward to providing specific details on our fiscal and economic development approach when we release Budget 2018 on March 27.

INNOVATION AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The economy of Newfoundland and Labrador is being driven by an innovative and export-focused business community. In a world where location is not a limitation for developing new business ideas, we are growing a diversified economy where entrepreneurship and innovation are flourishing.

In November 2017, our Government released a Business Innovation Agenda with a goal to expand the pool and capacity of innovation and growth-focused businesses in the province. Last month, we released *The Way Forward on Technology - A Sector Work Plan* that contains concrete actions to grow the technology industry and stimulate new private sector employment. Our Government is committed to providing 40 high-performing technology firms with the supports required to be more productive, competitive and successful in international markets over the next two years. Furthermore, the creation of InnovateNL last year will

promote more efficient delivery of provincial innovation programs and services.

We know that partnership with industry is key to our future success. Last year, our Government established a Regional Trade Network for Newfoundland and Labrador as a forum to share information, identify potential initiatives and improve collaboration among resource and support providers.

Economic growth and environmental sustainability must go hand-in-hand. Our Government is working to ensure that Newfoundland and Labrador's carbon pricing system and the Federal Government's legislative changes to environmental assessment and other regulatory review progresses support opportunities for economic growth in the province while ensuring growth occurs in a sustainable manner.

We are committed to undertaking a review of our environmental assessment process and legislation to provide certainty for industry and stakeholders about process requirements while ensuring protection of the environment.

Our commitment to environmental protection is based on a close relationship with our land and marine environments. This relationship is reflected in our music, theatre, art and films. Indeed, it is reflected throughout all aspects of our culture.

CULTURE

Newfoundland and Labrador is home to some of the world's finest artists and performers. For centuries, we have made music, told stories and created images that have moved millions of people to laugh, cry and just want to be like us. It has been said that culture is our greatest export and our people are its currency. Through this wealth of artistic expression, we have brought the world to our shores.

Our breathtaking scenery, pristine landscapes, talented artists and professional workforce have successfully attracted film and television productions to our province. This attraction is demonstrated in the success of the television series, *Frontier*. Conceived, written and produced by Newfoundland and Labrador

company, *Take the Shot*, *Frontier* is now in its third season of production. Including the current season, this high-end production has generated more than \$73 million in total production activity and more than \$45 million in expenditures on goods and services.

CBC recently premiered *Caught*, which stars our own Allan Hawco and is based on the award-winning novel by one of the province's most beloved authors, Lisa Moore.

Other local companies such as Pope Productions, Morag Loves Company, Rink Rat and Spring Water Productions continue to create exciting film projects in this province.

These film and television productions are contributing to a stronger economic foundation for our province through the growth of the provincial film and television industry, which exceeded \$50 million in expenditures for the first time in 2017-18 and employs an estimated 640 full-time equivalent positions.

Our province's artists continue to receive well-deserved national and international recognition.

The Broadway smash hit, *Come From Away*, displayed to an international audience the unparalleled kindness and welcoming nature of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The show received seven Tony Award nominations, winning for Best Director of a Musical, and was also nominated for music's most prestigious honour, a Grammy Award.

In literature, local author Joel Thomas Hynes was the recipient of the 2017 Governor General's Literary Award for his novel, *We'll All Be Burnt in Our Beds Some Night*.

Recognizing and supporting professional artists is a priority for our Government, as outlined in *The Way Forward*. In the past year, our Government brought forward a new *Status of the Artist Act* to recognize the important role artists play in contributing to the cultural, social and economic well-being of the province.

To further reinforce our support for the arts and heritage, our Government will renew the cultural plan, Creative Newfoundland and Labrador, by January 2019. We will engage cultural

stakeholders to discuss opportunities to collaborate, provide better services and support better outcomes for the cultural sector over the next five years.

LABRADOR

Labrador is a distinct and integral part of our province's culture, history and identity. Labrador plays a crucial role in our vision of building on a strong economic foundation in the mining, agriculture, fishing, tourism, forestry and other renewable resource sectors.

Our Government will continue, through the Labrador Affairs Secretariat, to coordinate and implement a focused and innovative approach to improve service delivery in the region as well as to continue to prioritize strategic infrastructure needs.

Transportation remains a critical focus for the development of the region. Our Government is proud to proceed with the completion of the Trans-Labrador Highway, in partnership with the Federal Government. We also continue to support safe winter trail access to isolated Labrador communities through the Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy.

TOURISM

Labrador's stunning landscapes, vast wilderness and unique wildlife create an irresistible pull for adventure-seeking people from all over the world. The Big Land was the only Canadian destination to make *National Geographic Magazine's* Places to Visit in 2018 list, helping to spread the news that the Akami-Uapishk^U-KakKasuak-Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve offers a tourism experience unlike any other in the world.

The undeniable attraction of the Labrador wild was recently showcased in the running of the Cain's Quest snowmobile endurance race. Characterized as the world's longest and most extreme snowmobile race, the 3,200 kilometre event attracted contestants from Ontario, Quebec, Finland, United States and, of course, Newfoundland and Labrador. Following a circuit from Labrador City to Nain and L'Anse au Clair and back to western Labrador, 41 teams fought for the glory of winning this exceptional

event. Team Maine, an international duo from Wabush and Maine, repeated their 2016 victory while local team, the Innu Hawks, finished in second place. Since its inception in 2006, Cain's Quest has continued to grow in popularity in response to the beauty and hospitality of Labrador. We look forward to welcoming the next challengers for Cain's Quest in 2020.

With the world's attention on Newfoundland and Labrador, our tourism industry continues to be a driver for our economy. Last year more than 553,000 people travelled here and have spent an estimated \$575 million. This was the highest non-resident spending we have ever seen.

Spurred on by such growth and potential, our Government is committed to reaching \$1.6 billion in resident and non-resident visitor spending by the year 2020.

IMMIGRATION

Our province proudly offers a welcoming, safe and supportive environment for people from around the world who choose to live, study and work here.

Increasing the province's population through immigration not only benefits us economically, but also strengthens us socially and culturally. In *The Way Forward on Immigration*, our Government has committed to position our province to become a destination of choice for prospective immigrants looking for a new place in which to work, settle and raise a family. In collaboration with our Atlantic and federal colleagues, we launched the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program, a new way to assist employers to recruit talent internationally. We also took steps to enhance the recognition of foreign qualifications of newcomers, and to aid international students and graduates in attaching to the local labour market. And there is more to come. Our Government plans to launch new International Entrepreneur and International Graduate Entrepreneur categories under the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Nominee Program to further encourage economic growth in this province.

RENEWABLE NATURAL RESOURCES

Guided by *The Way Forward* and the Cabinet Committee on Jobs, our Government is working to revitalize and develop traditional and emerging industries – on land and on water – that will support and sustain a better future for Newfoundland and Labrador.

The new Department of Fisheries and Land Resources brings together a singular focus on renewable resources, including agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, forestry and lands. This consolidation has supported our Government's objective of a more efficient public sector and introduced new, streamlined client service that aligns program delivery with our Government's priorities. Since the formation of the department, we have held summits on agriculture and aquaculture, initiated diversification efforts in the forest industry, established the Fisheries Advisory Council and launched the Atlantic Fisheries Fund in partnership with the Federal Government. These actions have set the groundwork to realize true and substantive progress in these industries.

Having a safe and secure food supply is paramount for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We face significant challenges in this province, especially when it comes to access to healthy fruits and vegetables. Our Government has committed to double provincial food self-sufficiency by 2022. To accomplish this, our Government decided to open more Crown land for agricultural purposes. In 2017, approximately 64,000 hectares of land was made available for agriculture. Further actions under the Agriculture Sector Work Plan will support the growth of agriculture and security of food supply in the province.

The fishery has been the backbone of Newfoundland and Labrador for centuries, and it remains a critical industry for the province. We must continue to focus on strategic research and cutting-edge innovation in the fish and seafood industry, both in our wild fisheries and aquaculture sectors, to optimize the value of these resources for the benefit of our present and future generations.

To compete in the global marketplace, our Government will continue to support the fishery and aquaculture industries to achieve

efficiencies and to produce the highest quality, sustainably sourced products

NONRENEWABLE NATURAL RESOURCES

Over the past 30 years, our economy has benefited from opportunities brought through the development of our petroleum resources. The *Way Forward on Oil and Gas: Advance 2030 – A Plan for Growth in the Newfoundland and Labrador Oil and Gas Industry* sets an ambitious path forward, in partnership with industry, the Federal Government and other stakeholders, to nurture continued growth.

By 2030, our Government envisions more than 100 new exploration wells drilled. Multiple basins will produce over 650,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day. Our commitment is to enable industry to accelerate progress from prospectivity to production. By 2030, more than 7,500 people will be directly employed by this industry. We envision a world-class energy cluster built upon the integration of a robust, innovative global supply and service sector, commercial gas production and new oil developments. Modern and fair benefit agreements will secure the province's ability to realize enduring economic and fiscal returns.

Newfoundland and Labrador was recently ranked as the most attractive Canadian province for oil and gas investment, and fourth globally by the Fraser Institute. We have a strong track record of success, with our most recent major production achievement occurring with the Hebron project. Our Government will build on these successes with continued support in oil and natural gas exploration and development. It is our commitment to position this province globally as a preferred location for oil and gas development.

Our province continues to receive wide-ranging benefits from our mining and mineral riches. Mining is a significant contributor to the Newfoundland and Labrador economy, with a forecast in 2018 of 6,000 people employed in the industry and \$3.4 billion in mineral shipments. We will continue to grow opportunities, particularly in rural areas of our province, by advancing public geoscience, improving service delivery and promoting exploration. A new

mineral strategy for the province will be developed, in consultation with mining industry stakeholders, to identify new opportunities and guide future growth.

MUSKRAT FALLS

As we grow our economy, we are faced with some challenges. Our Government has worked hard with Nalcor to get the Muskrat Falls project on a better path. This hard work has paid off, as we witnessed the achievement of unprecedented progress with several important milestones reached over the past year.

