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Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

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The House met at 10 a.m.

Admit strangers.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Order, please!

Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: The Deputy Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I call from the Order Paper, Motion 1, that this House Approves in General the Budgetary Policy of the Government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl North.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LESTER: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to also congratulate the volunteers of my district which spans over St. John's and Mount Pearl. Both communities are held together by those volunteers which contribute to the fabric of community and helping out each other. Most of those volunteers are taking time away from their families and contributing to the better good of the youth, the seniors, the ones who are less fortunate and I think everybody in this House are very thankful for volunteers within their communities.

I'd like to bring your attention to an initiative which the City of Mount Pearl has undertaken. It's part of the Smart Cities Challenge which is a federal government program. I think this type of initiative is what we should be encouraging all our communities throughout our province to undertake.

I think our population has matured to a point to realize that government is not responsible for everything. They're responsible for creating environments; they're not responsible for taking individual initiatives. Mount Pearl is a prime example of this. They've recognized that their

demographic is rapidly changing. Their average age median rate is increasing every year.

Right now, in Mount Pearl, the age median is about 46. They've outlined targets to reduce their median age to 43½ by 2023, increase their population by 5 per cent to 24,104 and double the technology-based companies from eight to 16. Mount Pearl itself is unfortunately – well, I can't say unfortunately, but it's challenged with the fact that within Mount Pearl there is not a lot of physical natural resources. Their resource within Mount Pearl is their people.

Part of the Government of Canada's announced plan of Smart Cities Challenge is basically – it's open up to communities of all sizes including municipalities, regional governments and indigenous communities. The challenge encourages communities to adopt a smart cities approach to improve the lives of their residents through innovation, data and connected technology.

I think this type of initiative shown by Mount Pearl could go throughout our whole province. We really could become not just what I'd like to say the silicon valley of the east coast but the silicon political jurisdiction of North America. It's something that we've invested in, we as a people, we as governments from one administration to the next. We are educational facilities. While, yes, we do have infrastructural challenges, they're second to none throughout the whole continent.

For the longest period of time we have not been the primary benefactors of those educational institutions. Far too often our other jurisdictions, other economies are making good on our investment in our education. We need to find more ways to keep our educated people here, create industries around those, because people with jobs create jobs. People with good stable livings create stable livings for others.

I, personally, wish Mount Pearl the ultimate success on their initiative and will be doing everything I personally can within this House to advocate in any way possible to guarantee their success, but Mount Pearl, their existing council led by Mayor Aker and, I guess, chief administrative officer Steve Kent, who most of us all know very well, they are the ones who are

going to be able to lead this challenge. They got great councillors backing them up. Hopefully, we'll be able to replicate their example of initiative throughout the province to provide a stable future and opportunity for economic diversity throughout our rural towns and centralized locations.

Mr. Speaker, in 2015, I like to joke and say I was retired. I was working and I didn't consider it work. I loved being a farmer, but it came to my attention – and no disrespect to any individual within this House, especially the Member who I ran against, but he was successful. I was concerned that, once again, the electorate throughout the province was going to do a wholesale change of government. Democracy just can't work that way when it's a wholesale change. We need an Opposition. We need a strong government, and we also need a strong Opposition. Collectively, all together, we have to work towards the same direction but we're human; we all make mistakes.

Why I decided to run in 2015, I was afraid that there was not going to be an execution of democracy. Another thing I didn't really see at that time was I didn't see a real, strong economic plan. I'm not an economist. I'm not a mathematician but when the price of oil goes from \$100 a barrel down to \$30, I know there's trouble on the horizon. That's something that we were all aware of.

People say you can't base our economy on oil, but guess what? We're a province of resources. We're a resource-based province at this point. We rely on commodity prices for our revenues. If we have to rely on tax dollars that we basically take out of one pocket and try to put it back in the other, each time we do that there's less money coming in front of us because someone else is dragging it out of the province. We need to concentrate on making the maximum use of our resources.

A lot of the strategies which the current government has put forward in *The Way Forward* documents, they were done in good intent and with consultation with industry representatives and the citizens of the province. I commend them for that, but what's happening is I don't see – granted, it's a short period of time, but I don't see the fulfillment coming out of that

like it should be happening. We need to bring some of those high-level theories to the ground and get our industries and the economy going again.

I hear a lot about Muskrat Falls, just like everybody else does. I'm concerned about it too. The reality is when the decisions were being made, they were made on the best possible information at that time. I don't mean to point anybody out but I'm pretty sure Cathy Bennett, who I have a lot of respect for, she was the chair of the –

AN HON. MEMBER: No names.

MR. LESTER: Oh, sorry.

AN HON. MEMBER: The Member for Windsor Lake.

MR. LESTER: I apologize for that. My rookie mistake.

The Member –

AN HON. MEMBER: Windsor Lake.

MR. LESTER: Okay. Thank you.

The Member for Windsor Lake, who I have an extreme amount of respect for, made the best decision at that time when she supported it, as did Minister Osborne, as did Minister Hawkins.

AN HON. MEMBER: Did it again.

MR. LESTER: Oh my gosh, I did it again.

AN HON. MEMBER: The Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Finance.

MR. LESTER: The Minister of Finance and the Minister of Transportation.

AN HON. MEMBER: Put him in the corner with a book on his head.

MR. LESTER: I guess I'm going to be put in the corner. I apologize.

We had concerns about it but when we looked at our energy deficit, we had to do something about it. There's a big concern about methylmercury in

that lake, but I can guarantee you that climate change is going to have a lot greater effect on everybody else.

When you look in Holyrood, that is still one of the top 15 producers of carbon into our atmosphere, one of the top 15 biggest polluters in North America. That's going to have a much larger effect. I'm not trying to diminish any risks of methylmercury because it is a concern, but I'm also a big proponent of right now we have to make the best decision with the least effect.