Construction of the project is now 90 per cent complete and most recently, the transmission link with Nova Scotia was finished, marking the first time in Newfoundland and Labrador's history that we are connected to the North American power grid. This allows us to import electricity at a cheaper rate than it costs to produce at the Holyrood Generation Station.

While the past cannot be changed, our Government took action to ensure that the Muskrat Falls Project is better managed. It is important that we examine why this project received sanction in the first place and ensure that the circumstances that led to that sanctioning never occur again. That is why our Government launched a public inquiry into the Muskrat Falls Project led by Justice Richard D. LeBlanc.

That inquiry, which began its work in January, will examine whether all options were considered at the time of sanctioning the project. It will look at why there are significant differences between the actual cost of the project and the estimated cost at the time of sanction. The inquiry will also explore whether it was justified and reasonable for the project to be excluded from oversight by the Public Utilities Board.

We expect the final report from the inquiry by December 2019.

CONSUMERS

Building on our commitment to consultation and responding to the concerns of our people, we are listening to consumers who are concerned about

high automobile insurance rates. Our Government has launched a review to examine why these rates are so high with the aim of identifying ways to lower them. This comprehensive review, led by the Public Utilities Board includes an independent closed-claim study as well as public consultations. We expect to receive the PUB's findings by June of this year and plan to introduce legislation this fall.

Later this year, the use of cannabis for non-medical purposes will be legalized. This is one of the most significant policy shifts in Canada since the province joined Confederation in 1949.

We will promote public health by keeping cannabis out of the hands of our youth and encourage low-risk use by those adults who choose to use it; promote safety on our roads, in public places and in our workplaces; reduce the burden on our criminal justice system and support new business opportunities.

Our Government has announced policies around the legal age to purchase, place of use and the retail model. We have guaranteed a safe and secure supply of cannabis through an agreement with one of the country's leading producers. This agreement will result in the construction of a multi-million dollar production facility in the province as well as the creation of 145 new, full-time jobs. Our Government remains open to entering into agreements with other licensed companies.

We will launch a comprehensive public education program to ensure that residents, and particularly parents, youth, employers and employees understand the health and safety risks associated with cannabis use.

While much work has been done, we still have to make important decisions on this issue and our Government will introduce legislation in this session of the House of Assembly to address matters related to public safety and health.

MUNICIPALITIES

Municipalities in our province play an important role, not only in town planning activities, but also in economic planning and development.

Our approach to engagement has been innovative and collaborative.

Our Government has listened to municipalities, and heard about the need to improve the legislative framework for local governments in Newfoundland and Labrador to enable them to improve their decision-making and address important issues such as conflict of interest. A preliminary round of consultations has concluded and targeted consultations will soon begin. We expect recommendations for improvement to be announced later this year.

The second annual Premier's Forum on Local Governance was held on November 1, 2017. Through forums like this, our Government receives significant insight into what municipalities need and they allow us to better collaborate with municipalities to reach our shared goals. Feedback allows us to adjust our programs to support community needs. Last year, we focused on building a more sustainable infrastructure program that supports sharing of services and prioritized projects that provide valuable water, wastewater and disaster mitigation infrastructure.

INFRASTRUCTURE

As we look at the broader infrastructure requirements of our province, our Government is taking a new and innovative approach to the way we build critical infrastructure that serves the needs of residents, creates jobs and generates economic activity.

Infrastructure is a long-term investment that requires a long-term outlook. Planning one year at a time is not sufficient. This is why our Government has taken a five-year approach to infrastructure planning.

Last March, we released *The Way Forward: A Multi-Year Plan for Infrastructure Investments* that outlines infrastructure projects across all sectors of government, such as education, health, justice and transportation. Similarly, we introduced five-year plans for the development and maintenance of road and marine infrastructure.

Long-term planning provides certainty and predictability for the construction industry.

Enabling contractors to see projects that are on the horizon will help them to make investments in their own companies, plan their expenditures and business opportunities and position themselves to be competitive in public infrastructure procurement.

With almost 10,000 kilometres of road and more than 1,300 bridges and large culverts, it is simply not possible to enhance our entire highway infrastructure in a single construction season. Developing a continuous five-year roads plan allows residents and motorists to know when highways important to them will receive upgrades. In 2017, more than 508 lane kilometres of highway were paved, more than 365 culverts replaced and 18 bridges repaired. Our Government will continue to issue all tenders for road construction projects well in advance of the road construction season. This ensures contractors are more prepared to start work and take advantage of Newfoundland and Labrador's short construction season.

Our province's physical environment presents unique challenges for transportation infrastructure. Deteriorating asphalt on our roads is a hazard to travellers and costly to replace. Our Government is working with industry to test different asphalt mixes to determine the best types of asphalt for our traffic volumes and our environment. In 2017, we paved five sections on the Trans-Canada Highway with different types of asphalt. Beginning this spring, we will analyze the wear of this pavement annually and use this information to improve roads for the future.

Our Government is taking an innovative approach to infrastructure procurement by partnering with the business community to deliver long-term care facilities in Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor and Corner Brook, as well as the new hospital for western Newfoundland. Taking this different approach to infrastructure development is saving in excess of \$100 million across these projects. Our Government remains committed to ensuring that critical health care services are provided by public sector employees.

ACCESSIBILITY

Everyone has the right to access services and participate fully in their communities without restrictions. Persons with disabilities should not have to experience barriers or overcome obstacles in their daily activities.

We are eliminating barriers in numerous areas. New regulations under the *Buildings Accessibility Act* come into effect in April. Changes to the Designated Mobility Impaired Parking Regulations took effect in January, which include significantly increased fines for those who illegally park in blue zones. Changes to the Provincial Wildlife Act and Regulations and the Hunters and Anglers with a Disability Program have enhanced equitable access to hunting and big game by increasing the allowable distance between a disabled licence-holder and their designated hunter, and changing policies to provide priority access to big game for people with disabilities.

We are working to develop a new Individualized Supports Funding model. This will greatly enhance how individuals access government services by introducing a single point of entry with flexible services that respond to individual needs.

Our Government will continue with a collaborative approach as it moves forward with other initiatives, such as the review of the *Buildings Accessibility Act*. In 2018, we will bring diverse knowledge and experience together in an Inclusion Symposium to inform new legislation focused on equitable access by people with disabilities.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Supporting Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to lead healthier lives will help our province achieve better health outcomes. Recognizing that our health and well-being are shaped by social determinants of health, our Government will continue to use a Health-in-All-Policies approach in decision making.

Our Government recognizes the importance of promoting participation in sport and recreation, and the importance of healthy active living. In *The Way Forward*, we committed to supporting

all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador to live healthier lives. By 2025, the goal is to increase our physical activity rates by seven per cent and to reduce our obesity rate by five per cent.

Better health outcomes lessen stress on our health care system. Healthier Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will pay dividends for our province as optimal health enhances quality of life, improves productivity and increases capacity for learning.

Our Government will release a Healthy Active Living Action Plan in 2018. Through this initiative, we will increase awareness and public education, introduce new policies and practice, build on existing programs and create environments to support healthy active living.

Our Government recognizes that strong public health legislation is vital to promote, support and protect the health of our population. Our province's public health legislation is more than 50 years old and has not been kept pace with the current and changing needs of our population. During this sitting of the House of Assembly, our Government will introduce a new *Public Health Act* to drive improvements in population health.

Given that one in five of us will experience a mental health issue, it is of the utmost importance to continue the public conversation about mental health. Together with community partners, health professionals and people with lived experience we are working to address the significant challenges associated with mental illness and addictions.

Recognizing the serious impact of such conditions in the workplace, our Government has directed WorkplaceNL to modernize its approach to providing coverage for work-related mental stress, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In February, WorkplaceNL announced a review of PTSD coverage in the workers' compensation legislation. This review will help ensure workers' compensation coverage responds appropriately to issues in the modern workplace.

Our Government values our partnership with the Mental Health Commission of Canada and

together we are working with communities to address suicide prevention. Newfoundland and Labrador is the first province to implement Roots of Hope, a suicide prevention project, in collaboration with community partners on the Burin Peninsula. This project represents a significant step forward in overcoming the stigma associated with suicide and allows for communities to come together, as they have on the Burin Peninsula, to address suicide in our communities.

Our Government is committed to the full implementation of *Towards Recovery*. In the near future, we will announce plans to redesign the mental health and addictions services system across the province beginning with the replacement of the Waterford Hospital and initiation of best practices in community support services to allow people to be supported closer to home.

We are committed to the continued implementation of the Opioid Action Plan. Opioid abuse is a significant problem in our province. As outlined in *The Way Forward*, our Government will open a drug treatment court for offenders with serious drug addictions, who commit non-violent, drug-motivated offences, as an alternative to the traditional criminal justice responses. The new court will address the underlying issues that lead to addiction by offering court monitored treatment, random and frequent drug testing, incentives and sanctions, clinical case management and social services support.

Our Government will ensure that our health care system meets the changing needs of the population. We spend significantly more than the Canadian average on health care, but we need to get better value from our health care expenditures. We will focus on enhancing services in our communities.

We continue to improve access to primary health care and home care services. Our community-based interdisciplinary team approach, involving doctors, nurses and other health care professionals will increase access to the right care, from the right health care provider, in the right place. To this end, we will establish more primary health care teams across the province, invest in electronic medical record systems and

implement a home-first approach to seniors' care.

Seniors continue to make significant contributions to our communities. We have a collective responsibility to ensure seniors receive the support they need to lead healthy and productive lives. Our Government has appointed the first Seniors' Advocate, Dr. Suzanne Brake, to collaborate with seniors, service providers and others to identify, review and analyze systemic issues affecting seniors.

CHILDREN IN CARE

Our Government also has an obligation to provide the children in our care with every opportunity to grow and prosper in a safe and caring environment. In 2017, we amended the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, in consultation with the Advocate, so that it is now mandatory for the Departments of Justice and Public Safety and Children, Seniors and Social Development to report child deaths and critical injuries.

Our Government continues to work with the Innu Nation on an inquiry into the treatment, experiences and outcomes of Innu in the child protection system. The overrepresentation of Indigenous children in care is a national crisis. In January, our Government reaffirmed its commitment to collaborate with our federal, provincial and territorial partners and Indigenous governments and organizations on this issue. Working together, we must do better for all Indigenous children.

EDUCATION

Our Government is steadfast in its commitment to better engage all students in learning, fostering skills and competencies development and ensuring an accountable education system through regular reporting.

In 2017, the Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes released its report, *Now is the Time*. Our Government will use this report's recommendations to support children and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador to achieve their full potential. We will release an Education Action Plan to guide implementation of the report's 82 recommendations. A number of recommendations will be ready for the

upcoming school year, including a new student support services policy that will address issues stemming from inclusive education implementation, and supports for reading and mathematics.

Our Government will also review legislation and make amendments to support students and teachers and ensure a safe learning environment. During this sitting of the House, amendments to the *Schools Act, 1997* will be brought forward to address the provision of alternate instruction where someone's presence would be detrimental to the well-being of others.

Our Government will continue to provide children and youth with modern and engaging learning environments in which they can learn, grow and prosper. Five new schools opened in 2017 and the major development of three others has progressed. Construction of new schools in Gander and Paradise will begin this year.

The earlier that Newfoundland and Labrador's children can develop the skills required for today's high-tech economy, the more prepared they will be to adapt to future entry into the workforce. Our Government will implement a comprehensive technology plan for the K-12 school system, including the addition of coding to the curriculum.

The priority our Government places on high quality education continues beyond the high school years. A strong and prosperous Newfoundland and Labrador requires well-educated and well-trained adults. Some Newfoundlanders and Labradorians may become disengaged from the educational system before realizing their full potential and may require additional support to assist them in achieving their employment and educational goals. Recognizing this, our Government will develop a new adult literacy action plan with the input of multiple stakeholders, including post-secondary institutions, community organizations, adult learners and business and labour groups.

Our support for Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic is unwavering. We will continue to ensure that tuition at both institutions is affordable and among the lowest in the country.

Our tradespeople have long been recognized for their skills and strong work ethic. Our Government is focused on the skilled trades and, in partnership with other provinces, will develop a new apprenticeship management information technology system to streamline the steps in completing an apprenticeship program to meet the needs of today's tradespeople.

ATHLETICS

Our athletes have also been recognized following great success on the national and global stages and are finishing on the top of the podium.

Kaetlyn Osmond, from Marystown, has seen her hard work and dedication pay off as she won gold and bronze medals at the 2018 Winter Olympics. This follows Kaetlyn's 2017 national title and a silver medal at the 2017 world championships.

Paradise's Sarah Davis captured a silver medal at the 2017 Women's World Hockey Championships. Stephenville's Katarina Roxon won two gold medals at the World Para Swimming World Series and nine medals at the Can Am Para-swimming Championships. We wish Ms. Roxon continued success as part of Team Canada at the Commonwealth Games next month in Australia.

Avondale's Angel Hiltz-Morrell captured a silver medal in wrestling at the 2017 Canada Summer Games in Winnipeg. Rigolet's Brooklyn Woolfrey joined Paradise's Nicholas Quinn to win a combined eight medals at the 2017 World Dwarf Games in Guelph.

Liam Hickey from St. John's won a gold medal at the 2017 World Para Ice Hockey Championships and is currently in PyeongChang competing at the 2018 Winter Paralympics. And not written here is that he scored five goals and a bunch of assists and doing quite well for our province. Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR: Liam is a phenomenal multi-sport athlete who also competes internationally for Canada in wheelchair basketball including at

the 2016 Summer Paralympic Games in Rio, Brazil. We wish him nothing but the best as he goes for gold with Team Canada in South Korea.

Team Newfoundland and Labrador took home 34 medals at the 2017 North American Indigenous Games last summer in Toronto.

After winning the 2017 Brier, Team Gushue wore Canada's colours to capture the 2017 World Men's Curling Championship. They wore those same colours last week to once again, win the Brier, becoming one of only eight teams to have won back-to-back Briers since 1927. Brad Gushue was also recognized as the skip with the most wins in the history of the Brier. Team Gushue will be representing Canada at the World Curling Championships later this month.

Joanne MacDonald, a native of St. Mary's Bay and three-time Paralympian, and Trepassey's Mel Fitzgerald, a two-time Paralympian, have both been inducted into the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association Hall of Fame.

Professional basketball, our own Carl English, returned home last fall to compete for the St. John's Edge in its inaugural season in the National Basketball League of Canada. He has been a standout for the team all season, most recently setting a new league single game scoring record of 58 points. We are fortunate to have such a wonderful role model and community ambassador for our young people.

This is an exciting time for the west coast of the province as the 2018 Newfoundland and Labrador Winter Games are underway in Deer Lake. Hundreds of young athletes from across the province are in the area competing in sports such as alpine and cross-country skiing, curling, hockey, gymnastics and figure skating. We wish all competitors good luck and hope they enjoy the camaraderie of their fellow competitors. Events like the Winter Games would not be possible without the dedication of volunteers. Our Government extends its congratulations and gratitude to the 500 volunteers for their passion and commitment to both sport and their community that ensures the success of these games.

Our Government is so proud of all these athletes. Their accomplishments inspire the next generation of athletes to chase their dreams.

SUMMARY

In summary, our plan to strengthen the economy, improve our fiscal situation and ensure a healthy, safe and welcoming society is working. We have made significant progress in the past two years, and we are continuing to implement our plan.

It is imperative that we stay the course. *The Way Forward* is our roadmap to achieve fiscal sustainability and better outcomes for our province. We remain committed to realize our vision for sustainability and growth, and we are honoured to continue to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Estimates of expenditure will be laid before you in due course and you will be asked to grant supply to Her Majesty.

I invoke God's blessing upon you as you commence this new Session.

May Divine Providence guide you in your deliberation.

Thank you very much.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise.

(His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor leaves the Assembly Chamber.)

(Mr. Speaker returns to the Chair.)

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Please be seated.

Order, please!

The hon. the Government House Leader.

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

I ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Family Violence Protection Act, Bill 1.

MR. SPEAKER: Is there leave for the hon. the Government House Leader to introduce the said bill?

Leave is granted.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the by the Premier, that Bill 1, An Act To Amend The Family Violence Protection Act, be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: 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.'

This motion is carried.

CLERK (Murphy): A bill, An Act To Amend The Family Violence Protection Act. (Bill 1)

MR. SPEAKER: This bill has now been read a first time.

When shall the said bill be read a second time? Tomorrow?

MR. A. PARSONS: Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 1 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has been pleased to make a Speech to the Members of this General Assembly. We shall take a few moments now to distribute the speech to the Members.

(The Pages distribute the speech to all Members.)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. P. PARSONS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Welcome to everybody, of course, and our viewers at home. It is certainly with great pleasure that I rise in this hon. House today to represent the people of the strong District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. P. PARSONS: I would like to begin by thanking the Lieutenant-Governor for delivering the Speech from the Throne this afternoon. I'm sure all Members in this hon. House would agree that His Honour and his wife have been very dedicated in their roles. I thank him, on behalf of all Members in this House of course, for his service to our province.

Mr. Speaker, the residents of my District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave face the same challenges experienced by people living in the more rural parts of our province. They are hard-working people who deserve access to quality health care and they want their children to receive the best education in the best quality facilities.

When we formed government two years ago, the future appeared quite bleak. Our fiscal situation was dire. Our Premier, our Cabinet and our government as a whole were left with very little to work with, to put it politely.

Today's Speech from the Throne outlines our government's vision for a better Newfoundland and Labrador. A place where people want to live, where they want to raise their families and where they want to work in good jobs. Our Way Forward is an ambitious plan, Mr. Speaker, but our plan is working because we are listening to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and including them in the process.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. P. PARSONS: As a female MHA, I am proud of the work our government is doing to advance the status of women in this province. Violence against women and girls is indeed a serious issue. As a society, we simply have to do more to stop this behaviour.

We heard in the Speech from the Throne that 50 per cent of women over the age of 15 have experienced or will experience at least one incident of sexual or physical violence in their lifetime. The likelihood of experiencing violence is tripled for indigenous women. We can all agree, Mr. Speaker, that these figures are much too high.

Our government issued an order-in-council to fully establish a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in this province. As well, just last week all Members of our hon. House unanimously committed to supporting the Moose Hide Campaign, which is focused on ending violence against women and girls, in particular, indigenous women and girls.

Last week, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls held sessions in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. We will continue to fully co-operate with the inquiry and end violence against all women and girls in our country.

The Minister of Justice and Public Safety has initiated the Minister's Committee on Violence Against Women and Girls. Our government, in collaboration with the Public Legal Information Association and the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre, is developing a program to offer legal support to victims of sexual violence, in particular those who cannot afford legal counsel.

In this session, we will also be introducing amendments to the *Family Violence Protection Act* to better support adult victims of family violence and their children.

Mr. Speaker, we are very aware that a wage gap still exists between women and girls, not just in this province but globally. Here in our province we have made progress in the recruitment and retention of women in male dominated occupations but we also recognize much more needs to be done.

Our government has committed to two important initiatives focused on women in the workplace, women's employment plans for new infrastructure, projects and gender equity and diversity plans for all large resource

development projects to help improve training and employment opportunities.

As a female MHA, I'm very aware of the low number of women who decide to run for public office, whether it be municipal, provincial and at the federal levels. Statistics from our last provincial election show that only 28 per cent of nominated candidates were women. And if you look around the House, 10 elected Members are women and three of 10 Cabinet ministers are female. So I'm very pleased that our government will invite women leaders to a forum this year to help develop initiatives aimed at increasing the number of females in provincial leadership roles.

Our government is not only interested in protecting the interests of women and children, but all vulnerable citizens. New regulations under the Buildings Accessibility will come into effect in April. Changes to the Designated Mobility Impaired Parking Regulations took effect in January, which includes significantly increased fines for those who illegally park in blue zones.