This leads me into my next topic which is agriculture. We often hear that by 2050 we're going to have to produce twice as much food as we do today. I've said this before, as a provincial jurisdiction at the end of the food supply chain, it won't matter how much money we have in our pockets, we're going to be the ones to go hungry.

Most of our population increase is going to happen in the Third World countries. Over the past five or six decades, our food production has moved out of our own backyards into the Third World countries. I'm really troubled with the fact that I'm sure the people of China are not going to allow food to come here to North America while their own children are starving. We'll be the ones to be hungry.

Industries such as agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, they're not as readily accessible or developable – if that's a word – as mining, for example. The mineral resources are there in the ground. But in order to harvest a living resource, be it through agriculture or forestry or aquaculture, it takes decades, absolute decades and millions and millions of dollars of investment in order to make that industry profitable.

That's a concern of mine because I see there is a bit of a shift within the Department of Natural Resources from planning and business development to streamline programs, to streamline departments, to reduce costs. But I really think that is not the situation we should be looking at. We shouldn't be looking at cutting planning. We shouldn't be looking at cutting resource management. Those decisions that we make to cut those management positions today are going to affect the availability and

profitability of those resources 10, 15, 20 years down the road. We need to keep up to date. Even if it is a bit of a knock on the chin right now, we need to continue to manage our natural renewable resources, because they're the ones that are going to provide the paycheques down the road.

In addition to the opportunity that's there in the agriculture industry, there are several different directions it can go when it comes to spinoffs. Agriculture basically creates jobs, not only in the activity of producing food or agricultural products, it creates service industries. There's no reason why we can't build our industry to a critical mass where we can get infrastructure placement, such as fertilizer plants, larger dealerships of equipment, larger dealerships of input such as chemicals, packaging. All those things can be produced right here in our own province.

It's estimated that for every one job that agriculture creates, there are two more jobs needed to back that production up. So it's a great driver of the economy, and I would suspect, while my knowledge is fairly limited, that the same ratios could go for aquaculture and forestry as well.

We often hear about this 64,000 acres of land that's highlighted as areas of agriculture interest. That has always been there. We've always had an opportunity to produce more of our own food. The factor that's kept us from doing that has been the economics of doing so. Because we're such a small portion of the retail grocery trade throughout Canada, we account for less than 4 per cent of the food consumed in Canada. Back to my first point about being food short, we'd only need a very small reduction in food and we're going to be hungry.

Because of the nationalization –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have some order, please!

It's getting difficult to hear the speaker.

Thank you.

MR. LESTER: And I'm pretty loud.

MR. SPEAKER: You are.

MR. LESTER: Back to my point about 4 per cent of the market. Because of that and our nationalization of our food supply chain with the big corporations, the opportunity to get into these food supply chains is becoming increasingly challenging. While it may not be popular with other provinces, as a provincial Legislature we need to put parameters and legislation in place that local first. We need to make sure that food that's produced here is able to be filling a market that's devoid of local product and in short supply.

In our recent budget, I had one little concern – a very small number that creates a very big concern, and that's the amount of limestone that is budgeted. It's been more or less stable for the past 10 years, the amount of limestone consumed. There was a bit of a jump in it a couple of years ago when there was additional agricultural land being developed.

Agricultural land development is great but productivity is more important. Limestone is the key element to agricultural productivity. For every basis point that you're below optimum levels, you're looking at an 8 to 12 per cent decrease in production. I would challenge the department to do another survey of pH on existing agricultural soils. I'm sure they would find that through the addition of limestone, an increased budget of limestone, we would be able to increase our production significantly without the development of additional agricultural land.

We have to start making better on what we already have. If we look to increase and double our production of horticultural goods in less than four years, we have to look at the land we already have. Land I will clear this fall or this summer, I'm not going to get maximum production out of that for at least four to six years. That's beyond our target of production. We need to look at the land that we already have, make the best of it and use it for where we can get the most food produced. That is, of course, in horticultural production.

I can bring in on my – again, speaking to my experience as a farmer. I can bring in one

tractor-trailer load of supplies and I can produce 10 tractor-trailer loads of food. That's what I call tractor-trailer economics that we need to look at.

The same thing with Labrador, you can bring in one tractor-trailer load of food. There's lots of land in Labrador, lots of opportunity, far better soil than I have in my jurisdiction and you could produce much more food for the people of Labrador.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. LESTER: Pardon me?

AN HON. MEMBER: We got a lot to think about.

MR. LESTER: A lot to think about.

Well, see the time for thinking is now passed, we need action. We need to start using that land. We need to put the economic factors in place that enable people to consider agriculture as a viable livelihood and a viable means of supporting their families.

I love being a farmer and I'm slowly liking to be a politician. It's just a different kind of material that you're having to deal with, but –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible) rewards.

MR. LESTER: Yes (inaudible) rewards.

I think this is something – the agriculture industry in particular is going to be an industry that's going to be passed from administration to administration and it's something that's going to be passed from generation to generation.

A field that I farm, that's been producing food for the people of the St. John's region for over 200 years. Then I'm farming other fields that, for the first time, will become a resource that's going to produce for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In closing, I would like to restate my commitment to advocate for the people of my district. As I said, we have an aging demographic and there are going to be challenges as we can all experience throughout our province but we can't lose sight of the future

in taking care of the problems that are happening today. We still have to put the resources and forthright thinking into planning for down the road.

Yes, we need to take care of the problems at our door but once we close the door on those there'll be more that will show up if we're not thinking ahead. Yes, it's great to think but, again, we need to go with action. That's what I'd like to see a little bit more of on the ground. I'd like to see more proactive work and not see our research and planning divisions of our resources in any way compromised and continue to invest in that.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DEAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure and an honour to be able to speak on the budget of 2018 and the people of the great District of Exploits.