Changes to the *Provincial Wildlife Act* and regulations and the hunters and anglers with a disability program have enhanced access to hunting and big game by increasing the allowable distance between a disabled licence holder and their designated hunter, and changing policies to provide priority access to big game for people with disabilities.

Along with protecting people with disabilities, we are committed to protecting children in care. In 2017, we amended the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* in consultation with the advocate so that it is now mandatory for the Departments of Justice and Public Safety, Children, Seniors and Social Development to report child deaths and critical injuries. We are also committed to working with the Innu Nation in an inquiry into treatment, experiences and outcomes of Innu in the child protective system.

Our government recognizes the value seniors bring to our province. I can't help but think about my grandmothers every time I talk about seniors. Seniors continue to make significant contributions to our communities, and, Mr. Speaker, seniors built Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. P. PARSONS: We have a collective responsibility to ensure seniors receive the support they need to lead healthy and productive lives. Our government has appointed the first Seniors' Advocate, Dr. Suzanne Brake, to collaborate with seniors, service providers and others to identify, review and analyze systemic issues. That's a first.

Our government values our partnerships with the Mental Health Commission of Canada to work with communities and address suicide prevention. Newfoundland and Labrador is the first, as mentioned by His Honour, to implement Roots of Hope, a suicide prevention project in collaboration with community partners on the Burin Peninsula which is a service that will certainly be offered province-wide. Recognizing the serious impact of such conditions in the workplace, our government has directed WorkplaceNL to modernize its approach to providing coverage for work-related mental stress, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

In February, WorkplaceNL announced a review of PTSD coverage and the workers' compensation legislation. Our government is committed to the full implementation of *Towards Recovery*, a report detailing the work done by the All-Party Committee on Mental Health.

In the near future, we will announce plans to redesign the mental health and addictions service system across the province, beginning with a long overdue replacement of the Waterford Hospital.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. P. PARSONS: In 2017, the Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes released its report, *Now is the Time*. Our government will use this report's recommendations to support children and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador to achieve their full potential. We committed to releasing an education action plan to guide implementation of the report's 82 recommendations.

During this sitting of the House of Assembly, amendments to the *Schools Act, 1997* will be

brought forward to address the provision of alternate instruction where someone's presence would indeed be detrimental to the well-being of other students.

Five new schools opened in 2017, and the major development of three others has progressed. Mr. Speaker, at this time it gives me great pleasure and I'm very pleased to say there is finally a concrete, real plan in place for the long overdue Coley's Point replacement project.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. P. PARSONS: I've met with our Premier numerous times, we continue to meet. Of course, when I've stressed this problem, because it indeed is a problem, with a 65-year-old structure, the Premier has heard me and I am very grateful to say we received the people – the children of Coley's Point Primary and the staff and the parents and the residents of our district will be supported. Of course, I'll continue to work with our Premier and our ministers on this. Needless to say, we can't wait until we turn the sod on this project. Constructions of other new schools will happen in Gander and Paradise and will begin this year.

Our government will implement a comprehensive technology plan for the K to 12 system, including the addition of coding to the curriculum.

We continue to support Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic. We'll work to ensure that tuition at both institutions remain affordable and, again, remain among the lowest in the country.

Our province is home to some of the world's most talented artists. They come right from Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker; and, of course, we will certainly invest and capitalize on our beautiful and unique culture.

Our government brought forward a new *Status of the Artist Act* to recognize the important role artists play in contributing to the culture, social and economic well-being of the province.

We have also committed to renewing the cultural plan, Creative Newfoundland and Labrador, by January 2019. Of course, Mr.

Speaker, everywhere we go we know we always bump into talented Newfoundlanders and Labradorians all over the world.

One example of how we are capitalizing on our culture is through the provincial film and television industry, which exceeded \$50 million in expenditures for the first time this year. This employs an estimated 640 full-time positions.

Building on the success of the popular *Republic of Doyle*, and of course we're encouraging everyone to tune into CBC's new production to watch Allan Hawco's new series, *Caught*, which was written by the award-winning author, Lisa Moore. Also, don't forget to tune into *Little Dog*, featuring our very own Joel Thomas Hynes and our female strong producer Sherry White.

As we know, the stories of Newfoundland and Labrador can captivate audiences all over the world, and look no further than the success from *Come From Away* on Broadway featured in New York, telling the story of the beautiful people of Gander and surrounding communities, how they opened up their hearts and their homes and they helped during that major terrorism crisis of 911.

While we recognize the importance of our traditional Newfoundland and Labrador culture, our government also recognizes the benefits of embracing cultures from all over the world. In 2017, our government launched The Way Forward on Immigration where our goal is to welcome 1,700 new immigrants to the province by 2020. As well, our government is committed to the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program, which is a new way to help employers recruit talent internationally.

We will also launch a new International Entrepreneur and International Graduate Entrepreneur categories under the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Nominee Program to further encourage economic growth in our lovely province. Our province has much to gain by welcoming more immigrants. Newcomers provide fresh ideas which our province can embrace to grow and diversify our economy. This is very important in light, of course, of our aging demographics and our workforce.

Mr. Speaker, also we must always work with our harvesters in our fishery, our inshore and offshore harvesters and all players in the industry. As mentioned by His Honour, the fishery certainly is the backbone of our province and we must do everything we can to work with those players for our natural renewable resources.

I am proud to be part of a government focused on the needs and the priorities of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Mr. Speaker, I am confident in this team and I am confident when I say that this Premier, our Cabinet, our government as a whole will continue to be honest and to work with and on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, as we were elected to do.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I now move that a select committee be appointed to draft an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LETTO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to rise today on behalf of the constituents of Labrador West and second the motion that a select committee be appointed to draft an Address in Reply to this year's Speech from the Throne.

I have to begin by first thanking His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor for delivering the Speech from the Throne today and like my colleague, the MHA for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, I would like to thank the Hon. Frank Fagan and his wife, Patricia, for their dedicated service to our great province.

Mr. Speaker, I am one of four Members of the House of Assembly who represents the diverse and distinct area of the province known as the Big Land, Labrador, along with my colleagues, the Members for Torngat Mountains, Lake Melville and Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair. Under the leadership of our Premier, who is also the Minister of Labrador and Indigenous Affairs,

reconciliation with indigenous people is a priority.

Last year, our government convened the first provincial indigenous round table with representatives of indigenous governments, women's groups and friendship centres. We will be holding a second indigenous round table later this year. Our government is working to ensure that future generations will grow in the spirit of reconciliation.

In November, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau apologized to former students in Newfoundland and Labrador residential schools, calling the treatment of indigenous children in residential schools a dark and shameful chapter in our country's history. As mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, our government will offer our own apology to residential school survivors.

We are all aware of the ongoing National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. While there have been delays, and we hear heart-wrenching stories from families impacted by violence, it is important that this process occurs. I want to thank my colleague, the MHA for Torngat Mountains, for attending hearings last week in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

Last week, all Members of this hon. House supported the private Member's resolution introduced by the MHA for Torngat Mountains in support of the Moose Hide Campaign – and I know, Mr. Speaker, you were a great part of that – a grassroots movement of indigenous and non-indigenous men who are taking a stand against violence targeting women and children. I am proud to say we are the fourth Legislature in Canada to support the Moose Hide Campaign.

Mr. Speaker, it is my intent during my brief response today to highlight some of the great initiatives in Labrador that will contribute significantly to the sustainability of our province. When it comes to tourism, our future is bright.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: There are big opportunities in the Big Land. Labrador's beautiful landscapes and

vast wilderness make it an incredible destination for tourists.

Just last week, 41 teams from Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario, Quebec, the United States and Finland competed in Cain's Quest, one of the world's toughest and most extreme snowmobile races; 3,200 kilometres across the snow and ice 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 Riders. With over 400 volunteers from all corners of Labrador involved, Cain's Quest 2018 was a tremendous success.

Labrador was also the only Canadian destination to make *National Geographic* magazine's Places to Visit in 2018, helping to spread the news the Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve offers a tourism experience unlike any other in the world. The beautiful and majestic Torngat Mountains offers a spiritual experience that cannot be matched anywhere else on this planet.

The national historic site of Battle Harbour and UNESCO's Basque whaling site in Red Bay are on many tourists bucket lists. As the Trans-Labrador Highway is more developed each year, access to the untapped and beautiful interior of Labrador becomes more achievable.

Not only is tourism a great way to showcase Newfoundland and Labrador to the world, it is an important economic driver for the province. Last year, more than 553,000 people travelled here and spent an estimated \$575 million. This was the highest non-resident spending we have ever seen.

Mr. Speaker, we certainly cannot forget the benefits of our mining industry. Mining continues to be a major contributor to our provincial economy. It is forecasted that 6,000 people will be employed in the industry this year and \$3.4 billion in mineral shipments. I am pleased that a new mineral strategy will be developed for the province in consultation with the mining industry stakeholders to identify new opportunities and guide future growth.

Labrador's natural resources have been, and will continue to be long into the future, a major

contributor to this province's economy. From the iron ore mines of the Labrador Trough in Western Labrador, to the rich nickel deposits of Voisey's Bay in Nunatsiavut, to the potential of rare earth minerals in Southeastern Labrador, Labrador is poised to capitalize on both those existing and emerging developments.

Mr. Speaker, although we are far from the production stage, the oil and natural gas deposits off the shores of Labrador will play a huge role in the future development of our offshore resources in this province. This is certainly recognized in through *The Way Forward on Oil and Gas: Advance 2030 – A Plan for Growth in the Newfoundland and Labrador Oil and Gas Industry*.

Guided by *The Way Forward* and the Cabinet Committee on Jobs, our government is working to revitalize and develop traditional and emerging industries. The new Department of Fisheries and Land Resources brings together a singular focus on renewable resources including agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, forestry and lands. Since the formation of this department, we have held summits in agriculture and aquaculture, initiated diversification efforts in the forest industry, established a Fisheries Advisory Council and launched the Atlantic Fisheries Fund in partnership with the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot underestimate the important role the fishery continues to play on the Coast of Labrador. Over the years, the Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company in the south and Torngat Fisheries in the north have and continues to contribute significantly to the sustainability of the communities in which they operate. To compete in the global marketplace, our government will continue to support the fishery and aquaculture industries to achieve efficiencies and to produce highest quality, sustainably-sourced products.

Mr. Speaker, our government inherited many challenges but we remain committed to turning things around. One of the biggest fiscal challenges our government is facing is undoubtedly Muskrat Falls. We have worked diligently with Nalcor to get this project back on track. A project that was only 48 per cent complete two years ago is now 90 per cent

complete. The transmission line with Nova Scotia was finished, connecting our province to the North American power grid for the first time.

There were many questions and answers and concerns about the Muskrat Falls Project when we took office. We have launched a public inquiry into the Muskrat Falls Project which is being led by Justice Richard D. LeBlanc and we look forward to receiving a final report from the inquiry by December 2019.

Mr. Speaker, municipalities in our province play an important role, not only in town planning activities but also in economic planning and development. Our approach to engagement has been innovative and collaborative, and the second annual Premier's Forum on Local Governance was held on November 1, 2017. It's through forums like this, our government receives significant insight into what municipalities need and they allow us to better collaborate with communities to reach our shared goals.

Our government is committed to engaging with Newfoundlanders and Labradorians on issues that impact them. We will work closely with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador, the Professional Administrators association and the Combined Councils of Labrador to ensure that our municipalities remain sustainable for years to come.

Last March, we released *The Way Forward: A Multi-Year Plan for Infrastructure Investments* that outlines infrastructure projects across all sectors of government such as education, health, justice and transportation. With almost 10,000 kilometres of road and more than 1,300 bridges and large culverts, it is simply not possible to enhance our entire highway infrastructure in a single construction season. In 2017, more than 500 lane kilometres of highway were paved, more than 365 culverts were replaced and 18 bridges repaired.

Mr. Speaker, transportation remains a critical focus for the development of Labrador. Our government is proud to proceed with the completion of the Trans-Labrador Highway, in partnership with the federal government. We will not stop until all sections of the Trans-Labrador Highway are paved from the Quebec

border in the south, to the Quebec border in the west.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: Until we have a year-round road connection to the Inuit communities in Nunatsiavut and the Innu of Natuashish, we will continue to ensure they receive the best marine service that they rightly deserve.

We also recognize the vital role the Strait of Belle Isle plays in our province's economy. Whether it is by marine travel or through a fixed link, it is imperative that we maintain a service that is reliable, sufficient and effective for the people who use this valuable service. We will also continue to support safe winter trails, access to isolated Labrador communities through the Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy.

Mr. Speaker, I was born and raised in Labrador and it is an honour for me here today to serve the residents of Labrador West as their MHA, and I take it very seriously. The improvements I have seen since we formed government are undeniable. Under the leadership of our Premier –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: – Labrador has flourished and continues to be a major economic driver for this province.

Mr. Speaker, I have talked about our natural resources, our great tourism potential, our fishery resource, among many others, but, Mr. Speaker, our greatest resource is our people and the diversity of the 27,000 souls we have in Labrador. The Innu of the Innu Nation, the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, the southern Inuit of NunatuKavut, the settler and, yes, Mr. Speaker, the immigrant are all part of the fabric that make us so proud to call Labrador home.

If we are to be successful on *The Way Forward*, it is then our duty to ensure that the diversity of our people is an opportunity and not a barrier. That is our hope for the future.

Mr. Speaker, once again, it's a great honour to second the motion that a Select Committee be

appointed to draft an Address in Reply in response to the Speech from the Throne.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition, I thank the Lieutenant-Governor for delivering the Speech from the Throne here today.

Mr. Speaker, in recent history, Lieutenant-Governors in this province have served for five to six years. His Honour was appointed in March 2013, making this his fifth year in this post. Whether or not we're privileged to hear him deliver another Throne Speech next year, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank him for his service and also for the service of his wife, Mrs. Fagan, for their exemplary service to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, I also thank the mover and the seconder who just spoke here in this hon. House, and I would also like to commend the Third Party Leader and the Premier who will get to speak. All Members who are here today serve the people of our province, including my own colleagues here in the Official Opposition caucus.

Mr. Speaker, what a privilege we have to serve the people. As elected Members we have a responsibility, and no greater honour can be bestowed upon us than to be elected and to represent our peers and our communities.

I thank the judges and the leaders of the various sectors of our province; leaders in business, labour, in academia, faith, culture, leaders in public service, the community sector, municipal governance, students and youth who are paying attention to these events today. I thank the

people of our province for attending or for watching at home.

Mr. Speaker, as referenced by others earlier today and in the Lieutenant-Governor's delivery as well, but I suspect there are other televised events which probably have a little bit higher ratings than this one here this afternoon.

For example, the recent gold medal skate by Kaetlyn Osmond and the beautiful performance that she provided. I don't think anyone could every do anything to make Newfoundlanders and Labradorians more proud than the beautiful performance delivered by Ms. Osmond.

This month we're watching, as referenced earlier, Liam Hickey, completing the in Paralympic sledge hockey. I think in the first two games with him as part of Team Canada – I know there have been three games now – they outscored their opposite by 27-0.

As also referenced, Mr. Hickey has also previously competed in Paralympic wheelchair basketball. A very rare feat of having a Paralympics athlete, especially from this province, to perform in both summer and winter games, I think speaks volumes for his efforts.

We'll be cheering on Katarina Roxon again in the near future at the Commonwealth Games in Australia in April. As referenced earlier, and I'd be remiss if I didn't mention as well, Team Newfoundland and Labrador brought home 34 medals at the North American Indigenous Games last summer.

I'll reference my own district very briefly, Sarah Davis, who's a world-class hockey player that we are all so very proud of. Nicholas Quinn from my district as well was joined by Brooklyn Wolfrey and they provided, I think, a first-class representation of Newfoundland and Labrador at the World Dwarf Games last summer.

As referenced as well, how proud is it to have an opportunity for Carl English to be performing here at home, back here in Newfoundland and Labrador and being the star of his team in so many ways.

Mr. Speaker, just this past weekend and during the past week, we watched very carefully as we

had two teams really representing Newfoundland and Labrador. One led by Skip Gregory Smith, who has captured the imagination and interest of young and old from coast to coast and was duly rewarded and recognized for that this past weekend. While they're a new team, we know we haven't seen or heard the last of them. We wish Greg Smith and his team all the very best in the future.

Of course, the reference to Team Gushue with their second back-to-back Canadian championships at the Brier, which we all stayed up late to watch and enjoy his past weekend.

Mr. Speaker, if it isn't sports, it's academics and innovation where Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are leading and showing up and doing great and wonderful things. Memorial and the College of the North Atlantic students recently placed second last year in the SpaceX Hyperloop Pod Speed Competition in California. We have so many people of our province and young people in our province who are high achievers and doing wonderful things. Mr. Speaker, this is our future, our people are our future and nothing is more valuable.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech today, as we've seen traditionally, is some time for stepping back and also a time for being specific about the short-term future, less so for the long-term future, but being specific for a short-term future but also a chance to look at the big picture.

Today's speech says the government's plans are working. Well, Mr. Speaker, sadly we're at a time when we have a province with so many people with so much to offer, so many young people with so much to offer; the most significant story in our province right now is a story of loss, lost income from the crushing burden of taxes imposed by the Liberal government, loss of jobs, a loss of homes and businesses in an economy that's shrinking, a loss of opportunities gone to other jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, not that many years ago we believed we were the best and the brightest, and had the greatest future. We had a spring in our step and we believed in ourselves. Well, Mr. Speaker, we've lost hope. We've lost hope that there's a plan for better things to come. As I mentioned earlier, there's nothing more

important than our people. The loss of people is devastating our province.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to see that the speech today refers to immigration and attracting people while we're the only jurisdiction in Canada with an economy that's going in the wrong direction. I recently spoke to someone in the moving business, who has been in the moving business for many, many years and he's also in the business of moving families out of this province. That company alone, from 2015 to 2017, has seen a 30 per cent increase in the business of moving Newfoundlanders and Labradorians out to other provinces – a 30 per cent increase since 2015.

Mr. Speaker, government has just allocated a significant sum of money to conduct a survey to find out why people are leaving; 2½ years into office, we wished that they had of been listening because they would already know the answer. For the last 2½ years, if they had of spent more time listening, thinking about the future, thinking and considering the impacts of their decisions, I think today the picture would look different.

In 2015, the current government ran on a long list of promises, including a commitment to deliver on an economic plan developed by some of the best minds in the province, they said. They said a plan that the people would like. As it turns out, there was no plan, Mr. Speaker. Even though we've seen plans and discussion of plans such as we've seen LEAP, we've seen the Road Ahead Tour, we've seen *A Stronger Tomorrow* and now the talk is *The Way Forward*.

The Way Forward document, Mr. Speaker, a thinly worded document of 12 long-range goals, I think what it really does is lower the expectations that people should have for this government. But it does include things like increased physical activity, fruit and vegetable consumption and decreasing obesity and smoking. The history and the past of this government is when their plans don't work, however, they like to blame somebody else. They like to blame citizens or someone else when they fail.

Where are the commitments, Mr. Speaker, to deliver on actions that a government can make?

Choices like cutting taxes or reducing poverty, creating the conditions for economic growth and diversification, or standing up for our fair share in the federation.

Some ask why doesn't the government hold itself to a commitment that depends on its own choices. That takes real courage and can be difficult to do. We do know that leading and governing is not easy, but just setting up people to take the blame for failure is not acceptable. Even the ministerial mandates, some have been rewritten. It appears to be lowering the bar on expectations.

Mr. Speaker, people in our province, especially our young people in our province, are tired of excuses and are tired of having others being blamed for the failure of what was promised to the people of our province back in 2015. Keeping our young people here should be a priority for our government. Not just simply a priority to talk about, but a priority to deliver on.