Before I go to some of my points, which will be more generic this morning – I'll be a little bit more focused on the district when I get to speak again hopefully later. Before I go there, Volunteer Week, all of the speakers thus far have raised and acknowledged with accolades, all of our volunteers throughout the province.

Exploits; certainly we're not shortchanged when it comes to people, organizations and different groups. I'm not going to go down the road of individualizing them because whether they're individuals or service groups or firefighters – and the list goes on and on and on – each and every volunteer in the District of Exploits, I'm sure, knows who they are.

It's like I've often said when I was mayor bringing greetings – and I've heard it said here – the volunteers in my district and throughout the province, what they do and what they've done for decades for our people is pick up, I'll call it, the slack or the shortcomings, in a lot of cases,

of government services, what we probably should be expected to bring forward. Our people have always been good. Regardless of the party in power, our volunteers have always had the backs of successive governments. They need to be congratulated for coming onside and doing what, in my opinion and in most cases, is really government responsibilities. Without our volunteer sector, I think we'd find ourselves lost.

Mr. Speaker, in December 2015

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were facing an unprecedented \$2.7 billion deficit. We inherited a fiscal policy guided by no realistic plan to return the province to surplus, long-term plans based on the belief that oil would always be at \$100 per barrel and a promise of only \$3 billion equity investment in Nalcor Energy that was expected to generate \$12 billion in revenue. We were also told the investments in Muskrat Falls would be returned in just eight years.

Mr. Speaker, we have reduced our deficit from a projected \$2.7 billion to a little more than \$800 million today. We are on target to return to surplus despite the volatility of oil prices. We are moving forward with a strong commitment to creating conditions for businesses and employment growth.

We also cannot take such severe actions as massive job reductions and cuts to services as they would have far-reaching consequences on our already challenged economy due to the winding down of major industrial projects. As our economy stabilizes, coming off these projects, employment remains one of our key challenges and we are addressing this head-on. Our approach is focused on creating opportunities for job growth across sectors and retaining our youth by supporting them to pursue career opportunities right here at home.

Building for Our Future addresses our province's economic, social and fiscal challenges. It is a way forward that is methodical, fair and responsible. This is the approach that our government will be taking. This is the approach that our government will continue to take.

We are driven by the goals of managing our fiscal situation, delivering valuable programs and services, getting better outcomes for our

investments, creating an environment which supports economic development and job creation and creating opportunities for residents to excel in their careers.

An important part of our approach has been our relationship with the federal government and the ability to leverage available funds for a maximum benefit.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's right; we don't tear down flags (inaudible).

MR. DEAN: That's right.

For municipalities, we have partnered on initiatives that have improved clean drinking water, waste water systems, along with road and community infrastructure. We have also advanced projects that support the growth of tourism, ocean technology, aerospace, defence, film, television and manufacturing, along with many other industries. We will continue to identify opportunities where we can join our federal partners in realizing the full benefit of our considerable investments and help create opportunities for economic successes.

Mr. Speaker, within departments and government organizations, we are carefully examining how programs and services are delivered in order to secure the best possible outcomes. This reflects the principles of our way forward to advancing a smarter, more accountable approach to managing government's operations.

Our approach to health care is addressing increased demand for long-term care and creating economic benefits. Through *The Way Forward*, we are continuing to action initiatives that help to improve government efficiency. Over the next year, we will implement initiatives to build on the progress achieved to date. Examples of these would include consolidating government's vehicle fleet under one department, which will result in the reduction of the number of vehicles by 10 per cent, saving taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars over the long term.

Consolidating collection activities to reduce redundancy and standardized collection processes – this will provide a single approach

to managing receivables owed across multiple departments; creating an asset management framework to guide how we assess and dispose of assets in a way that enhances service delivery and ensures the maximum financial return; adopting a strategic sourcing model that leverages the consolidated purchasing power of the government to secure better prices for goods.

We will take steps to make it easier for citizens and businesses to access services online which will improve the overall experience of interacting with government and, ultimately, result in greater efficiencies and savings. We are working towards a single government ID that citizens and businesses will use for all services accessed through a single portal.

Mr. Speaker, our approach focuses on reducing spending within government while advancing programs and services to citizens. A truly balanced approach involves many different areas of improvement. In the past two years, we have eliminated 795 positions within departments while maintaining service delivery and protecting a vulnerable economy.

We recognize there is an opportunity to expand attrition across the entire public service, as there are more than 5,000 public service employees who are eligible to retire. By carefully conducting workforce planning, we will be able to reduce the size of the public service and spending in a more gradual way, without risk of disrupting service delivery and the economy. Longer term, we continue to look for savings within all areas of the public service, including reducing discretionary spending and working with management and unions to address such issues as overtime and sick leave.

Mr. Speaker, health care spending represents the largest portion of our provincial budget. Annually, the cost to deliver health care programs and services in Newfoundland and Labrador are the highest in Canada and has increased by 130 per cent since 2001.

It's no small undertaking but we are carefully changing how our health care system operates. We are shifting focus from treatment to preventative care, providing care in the home and community where possible and appropriate and strengthening primary health care options.

We are also using \$72 million, secured from the federal government, to improve home and community care and mental health and addictions services.

More specifically, we will develop a Home First Integrated Network with wraparound services for clients and an extension of available services in the community beyond traditional work hours; initiate a province-wide palliative care approach with greater training for clinicians, service providers and caregivers who provide end-of-life care; and increase access to home care supports for people with dementia. Our government has placed a spotlight on transforming how mental health and addiction services are delivered, breaking down stigmas and removing barriers to treatments.

Mr. Speaker, we have made progress by using federal funding. We are better able to support those experiencing mental health issues. We will develop a province-wide mental health service delivery model for children, youth and emerging adults to address existing systemic barriers and gaps; expand e-mental health services; improve access to addiction services; and improve the community-based services to replace hospital care.