The government has to inspire our youth to stay here in Newfoundland and Labrador, not give them reasons to leave our province, Mr. Speaker. The government ought to focus, first and foremost, on securing Newfoundland and Labrador's future. They talk about that from a long-term perspective. They should also be looking at the current day and the short term ahead.

Mr. Speaker, Quebec is busy fighting for Quebec. To be frank, they're doing a good job of it. Ontario is fighting for Ontario. In the meantime, the question is: Who's standing up for Newfoundland and Labrador?

Mr. Speaker, we know that the government has referred today in the Speech to consumers being concerned about automobile insurance rates, and the government has indicated a willingness to fix that. Well, the high cost of insurance rates is impacting hard-working families in our province. It's impacting the transportation industry, it's impacting taxi businesses and it's increasing costs for everything else.

We won't have to wait long, because tomorrow we will be debating taxes on insurance in this very House, and I look forward to the government Members supporting our motion to

encourage the government for change. It needs to change, Mr. Speaker, the taxes are hurting so many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Mr. Speaker, we also heard in the Speech from the Throne reference to a February announcement, an invitation for submissions regarding post-traumatic stress disorder that's impacting workers here in Newfoundland and Labrador. It's actually the second time government announced asking for submissions, because in 2017 they sought submissions with an earlier deadline, and now they've asked again for a second round of submissions. Wording is slightly changed, but I hope the goal is not changed in the end.

Mr. Speaker, the truth of it is that first responders and other classifications of workers in our province are suffering because our government has not yet identified and accepted an accumulation of exposures can cause illness for workers. If a worker today cannot identify the place and the time for the illness, they're not entitled to workers' compensation benefits. Their families are paying for that.

Someone in our province – I'm glad it's there, but we're going to continue to push to see changes in the future. But, Mr. Speaker, someone has to make Newfoundland and Labrador the number one priority. Someone has to make Newfoundlanders and Labradorians the number one priority. It certainly won't be Quebec or Ontario, that's for sure. That job is supposed to fall to the province's government. For the last 2½ years the government has not lived up to the responsibilities and to the many promises they made during 2015.

Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking down on this government and an election is approaching. We're entering the dying days of a mandate that's too late to undo the errors of the past 2½ years. It's been nothing but one giveaway after another.

The fisheries fund, minimum processing requirements are gone. We don't know what we got in return. A fair deal on equalization is gone. The ocean technologies headquarters is gone to Nova Scotia, a partnership with the federal government that our current provincial government says is a good thing; principles of

Atlantic Accord. Most recently, we see the surf clam quotas and the potential for full-time jobs on the Burin Peninsula to be impacted by this partnership with the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, at some point the Liberal government are going to have to make the connection that maybe these losses of opportunity have something to do with why people are leaving our province; but, Mr. Speaker, people are not going to stand for this. People are too smart in our province, they see through it. They know what's happening because the clock is ticking down.

Mr. Speaker, our party right now is going through a leadership process. The New Democratic Party is going through a leadership process as well. Before this sitting ends at the end of May, our parties will be freshly focused on the election that looms for 2019. In the meantime, we intend to be relentless in holding the government to account for its actions and for what people see as their failures to act. Its choices good and bad, broken promises and poor judgment.

As an Opposition, Mr. Speaker, as a sitting Opposition, we are all Members of the House elected by the districts that we represent but we all have a job to do. That's our job as an Opposition. We'll continue to propose solutions, we'll make suggestions to strengthening legislation, look for new legislation provisions and opportunities that will protect people and be to the benefit of our province and we'll make suggestions for doing things a little differently to seek better results.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, that's our job as an Opposition. We are not going to back away from the responsibilities that we've accepted. We'll be holding this government to a higher standard. We'll point out how badly accountability and openness has slipped under the current administration.

Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to point out and ask questions as to why is the government not being open and forthright as they promised to be? Why do they do things such as hide information on Nalcor's CEO contract and if there is a concern for potential conflict of interest? They say it's up to him, it's not their responsibility.

What about hiding information about electricity rates and their ability to mitigate those rates, versus creating a higher level of fear in the province than is necessary? How about hiding talks with Quebec on energy? Or how about hiding the cost of moving the Crown Lands division from St. John's to Corner Brook? What are the real impacts of those moves? While the minister stood here in the House yesterday and talked about the positives, we also need to understand what the negative repercussions of that move are.

What about hiding the rankings for the roads from the Transportation Department? In the Throne Speech today they talked about their five-year plan. What they won't disclose, Mr. Speaker, is what about the roads that didn't make the cut, why did they not make the cut and how far down the list are those roads? How about the fact that they hid their plan to eliminate the Research & Development Corporation during the 2017 budget Estimates Committee?

What about their move on the legalization of cannabis and how they hid some of that information? We stood here, and I stood here in the House last fall, while the government denied that a sole-source contract decision had been made when, in fact, it had been made. We stood in the House here last fall when the government denied that they were about to announce the sole-source contract when, in fact, the plans were in place to announce just that.

What about details on our College of the North Atlantic and programs on probation? What about the Atlantic Accord and plans for that? How about government's intention on the generic Royalty Regime when they very quietly, without announcement, without anyone knowing – they very quietly passed it and posted without any announcement or without any knowledge to the general public.

What about the Medical Association when they called for an inquiry into the health system that's clearly in crisis? Mr. Speaker, what about their Clerk of the Executive Council who was appointed when he had a clear conflict of interest? He was suing the government that he then led.

Mr. Speaker, bad governance produces bad results. The facts speak for themselves.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. P. DAVIS: The government will not tell all of the facts when it doesn't benefit them. They try to hide behind them, Mr. Speaker. Those are just some examples. I can assure you, I've shortened the list before I came to the House here today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. P. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, the government will deliver its budget on March 27. Just a couple of days before Easter holidays when this House takes an Easter break, when schools in our province take an Easter break, while families take some time away from the daily routines and spend some time with their own families and their own children.

Mr. Speaker, during that Easter break we'll be digging in to the details of the budget. We'll be searching for the facts that lay beneath the top pages because people have a right to see beyond the varnished truth, and we'll be doing our job to expose that – the same job we were elected to do.

Mr. Speaker, while other Canadian economies are growing and the greatest economies in the world continue to grow, our province can grow as well but only if we turn away from the happenings of the past and we work together to drive our economy, and not drive it into the ground but drive it forward.

Today's speech says we cannot afford the fiscal situation, but so far we've seen little done by the government to deal with it, other than taxes and fees on the people of our province – the people who are now leaving Newfoundland and Labrador.

It's not a time for government to have a knee-jerk reaction. It's a time to maintain assets, not to sell assets off; to maintain what is powerful and important to our province, not for any short-

sighted and not well-thought-out plans. The time now is to stabilize the province and to turn our province from believing the best opportunity is to leave and turn that into the best opportunity is to stay. We want nothing more than for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to stay here, raise their families here and to contribute back to our province. Mr. Speaker, for 2½ years, before excuses and blame, it's time for that to stop because the clock is counting down.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I'm very pleased this afternoon to stand and to recognize the Speech from the Throne and to thank the Lieutenant-Governor for being here with us today and bringing the speech to us. I also want to thank visitors who have been here with us, some who are still here with us, those who are watching us on television, and I want to thank all my colleagues here in the House as we start a new session of the 48th General Assembly.

With this Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, it's a well-written speech, I have to say, and there are some good things in it. We have a piece on women's employment, especially in the resource development sector in our large projects, which is good. We have some growth in the Provincial Nominee Program, which will be good for immigrants. We have government talking about its five-year road infrastructure plan, something which I've always applauded and glad to see it there.

The government does a great job of recognizing – and rightly so – all of our stars in culture, in tourism and in sports. We all applaud them. But while I'm really proud of them – I don't want to name them all because I'll miss somebody. We have our huge stars, our Olympic winners and we have the Brier winner, the world winners on both levels in skating and in curling. We have tremendous stars and I am so proud of them. I

wish I could be just as proud of this government as I am of those.

I understand why government honoured them. I understand why the Leader of the Official Opposition honoured them because we don't have much to honour with regard to this government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. MICHAEL: With a government, Mr. Speaker, in this Speech from the Throne –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. MICHAEL: – we have a stay-the-course speech; business as usual from this government. I find that very disappointing. Probably one of the most disappointing phrases in the Speech from the Throne for me was, under the Fiscal section: "... we must continue to do better with less" I just find that, Mr. Speaker, such a weak, defeatist attitude.

What I want from a government, what I want for our people is: How can we build together? What is the plan we can work on together to build our economy? An economy that is not there just to make money for business but an economy that's there to take care of our people; an economy that's there to keep our young people here; an economy that knows that everybody here is important and everything we do has to be there from them.

What I miss from this government, Mr. Speaker, what I miss from their planning is that: planning. What I would like to see and what I would do if I were in the position that the Premier is in, is put together a plan that brings together all the pieces, that looks at culture, that looks at tourism, that looks at agriculture, that looks at our educational system and every other piece of government all together in how do all of these pieces fit together to move forward. Not silos, not paragraphs on this and paragraphs on that, but how does it all fit together? How do we plan in putting our infrastructure together? How do we plan to make that work for the people? Where is the plan that brings all the pieces together?

It's one thing to talk about you giving Crown land for agriculture, but the big picture is what is needed to make agriculture grow to the point where, number one, it does give us food security and, number two, it increase our economy.

Where does tourism fit in that picture of our fiscal planning? What is government's role in sitting together with people? Not saying we have a plan, we're going to consult you, but let's work out the plans together, Mr. Speaker. This is what we need.

We have had, over the last decade and more – more than that – all kinds of consultations. We had a Rural Secretariat. We had our RED boards. We had so many structures in place where people came together. I'm absolutely certain that if we went through all of those discussions, their recommendations – I've read some fantastic papers that came out of those discussions, especially during the Rural Secretariat days.

If we put it all together, we would get a cohesive plan. We would get a plan that shows how everything fits together and how our fiscal reality has to be done in that cohesive way. That's what we're missing. There's no vision for how that can be done. It can be done because other places do it. Why can't we do it here?

Why can't we, for example, in looking at our plan, we put all the overlays – sometimes we call it gender lens but it's overlays, so the overlay of gender. Why is there no child care plan? Why is there no plan for child care? We have to ask the question.

How will our economy grow? It will grow with more people employed. If more women aren't employed, what is going to happen? We need more women employed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. MICHAEL: They've proven it in other places. So you take that overlay and you do your economic planning with that overlay there.

You do the same thing from a disability perspective. You do the same thing from an

immigration perspective. It's not immigration is over here, child care is over there and education is over there; it's all together. This government has not yet – and that's why I'm so disappointed with what I said I was disappointed with – shown to us, shown to the people of this province that it knows how to do that kind of analysis and how to do that kind of planning and putting pieces together, Mr. Speaker.

It's not just let's sit down with municipalities, where do municipalities fit in the overall plan of keeping all of this province vibrant and alive? Where does that fit? It's not: we have rural issues here and urban issues here. No. How does it all work together? How does tourism, for example, work with the growth of our rural communities?

Just like other places in the world, we're not the only ones we know with wonderful history and wonderful landscape. You can go everywhere in the world to get it. We do have our own, but do we promote it? When I think of the places you can go to on the Island and in Labrador, which are just magnificent, but do we promote it?

Government has to sit with everybody in all the areas, with industry, in tourism and plan together and show how government can work with them. Not just say, isn't Cain's Quest wonderful? Government has nothing to do with Cain's Quest. It is wonderful, but – well, I wouldn't do it – government has nothing to do with it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. MICHAEL: Government has nothing to do with most of the things. They put a few bucks in here and there, but they don't sit and plan and say: What is government's responsibility as we move forward?

That's what I miss. That's what I miss from this government. That's what I miss again from the Speech from the Throne, because as it said, it's a stay-the-course speech. We just keep going as we are. We just keep cutting and doing with less. No build for the future. You don't say because we are where we are that we just stay here. No, you build for the future and that's not here. There's no vision for that, Mr. Speaker.

So, yes, it's very, very disappointing. Economic development, there's none. There's nothing in there for economic development. We have to put the economic and the social together. So in looking at social infrastructure – I remember once using the phrase here in the House and somebody said: What did you mean by social infrastructure? That question in and of itself is a mouth full.

Look at our social infrastructure and see how that connects with the economic. I've said this before in this House and I'll say it again, I've mentioned child care. Child care is taking care of a social need, and it is economic growth. That's the kind of putting together of concepts that we have to do in our planning. That's the kind of integration that has to happen in our planning, and I don't see any of that integration in this plan, Mr. Speaker.

It's the same way; let's bring the social and the economic together again. It's the same way with home care. Our home care needs to be part and parcel of our public health care system. It isn't. Here in this province it is not part of our public health care system.

In doing that, not only will you have better paid people working, better trained and better paid people working, not only will you have seniors and those needing long-term care being better taken care of, you'll have more people employed. The more people you have employed and making better money, the better that is for the economy. So it all goes together. That's the kind of planning that has to happen, and that's the kind of planning that we don't have.

This document, as well, our Speech today does not recognize the demographic reality of who we are. It doesn't recognize that we are losing our young people. Whether the government wants to acknowledge it or not, we are. It's happening on a regular basis. And at the same time, our numbers of senior people are growing.

The government says it has a home – home first is their goal, or it is their policy, or it is their vision, and saying home-first they do cuts to home care hours. Now where does that fit? Where is the plan for putting home care up front and understanding its needs socially and economically?

Mr. Speaker, government also said they're supporting Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic – and that's it. That's the statement they made, that their support is unwavering. Well, is it really unwavering? MUN is crumbling. As a physical infrastructure, MUN is crumbling. Again, the lack of integration, the lack of looking at what is the role of our post-secondary institutions in the economic growth? What is it? We have it happening. I mean a lot of the research that's going on at MUN, a lot of the work at the College is part of our economic growth but it's not happening because government has the vision.

How do we work with the institutions to continue to create the opportunities for our young people and the opportunities for business that will make sure our young people are getting educated in a way that will give them jobs? And not just jobs outside of this province, but more important, jobs in this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a long ways to go. I'm quite disappointed that government is still not showing the kind of vision that we need in this province. I have to say, am I looking forward to the budget? Well, it's going to be very interesting to see how some of the things get played out in the budget. If it's all based on we got to do better with less, than I'm not very hopeful.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm certainly pleased to be able to rise and speak to the Speech from the Throne. I will say right from the outset, I really wasn't expecting riveting speeches from the Opposition and they certainly delivered on that.

I do, before I begin, want to say a big thank you to Their Honours, the Lieutenant-Governor and

his wife, the Fagans. They've been a pleasure to work with, Mr. Speaker, and it's really too early to tell what the future will hold for this couple but I will tell you they have done a remarkable job representing Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and opening up Government House. I want to mention that, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: We've had judges, we've had clergy, we've had movers and seconders. Mr. Speaker, we've had Opposition Leaders that have spoken to the Speech from the Throne so far today, and I will tell you over the next few months I guess we will hear many more speeches in Address in Reply that will relate to how we feel about this government and how we feel about the direction we've been taking it in.

When you think about it, it's something like a compass for this government. It speaks about the social and the economic responsibilities we have in really trying to find what that balance is all about. That is what today's speech was all about, Mr. Speaker. It sprinkled in, to a large degree, the initiatives we've done over the last few years and where we see where the future initiatives will be.

Mr. Speaker, I find it quite surprising to some degree, as I listened to the Leader of the Third Party I actually was expecting an endorsement from *The Way Forward* as she was speaking, because everything she talked about is exactly what *The Way Forward* is all about.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: We only released that I would say in November of 2016. It speaks to the growth and sustainability of Newfoundland and Labrador.

She talked about bringing people together in this umbrella. Well, we call that summits. We've had three since September. We've done it with technology – maybe you missed that, I say to the Leader of the Third Party. But we've done it with technology and aerospace, we've done it with aquaculture. We actually done it from the very industry that she spoke so much about, the agricultural industry. She actually talked about

silos, how unique that is when you mention agriculture; but, indeed, it wasn't a silo that day.

We had industry leaders there who gave endorsement to our agriculture summit and where we are. As a matter of fact, even the Member for Mount Pearl North endorsed our agricultural sector, I would say, Mr. Speaker, as well as many other people across this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: Do I speak with passion about those industry summits that we've done? Of course I do, Mr. Speaker, because it is about the future of Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER BALL: It is about job creation. It is about putting in place a good economic footprint for the people of our province, as well as a social footprint, Mr. Speaker. As the Members rose and did speak to that, I certainly was reminded of the very successful summits that we've had. It's unfortunate because it was about preparing.

By the way, I will want to remind people that are listening that what the Member opposite said, talked about no overall plan. Well, there are actually initiatives in place, targets that will be reported to the people of this province. All I'd say to Members opposite is pick it up because they're initiatives with targets in place that address agriculture, aquaculture, technology and aerospace, Mr. Speaker.

I will say that just a few weeks ago when we did the technology summit, it was a large room, a lot of people from industry there. So it really wasn't a silo, a lot of people from industry there. We had some of the brightest minds in this province in attendance that day.

Near the end of that session, Mr. Speaker, we asked people in that room if you're less than 30 years old to stand up. There were a lot of people that stood up. Many people stood up in that room. There was a loud round of applause for those young people because they didn't see the future in our province like the Leader of the Opposition sees the future of this province. They

did not see the future of this province like the Member for the Third Party sees this province. They saw themselves in the future of this province. They were there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: Mr. Speaker, I will speak a bit on the Speech from the Throne, but I cannot let two Members opposite in this House today stand up and give a doom-and-gloom approach to the future of our province.

Just a few weeks ago, we had an ex-Finance minister, an NDP Finance minister from another province had stepped in here and said that Newfoundland and Labrador – an NDP Finance minister now, from another province, stepped in and said Newfoundland and Labrador is going bankrupt. I can assure people that are watching this today, I can assure her colleagues in another province that this province is not going bankrupt, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: The Leader of the Opposition made mention about hiding things. He talked about taxes by government, about increasing fees by government. Mr. Speaker, the biggest single tax on the future of this province that was hidden from the people of this province is the Tory tax on electricity. For today, I say to the Member of the Third Party, it's the only thing that you and I will agree on because you sat in this House and you saw and you heard the debate. The Tory tax on electricity is the most significant impact – people who are looking at our province, it is the biggest single challenge that we have facing us.

Just a few days ago, the Leader of the Opposition said: Well, that's an asset. Well, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you what an asset is. An asset has a value, if it can actually generate an amount of money to actually even pay for itself. So in this particular case, an asset is determined by our electricity rates. For Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, seniors and people in our society and the business community in our society will be exposed to this.

He actually even mentioned today about doubling the rates, as if that wasn't going to

happen, as a result of the decisions that they made. Mr. Speaker, I want to remind people in this province, when it comes to hiding things, it was the former PC administration in this province that refused to put that project through the PUB process. They cut it off when they were 90 days away from their review, Mr. Speaker. That is what happened.

So when people opposite stand up in this House and talk about hiding things – he talks about blaming things. What I talk about is accept the responsibility for the decisions that you made. It is not about blaming others. It is about accepting responsibility for the decisions that you made.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to talk about 10 years, when \$25 billion in revenue that came into this province. This is not blaming anyone. These are just facts. This is history. This is about the money that was available to prepare for the future of our province. In 10 years, seven deficits that the former government with \$25 billion coming from the oil royalties and from that industry. Mr. Speaker, seven deficits and they talk about the fiscal situation of our province today, after living that, posting deficits, not preparing for the future when you had the opportunity. Given the opportunity to prepare this province for the future, they walked away and decided not to do it.