This year, we have allocated \$6.1 million to advance a value-for-money assessment for a new mental health facility to replace the Waterford Hospital. The new facility will be a focal point of our community-centric approach to mental health and addictions.

In *Budget 2018* we are allocating more than \$115 million for operational funding for community groups, as well as support for projects and programs that they deliver to our residents. A multi-year approach for community grant funding will be announced in the coming week.

Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes that we have responsibilities to support all of our citizens regardless of age, gender, ability or geography. It is our responsibility that we take very seriously. Today, we are continuing to provide these valuable programs with the total investment of \$121 million. In 2017, 47,000 seniors and their families received the Seniors'

Benefit and 155,000 families received the Income Supplement.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that safe, stable and affordable housing is fundamental to the social and economic well-being of individuals and families in our communities. Our government is working closely with our community partners to help improve access to affordable housing and to make it easier for first-time homebuyers to enter the marketplace.

This year we are increasing the Rent Supplement Program by an additional \$2 million to increase the number of rent supplemented units and to support the portable rent supplement pilot program. We will also invest \$10.2 million for maintenance, repair and upkeep of public housing properties to ensure safe and quality homes are available for our tenants. To modernize and renovate public housing, \$3.6 million has been allocated, which will help ensure we continue to provide good, affordable housing.

Mr. Speaker, our \$8.6 million investment in the Supportive Living Program and the Provincial Homelessness Fund will allow us to partner with the community sector to prevent homelessness. An additional \$2.7 million will be invested to leverage federal funding under the Investment in Affordable Housing Agreement which enables Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation to partner with affordable housing developers in the private and non-profit supportive living sectors.

In partnership with the federal government – we've got good partnerships with the federal government – we anticipate building new housing units, as well as upgrades to some of our existing social housing units to reflect the present day family size and needs of seniors. The focus will be on providing additional housing to those who need it and reducing wait-lists for social housing.

Mr. Speaker, our government is making it easier for home buyers to purchase their first home. We are doing this through two new programs, which are: The First-time Homebuyer's Program, which will include financing for a down payment and a \$2,000 grant for eligible

first time home buyers to purchase a new or existing home.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Housing commission is also increasing the average household income maximum for eligibility from \$65,000 up to \$75,000 for full benefit and up to \$85,000 for partial benefit. The program will be extended to March 31, 2019, with available funding of \$1.25 million, and will assist an estimated 100 households secure home ownership.

Our new Home Purchase Program will provide a \$3,000 grant towards the purchase of a newly constructed or never sold home under \$400,000, including HST. These are innovative programs that will stimulate new home construction, economic activity and job creation.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible) some builders are mentioned.

MR. DEAN: That's right, maximum.

Mr. Speaker, through the Independent Appointments Commission, government will appoint a committee of experts to undertake a system-wide review that will explore how our post-secondary education system compares to other jurisdictions, and to recommend options to achieve better outcomes in post-secondary education in a more cost-efficient manner. Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic will play key roles in this undertaking.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial and federal governments are finalizing agreements that will provide additional funding to support employment and training programs. Through these agreements, our government will strive to increase participation in the local labour market for under-represented groups, including women, and assist them to achieve gainful employment.

Under the three-year \$100 million municipal infrastructure program, we are investing approximately \$10.6 million in 2018-19 through the provincial Municipal Capital Works Program. In addition to this, we are providing \$18.8 million to leverage an additional \$12.7 million in federal funding under the Small

Communities Fund of the New Building Canada Fund.

Mr. Speaker, our government is proud to continue the presumptive cancer coverage benefit that career and volunteer firefighters now receive. This year, we are expanding support for first responders by introducing a new Search and Rescue Volunteer Tax Credit that will allow eligible search and rescue volunteers to claim a \$3,000 non-refundable tax credit starting on January 1, 2019, on their provincial income tax.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to our industry development, our commitment to advancing infrastructure throughout the province will help stimulate economic activity and job creation, while providing access to services in modern facilities.

Last year, our government launched a five-year plan for new and existing schools, health care facilities, post-secondary institutions, roads, bridges, justice facilities, affordable housing and municipal infrastructure. This year, we will continue to build on this momentum and action a plan that includes a total investment of \$619.7 million. The five-year infrastructure plan will generate an average of \$540 million in economic activity and 5,300 person years of employment per year.

Mr. Speaker, *Budget 2018* includes investments which ensure health care infrastructure can meet the demands of residents, including the \$6.1 million for the value-for-money analysis to replace the Waterford Hospital, as well as \$4 million to support the 20-bed expansion of the protective care unit at the Dr. Hugh health care centre in Botwood.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DEAN: If I may – this probably would be a good time – I would like to advise all hon. Members and staff here in this House that the wife of former Health Minister Dr. Hugh Twomey passed away about three days ago. I've been talking to her son, Sean, and conveyed to them our deepest sympathies.

Sean is totally aware of the extension to the Twomey centre in Botwood. I know he feels strongly that his father would be nodding his

head in approval; a great doctor, a great minister, a great MHA and a great friend of mine. He died several years ago. Unfortunately, his wife passed away recently. Condolences are extended to all.

Mr. Speaker, \$3.75 million for the ongoing development of the new long-term care homes in Gander as well as Grand Falls-Windsor.

In 2017, we introduced a five-year plan to improve the province's roads network. It also allows us to take better advantage of our short construction season through early tendering, which leads to more competitive bidding. By the end of last season, more than 500 lane kilometres had been paved and 360 culverts were replaced. This fiscal year, our government will match last year's Roads Plan budget of \$77.2 million. Tenders for many projects have already been issued, while the remaining tenders will be issued in the coming days.

Mr. Speaker, our government continues to make substantial progress in improving the transparency and accountability at Nalcor Energy. In collaboration with the Crown corporation, we have created greater certainty on the cost estimates and timelines for completion of the Muskrat Falls Project.

Under the terms set by the previous administration, we are once again required to make an equity investment in Nalcor. This year, that investment totals \$723.9 million and will support the completion of the Muskrat Falls Project, which is close to 90 per cent complete.

Budget 2018 allocates more than \$20 million and an additional \$13.7 million in 2019, and is led by Justice LeBlanc. The inquiry will provide a greater understanding of what led to the previous administration's sanctioning of the project and why budgets increased from \$6.2 billion to the \$12.7 billion projected today, as well as why the schedule was consistently underestimated.

While we cannot change the past, we can learn from our mistakes. Addressing electricity rates has been, and will continue, to be our priority. Continuing to purchase and import less expensive power via the Maritime Link and Labrador Link; exporting surplus recall energy

from Churchill Falls; bringing surplus power across the Labrador-Island Link for use on the Island in 2018; finding ways to use energy more efficiently, reduce peak demand, to free up capacity for export and domestic customers; and expanding customer base within the province.

Mr. Speaker, our vision for the province does not include the doubling of electricity rates. We are focused on ensuring that electricity rates –

MR. SPEAKER (Reid): Order, please!

MR. DEAN: – are competitive with other Atlantic provinces.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I am pleased to stand this morning and to speak for the first time in the budget debate. There's much to be said – not much in the budget, but much to be said.

This is a budget that is continuing a pattern that was set by this government with its 2016 budget. So in order to really understand the impact of this budget, one has to understand where this budget comes from.

In 2016, we had an austerity budget –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. MICHAEL: – put in by this government. They knew it was that and they've made, in their words: they make no excuses for it. They knew it was going to be hard, they said. They knew it was going to hurt people, but they had to do it. We know they didn't have to do it; they chose to do it. They chose to take that route of an austerity budget.

This budget continues everything that was in that budget –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. MICHAEL: – except for the few changes that happened because of protests from the people and protests here in this House from us as Opposition. For example, the 2016 budget had a levy in it. Well, we still have the levy. We still have it. They made changes to it. Now it starts with the individuals with incomes over \$50,000. That's a whopping lot of money and the levy is still there. So that levy hasn't gone. While this *Budget 2018* may not mention the word levy, the levy is still in place.

Now, when it came to something like the closing of the libraries, we certainly know the impact that had and the reaction of the community, the reaction of people outside of our province and our reaction caused that to change. So we did have in this budget – and I did have yesterday in Estimates from the minister – a commitment that libraries are staying open. But it's not because they wanted it. It's because of the fightback from people in this province that caused that. Day after day, we stood with petitions from people in this province demanding that they make the change, so they made it.

When we're dealing with 2018, we're dealing with what they're calling this is staying the course. Well, the course they're staying is hurting people on a daily basis, and that's what they don't say. The people who, since 2016, have lost hours of home care, that goes on. The seniors, since 2016, who've lost dental care, that goes on. The people who are paying levies, because they have whopping incomes of \$51,000, that goes on. All of this continues.

So it may be a stay the course for them in terms of their so-called fiscal policy, but it's not a stay of course for the people of the province because with every year that they're being affected by what happened in 2016, their lives are getting worse. The senior who hasn't had dental care for two years will now not have it for three years. It gets worse for the people. So it's not a stay-the-course budget for the people of the province. It's only a stay-the-course budget for the government and the direction in which they are moving.

Now, government likes to say that we stand up and we talk about what's wrong and they act as if we are the only ones who do that, Mr. Speaker, who look at their budget with an eye that says an austerity budget is not the way to go. Let's face it, this budget in 2018 is still an austerity budget because it's based on 2016 and what happened in 2016.

In June of 2016, when we, in this House, were talking about a private Member's motion, I made reference to comments from the heads of the teachers' associations in Canada who were actually meeting here in the province at the time. The reason I brought them in is because this was a belief statement and call to action. It was actually signed by the presidents of the Canadian teachers' organizations of the whole country. They were here in St. John's.

They were dealing with governments, not just here, but other Liberal governments and other governments in this country who were starting to look to austerity budgets. These heads of the teachers' associations of the country said that they developed a belief statement and call to action because of overwhelming concerns on the educational system on inclusive education because of austerity budgets. So they were concerned about austerity budgets.

Let's listen to what the presidents of the teachers' associations of Canada said and their belief. I think these are people who are pretty well-educated people, who certainly know the impact on children and families of government's budgets. Let's listen to what they're saying: "WE BELIEVE... that austerity budgets undermine the strength of our public education system as students and their teachers lose out, and families are left out." So this is in general; this is just not from an education perspective. This is the effect of austerity budgets.

"WE BELIEVE... that publicly funded public education must be fully funded to support student learning." So they're talking about learning, but they're still talking about the impact of austerity budgets.

"WE BELIEVE... that a successful inclusive education model requires sufficient funding" – not austerity budget – "and teachers/educators to ensure student needs are addressed."

“WE BELIEVE... that fiscal deficits must not be solved at the expense of the public education system or on the backs of our children.” And I would say fiscal deficits must not be solved at the expense of vulnerable people in this province and on their backs.

This comes from the presidents of the teachers’ associations in Canada. So it may be wise for this government to open its eyes and its ears and to listen and pay attention to what people, not just the Opposition in this House, not just my party, but economists, educated people, academics, the people on the street, what they all say about austerity budgets.

So when I look at *Budget 2018* and I hear what my constituents are saying to me, one of the things they picked up on – and I’ve had a number of my constituents who’ve said this – is the fact that, once again, there is no plan for a child care program. That we have no plan by this government to look forward and to pay attention to what a child care program would need.