Today, they talk about the situation this province is in. This is a group that nearly bankrupted this province, Mr. Speaker. A \$2.7 billion deficit was what was facing us when we took government in 2015. So yes, we had a lot of work to do. No, I will agree, this is not a perfect job, this is not a perfect world but we have made decisions to put in place a firm foundation to rebuild this province.

We are rebuilding it with the vision that we put out there in November of 2016 called *The Way Forward*. The initiatives are there to include every single Newfoundlander and Labradorian. When the Members say that we do not include municipalities, this is the first government that has ever sat down with municipal leaders. They are coming out loud and clear endorsing what happens as we have those round tables on an annual basis, Mr. Speaker.

So yes, we have put in short-term measures, Mr. Speaker, to correct where we are today. We put in mid-year measures because we also realize that we have a population that needs to be taken care of today. They rely on services that are often delivered by governments, and we are mindful of that too. But we also must put in long-term goals so that we can protect the future of young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I also want to address who is standing up for Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Speaker, I can assure you, you have Members on this side of the House that are standing up for Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: And we have partners with this government that are standing up for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We have seven MPs in Ottawa that are standing up for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: We have not shut them out. We are proud of the work that they've been able to do, working in collaboration with Members on this side of the House. There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that we will not always agree on every single issue, but I can point to the Muskrat Falls loan guarantee, the extension on that, that brings nearly \$2 billion worth of value to this province because of the relationship and the work that is being done.

Mr. Speaker, what about the Oceans Protection Plan that will bring investment into Newfoundland and Labrador? What about long, sought after and the failure of the previous administration to get search and rescue reinstated in this province? Why is it that Members opposite conveniently forget all of this what I'm talking about?

What about superclusters, just a few days ago with the announcement of superclusters, when, in collaboration with four Atlantic provinces, a joint effort with the federal government which will bring hundreds of millions of dollars to our province, working with energy, working with our fishery, working with oil and gas? Why, Mr. Speaker? Because the ocean, it's kind of natural

to us. We've done it in partnership with four Atlantic provinces and the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, guess what? There is zero – zero – provincial dollars into that. We're laying that on top of the investments that have been made in our province, leveraging the investment from the federal government and with our private partners that we have in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I think they once again conveniently forget about the nearly \$100 million in the core science building which will bring tremendous benefits to Memorial University, our post-secondary education. No one is talking about that from the other side of the House today, Mr. Speaker.

What about the Trans-Labrador Highway and the investments that's been made in the Trans-Labrador Highway? Getting criteria changed because doors were opened in Ottawa to get the criteria changed so we can continue the investment that the other government was willing to walk away from.

These are the kinds of things, when you build on a relationship, that really matter. Just a few days ago investments in broadband, early childhood education.

Mr. Speaker, what about infrastructure? No one on the other side today even brought it up. We have an infrastructure deficit in our province, and every day on a regular basis we get Members opposite – Members opposite will get up and talk about: What about the road in my district? What about the ferry in my district? People always talked about.

Mr. Speaker, the problems we face with our infrastructure was a generation in the making. This did not happen overnight. This did not happen in two years. Can we at least agree on that, that this did not happen in just two years? We're dealing with ferries that were made in Romania, not because we made that decision, because Members opposite.

If there was anything that was glaring today, if there was anything at all that was glaring to me when I listened to Members opposite when they spoke today, there were no solutions. No solutions. All they said was, don't go blaming

us. Don't go reaching back in history and blaming me for things like Muskrat Falls and seven deficits and spending of \$25 billion. Don't go blaming me for any of that, it's your job now.

It's like a marathon, or it's like a relay, I should say, Mr. Speaker. When you take that baton and you enter that race, you pick up from where another group left off. I can tell you what, we were a long ways from the finish line when we started that relay, Mr. Speaker.

He talked about announcements, too. The Leader of the Opposition talked about announcements. Interestingly enough, one announcement he didn't mention was the announcement he made on Statoil at a conference just a few years ago, when Statoil didn't even know about it. They weren't even party to this announcement. They knew nothing about it. It was a surprise to the province and it was a surprise to the company too, I say, Mr. Speaker.

Just like the fisheries fund that was announced at The Rooms. It was a surprise to a lot of people because it was supposed to be a co-operation or signing agreement with the federal government. Again, it was a party of one.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the history of our province over the last 10 or 12 years has been built on the oil industry. Just in recent years when you look at all of this, we have an industry that provides great benefits to our province.

Our budget was based on, just a few short years ago, 35 per cent in revenue from oil. Mr. Speaker, today it's less than 10 per cent. So we have a lot less to work with. When I say we must do better with less, we have to do better with less.

We have to be mindful that we have to do things efficiently. We have to look at the evidence and where the evidence guides us. We must do the evaluation for money and what value can we get, because if there is anything that's important for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians it is this: they do not want to waste their money. They do not want to waste their money, and it's important for us.

Our responsibility is to make sure we use those taxpayers' money wisely. We have that responsibility. That is how we put in better social programs with better outcomes. That is how we invest in more infrastructure in our province, Mr. Speaker.

I get the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to go around this province quite a bit, and I do it a lot. When I talk to people they reflect as well, like many of us do, and they think about how it could have been, how it should have been. What opportunity did we have, was there a missed opportunity? Yeah, there was, but I will also tell you this. It's a courageous bunch we have living in this province, and they are willing to work together.

That is what I'm finding when I go around this province. A willingness to work together, because they see this place as an ideal place to live, to work and raise a family. We will continue to find a balance, strike that balance between the social responsibility and the economic responsibility we have. It will be about partnerships, and those partnerships will be strengthened with our federal government, with other communities, with our educational institutions, with organizations. Sometimes even, yes, with individuals, but also with other provinces. We have provided and we will continue to work together.

When we came in government in 2015, I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, and I said this publicly many times, when you sit in a room and you're told the province is facing a \$2.7 billion deficit if you don't do anything, it was very clear there had to be immediate action taken. I believe anyone in this room would understand that. I think any reasonable person would understand that. Immediate action had to be taken, Mr. Speaker.

Layered on to that, we also knew that in a few short years we had to deal with electricity rates; and, yes, we have rate mitigation that will be included. We accept the responsibility that we know we had to be competitive in electricity rates in our province. We have to be competitive for the people that live here and for the businesses that employ Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Phase 1 of that vision that I talked about of *The Way Forward* was making sure that

we established a strong fiscal foundation for our province.

When we came into government, Mr. Speaker, we had the same number of deputy ministers in our province as the province of Ontario. These are the things we had to deal with. You asked yourself: How did this happen? How would a province the size of Newfoundland and Labrador find itself in that situation? Because people made decisions with no sustainability plans in place. They weren't worried about if this could be viable or sustainable in six or seven years. They just did it for the day. They live in the day. That's how we got in the situation we're in.

I remember at this desk right here when a prior Finance minister, when asked about this, said: If we have the money we'll spend it, and if the money is not there, we'll pull back then. That was the attitude that people, when they were in government, took towards the finances of this province.

Mr. Speaker, check in *Hansard*. That is there. Except for that person who's not in this House today, I would even probably name the person because I can remember that. I said that someday and at some point that will come back to haunt this province. Not preparing for the future when they had the opportunity.

Here we find ourselves today with less than 10 per cent of our revenue now coming from oil. Mr. Speaker, this government will not give up. We will continue to forge partnerships with industries. We'll continue to forge partnerships with investors that see opportunity in this province. Not like Members opposite today who spoke of gloom and doom.

As we go into Phase 3 of *The Way Forward*, we'll continue to build on our future realizing our potential because there is untapped potential in this province like no other. We will not give up, Mr. Speaker, on the future of our province. We have so much to be thankful for.

In the speech that was given today, I can touch on so many things, if it's cultural, if it's investment in infrastructure. On and on I can go. Yes, I, too, as Premier of this province, am extremely proud of the young people, especially

the achievements we've seen in recent days, either in cultural or in athletics. Mr. Speaker, I see it.

I had the opportunity this weekend to spend some time on the West Coast with young people between 11 and 18, Mr. Speaker, and with many parents. I'll tell you one story because I think it needs to be shared – one story.

I walked into the stadium in Deer Lake on Saturday morning; the place was full of young people. There was a young woman there. Her father was with her and her mom was with her. They had moved back to this province, Mr. Speaker. So yeah, they had moved back to this province. I met them about three years ago in Lewisporte. We recounted and went over the discussion and the conversation that we had in Lewisporte. Mr. Speaker, they see the future of this province to be bright. They know that we're going through challenges of the day. We know that – we all know that – but we cannot just continually focus on that, we have to look to the future of our province.

You tell me another province that has mining resources, oil and gas resources, fishery resources, land resources and, most importantly, the best people in this world.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER BALL: And it's just not me saying this, Mr. Speaker. We have people all over the world that are saying that. I think when you look at *Come From Away* it really, really symbolizes what this province is all about.

I say to Members opposite who are over there shaking their head now, you can shake your head and continue to talk about doom and gloom, you can do that if you want, but I will tell you we are on a mission to set the path straight for Newfoundland and Labrador and today's Speech from the Throne, it really gives an example, it summarizes where we see the future of this province, and it is indeed bright.

Thank you very much for this opportunity.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

It is moved and seconded that a select committee be struck to draft an Address of Thanks to be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, in reply to the Gracious Speech from the Throne with which he has been pleased to open the present session of the House of Assembly.

The Members of the Select Committee will be the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, the mover; the Member for Labrador West, the seconder; and the Member for Mount Pearl North.

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.'

I declare that the motion is carried.

In terms of Orders of the Day, Notices of Motion.

Notices of Motion

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

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

I move the following private Member's resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House urges the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to consider eliminating sales tax on insurance.

That is seconded by the Member for Ferryland.

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 63, the private Member's resolution read out by my colleague from Cape St. Francis will be the

private Member's resolution we'll debate on Wednesday.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will ask leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act To Amend The Electrical Power Control Act, 1994 and the Public Utilities Act, Bill 2.

MR. SPEAKER: Further notices of motion?

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 House do now adjourn.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that the House do now adjourn.

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.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 o'clock in the morning.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 10 a.m.