The minister yesterday, in responding to me, indicated that he really did care about an integrated system from the time children entered regulated child care right through to their graduation, and he and I are in agreement on that. The problem is: What about the children who come into the regulated child care? How many of our children are coming into regulated child care?

Basically what he was saying, and it’s true, that as the Minister of Education, that’s what he is responsible for, for the time they come into regulated child care right through. Our problem is we don’t have enough children coming into regulated child care. We have children who are coming into the system on an unequal basis. We have children who have been in child care maybe since they were three years old, maybe two, and these children have such an advantage over children whose parents have not been able to afford to put them into regulated child care.

My issue with the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is not the job that he’s doing for the children under his mandate and under his care, my concern is what this government is doing with a fiscal policy that is keeping children an unequal basis and it has a

long-term effect. There are many studies that would show that having an early childhood education, being in regulated child care and having a foot up before going into full-day kindergarten, that is something that makes sure that we have more children who are graduating out of grade 12. It lowers out dropout rate. It also increases employability of students coming out of our schools. Getting more children into child care should be this government’s goal, Mr. Speaker.

What I want to do today is to point out some of the ways that this can happen. I’m not saying it should happen overnight. I’m saying the plan needs to be put in place, and government is showing no sense of the need for a plan being put in place.

We have 22,695 children under five in this province. That’s the 2017 number. Most have working mothers. Sixty per cent, according to our stats, have working mothers. That’s the Federation of Labour statistics actually. We have 22,695 children under five but we have only 8,521 regulated spaces in centres and family daycares in September 2016.

We may have a few more now. Since 2016, we do have some more children in regulated care because of a Capacity Initiative program which provide start-up grants to community organizations. By 2016, we did have 28 CI centres. The minister told me yesterday in Estimates that there are four more since then in the past year.

We are not meeting the need. We do not have children coming in. We’re not doing what they do in Europe, for example, where from the time they’re six months old – there’s care in many European countries and Scandinavian countries. Why? So that parents can continue working and so that children are also getting good development – development is the word here – they are getting wonderful development.

The parents are able to work; the children are being cared for. Development for those children is going on and all children are receiving the same care. All children are being taken care of because of public child care, because of a publicly funded, a publicly regulated child care

program. It's a given in those countries, Mr. Speaker – a given.

Besides that, why should we want to have early childhood for every child in our province? That should be enough, knowing that our children are going to be in safe places where their development is going to be assured, where they are in a good social environment with other children their age, where the people who are working with them are trained and are well paid.

All of that should be something we want for our children but there are also economic reasons, and that's part of – there some of the social benefits. Social benefits are extremely important, but the social and the economic go together. There are also economic benefits, and that's been recognized here in this country, in Quebec for sure, and in PEI.

Now we're getting in Ontario, with their election coming up, we're getting both the government and the NDP there putting out proposals with regard to a public child care system. This is what we should be looking at, but economically we should be looking at it. Not just for the social benefits but also for the economic benefits. That's something I want to talk about here now is the economic benefits, Mr. Speaker.

The economic and financial benefits are immense. I think the government and the people who are sitting opposite me right now should be looking at, again, other people who are saying this, not just me, not just our party but what other people are saying, just like I pointed out what the presidents of the Teachers' Associations.

As early as last month, March 13, 2018, the head of the Bank of Canada in a talk, in a speech he gave on that day he used Quebec's affordable child care model to show how Canada could unlock some of the considerable untapped potential in our labour force. He is so impressed by what has happened in Quebec that he's done an analysis that showed that if we were to get an injection into our job market of 500,000 people, that's all, and he's looking at women and young people and indigenous people, recent immigrants, Canadians living with disabilities. If people in those groups could enter the job market to the tune of another 500,000 people, by

his estimate – this is the head of the Bank of Canada – that kind of workforce injection could raise the country's output by \$30 billion per year or 1.5 per cent.

Now that's really important information. He goes to the Quebec situation and points out how in Quebec – and we all know this because Pierre Fortin, the great economist did his own analysis – how the economy in Quebec was so improved because of having their fully subsidized child care program in Quebec. I think it costs \$7 a day per child, and it goes down with the number of children from one family.

What has happened in Quebec – and this is what he's pointing to – because of the participation rate of prime age women going up, that's why the workforce increased and that's why the economy increased. He says we could add almost 300,000 people to our country's workforce by doing what was done in Quebec.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. MICHAEL: Now, I just don't want to talk about what was done in Quebec. I'm using this as the information with regard to the economic benefit. Having a public funded, a public regulated and fully accessible child care program makes for a larger workforce, makes for a healthier workforce and therefore makes for a healthier economy. That's proven. It's proven over and over again. We don't have to look for the proof it's there, and this government seems to ignore that proof.

This is why you should be planning. This is why they should be planning, Mr. Speaker. They should be planning for this. It's not going to happen overnight. So they're not planning yet. I certainly got a lot of good stuff yesterday in Estimates but one thing I didn't get, there certainly isn't a plan going in this direction.

This government says it's concerned about the economy and concerned about revenue. Well, I just don't understand why they don't see this. It's proven. It's been spoken by everybody, including the head of the Bank of Canada. So why can't they start putting a plan in place?

When you look at PEI; PEI has exactly the same kind of program that we have, Mr. Speaker. PEI also had a patchwork quilt. They had private child care. They had community-based child care. They had not-for-profit child care. When PEI decided they were going to put in place a full public system, what they did, they put a plan in place, they gradually worked through that plan and the idea of that plan was to move everybody, to move the for-profit sectors as well as the community-based centres all into the public system.

What happened is that many of the for-profit centres did join the program. Some joined right away with a publicly managed system, and if they didn't join, they still had to adhere to the new provincial early childhood education curriculum. That was an incentive for them to do that. I think the government also put in place a timeline that was a point at which they needed to think about joining the full system.

The gradual transition happens by existing the network that we have, the network of not-for-profit, community-based and institution-based. Expanding that network, encouraging private operators to become part of it – look at what they did in PEI. Maybe not everything they did there was perfect. We need to analyze that to see what fits us.

It can be done, but, Mr. Speaker, it won't happen unless we plan for it. It won't happen unless we recognize the benefit of doing it. Until we do that, until we make sure that every child – we decide on the age, it could be two, it could be six months – at the same time has the right and the ability to be part of a publicly funded and publicly regulated child care program, our children will not be going into school on an equal footing.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HAGGIE: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise in this House to speak to the budget. This is the first of what I will hope

will be three opportunities to deliver some comments. Similar to my colleague from yesterday, I'm going to try and break them down into those that relate to my district, those that relate to this particular budget in general and also those that relate to my own department. I did have some prepared notes but I have to say the preamble, or the first 10 minutes of my predecessor's talk, left me wondering if we were talking about the same budget.

Essentially, I'll start with a quote, or at least a kind of slightly butchered quote from Charles Dickens. Mr. Micawber basically said that if your income was 19 shillings and 6 pence and your expenses were 20 shillings, you would be happy. If, however, your income was 19 shillings and 6 pence and your outgoings were 20 shillings, you would be in trouble.

You have to live within your means was the message of that. If I bugged it up, I apologize. I apologize if that's unparliamentary language. I withdraw it completely.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HAGGIE: Essentially, it's a failure to grasp the fundamentals of finance.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. HAGGIE: That's very good.

You either increase your revenue, you borrow money or you reduce your expenditure. It seems to be impossible for the Third Party in either of its leadership incarnations to grasp that principle. They keep on using labels – I would refer to the fact, Mr. Speaker, that economy has been called the dismal science for years for many a good reason. It has failed dismally or repeatedly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HAGGIE: So let's do what Margaret Thatcher did – and if the conservative group opposite will apologize for me stealing one of their icons for a moment – run it like it a household. If you spend more than you have, you're going to be in do-do. If you don't, you'll be happy.

The facts of the case are we inherited a situation that was not of our making, but we were in a colossal fiscal hole. There was a possibility that by December of 2015 this province would not be able to make payroll. That's been said and repeatedly said and repeatedly ignored by the Members opposite. So how do you deal with that?

The Members opposite are obsessed with a budget that we found ourselves in a situation where we really didn't have many options. The reason we didn't have any options is the hole we were in was so deep that borrowing was barely an option, barely an option. So what do you do?

If you can't borrow to keep the lights on, you either tax or you cut, or you do both. The fastest way was to pull, as my colleague of the day said, to pull all the taxation revenue levers that you could at the time.

The Member opposite keeps on referring to taxation and the levy. She keeps on forgetting that by legislation that drops off the books automatically with no debate and no fuss and no great fanfare this year. It goes. It goes.

This budget, Mr. Speaker, is a triumph of compromise. It is the best that can be done in a balanced approach to what is still a dreadful financial situation.

I've spoken in this House in previous years about the analogy of haemorrhage. We had to stop the haemorrhage. We were bleeding money by the day; \$4.8 million a day. We are still bleeding, but only at the rate of \$2.3 million a day. That is a significant achievement given the fact that there have been no mass layoffs, there isn't chaos on the streets, as the Members opposite would have us believe.

They talk about investing. I found this on my desk in the caucus room and I read it before and put it on one side. It's a five-year, multi-year plan for infrastructure investments. The first page, \$2.5 billion over five years in new spending. That is not austere by my books; \$619.7 million this year alone in infrastructure.

In addition to that, we're still managing to spend \$2.99 billion in my own department. One of the things the Members opposite will fail to point

out is the changes that have happened within that department in the last three years. We have kept health expenditures steady. Everyone says: So what? Well, so what, CPI is over 2 per cent.

We have beaten that. We've beaten inflation and we've beaten the costs of the service that we are providing. We're getting a better value for the dollar that we spend to the point now where nationally, within the last 10 days, a report has come out that shows this province leads Canada in having the shortest wait times in seven areas of national recognition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HAGGIE: Seven!

You don't hear them coming out and mentioning that, Mr. Speaker. We lead the country with the shortest wait times for radiation therapy, for hip replacement, for cataract surgery. We lead with cancer surgery for all but lung cancers. We lead

—

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. HAGGIE: The heckling from over there was bad enough, shut up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HAGGIE: You don't hear those celebrations. We spend over \$800 million a year in education. You don't hear that from the Opposition. We have with our infrastructure alone in Health — in Health alone, we have new infrastructure on the West Coast, we have the new long-term care facility, we have the request for proposals out for the acute-care facility. In Central Health, my colleague here stole all of my announcements from the last few weeks and bundled them up, except for one. The beautiful District of Green Bay —

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HAGGIE: The new centre in Springdale will move ahead this year. We couldn't do it in 2016, and we've been beaten to death because of it. We had no money. Ask them why. We had no money; \$25 billion in 12 years and we were broke. The cupboard wasn't just bare, Mr.

Speaker, they'd sold the damn cupboards as well. There was nothing.

We hear about how we need to listen to people. We hear about how much consultation we have to do. Well, in case they've forgotten, we did it. In June of this year, we released *Towards Recovery*. It is the single most comprehensive review of mental health care and addiction services in this province and a 54-point action plan – 54 points.

Eighteen of those are short term. Every one of those short-term targets will be met by the deadline of the middle of this year, Mr. Speaker – every one of those 18. Of those 54, there are only three that haven't been started. One of those is the replacement of the Waterford, which was announced very recently.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HAGGIE: We, again, have had national experts from the mental health council of Canada, from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto come to this province and say we are an example for the rest of Canada with what we are doing. We are leading the way.

You don't hear that from the Opposition. I understand it is their duty to oppose, but it wouldn't be a bad thing if for once they actually celebrated some of the things that Newfoundland and Labrador actually does better than anywhere else.

AN HON. MEMBER: Won't be done.

MR. HAGGIE: Won't be done.

Mental health and addictions: \$6.1 million – we're supposed to be talking about the budget and I may have digressed a little bit and I apologize, relevance and all that good stuff. Mr. Speaker, \$6.1 million to replace the Waterford. That project will unite, for the first time in this province, physical health and well-being with mental health and well-being. It will, in a single stroke, remove one of the biggest hurdles for mental health care and addictions care in this province, which is stigma. We do not, as a society, want to talk about it. Now it doesn't matter. You go to a building just down the road

and nobody knows whether you're going to have your bunions done, your piles done or have your depression fixed. Nobody knows, and that's the way it should be – I can't read this; oh yes, there we go. My eyesight, I need to go and see an ophthalmologist. We won't go there either.

Mr. Speaker, \$1.7 million for a mobile crisis response system across the province. This was pioneered in Memphis in the States after a tragedy involving someone with mental illness and an encounter with an armed police officer. It works. It has worked for them. What this does, again, is recognize a fact of life, which is law enforcement have become de facto first responders for mental health crisis in urban areas and rural areas, but it's more predominant in urban.

What we will be doing in partnership with the RNC and what's already started rolling out is plainclothes law enforcement, a mental health worker, an unmarked police car. These teams will attend those calls that dispatch feels would fit in their mandate. No obvious sign that it's a legal issue, it's a judicial problem. A mental health situation automatically, in no circumstances, starts to de-escalate because the prominence, the visibility, the fear of being foul of the law, for want of a better term, disappears. The officers have gone and received training to train their colleagues.

Over the course of this year, this program will roll out. It started in St. John's; it's now been expanded to 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It's going into Labrador with the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary and we've engaged with the other law enforcement office, with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, to put this in areas where they have jurisdiction. This will roll out over the course of this year. There's \$1.7 million there.

Then, to back that up, we are working with the regional health authorities to expand mental health services. We have rolled out already across the province a program called Doorways. Again, validated in a crisis situation in a part of the province where they experienced an upswing in suicides and suicide attempts. We have shown very clearly that for those folks who go to Doorways, 50 per cent of them will leave a single one-hour session regarding their problem

as having been resolved completely. We have those now in 17 locations across the province and more to come.

For those people whose problems are of a greater magnitude who need counselling, who need further assistance, we have the availability now of technology to defeat geography. We can put in place therapist assistance online. Eighteen thousand is the capacity of this system. On a referral from a walk-in clinic, this can be organized. A therapeutic relationship is established via Skype or phone or email or a mixture of those to suit the clinician and the patient to manage their problems over a series of counselling sessions.

For those for whom that is not sufficient, we're working on building up counselling services. Finally, for those people for whom in-patient care becomes crucial, we're going to put mental health beds in every region in the province. There are beds allocated for the Big Land too.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HAGGIE: Which brings me back to the Waterford replacement; again, a rather iconic building for good reasons and bad. It will be seen by many as the hallmark of the system transformation but, in actual fact, it is the tip of the iceberg.

It is the pinnacle of the roof, but we're building this building from the ground up. We've put the foundation in first. Not as glamorous as anywhere else but a house without secure foundations, as various books will tell you, will not survive. It's built on firm ground.

The Waterford and its replacement is the visible piece. There are always going to be those folks for whom that level of service is necessary and, indeed, vital. We've recognized that already.

We have funded renovations to the Health Sciences Centre already and put in place an eating disorders unit dedicated to the needs of a very small, but very significant and complex group of individuals. These people will have physical care and mental and psychological care and their families will also receive support and counselling, all in one location from a team

dedicated to dealing with this problem, and this problem alone.

If anything will exemplify that integration of physical health and mental well-being, it is those four beds on the Eating Disorders unit. Their location again is representative of the breaking down of the barrier between physical and mental, between family and patient, and between provider and patient. It is situated within the Health Sciences Centre.

When the plan comes to fruition over the next three or four years, they will have ready access to a broad range of mental health services which will be co-located, and they will be physically situated in a place which will deal with their significant nutritional and metabolic needs. This is, if you like, in microcosm the whole concept of integrating physical and mental health. The Eating Disorders unit opening got delayed owing to some plumbing issues and a flood, but that hopefully would be remedied and we should be back on track in the not-too-distant future.

Again, in terms of capitalizing on what revenue we can have – and I'm conscious that the clock is ticking – we have generated and leveraged federal dollars to increase the financial resources. Again, a window opened where our interests and needs coincided with what was seen as a federal priority as well, and we've been able to bring in money through bilateral agreement to address mental health and addictions particularly.

We've started spending that money from the get-go. In actual fact, some of that was allocated in last year's budget. Again, you don't hear that from the Members opposite. It's being used in an integrated way to fit the needs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, not simply thrown in a knee-jerk way at the latest fad. Within that pile of money is a separate pot for community care and for end of life care.

If I use my last minute or so to highlight the fact that what I've described through mental health and addictions is in actual fact indicative of a shift through the whole of health care. We're moving health back into the home, back into communities, back at a very low level with low barriers and low tech, and that's where it needs to be. No longer will the centre of excellence be

a building on a hill or somewhere on the Parkway. It has to be focused around the home, and this federal money will help us kick start that process, particularly in relation to our other area of need, and a personal pressure point of mine, which is palliative and end of life care.

I can wax lyrical further, but I see I'm down to my last 32 seconds. So I would use that simply to state that some of the misinformation, some of the doom and gloom that comes from the opposite side of this hallway is actually simply fear mongering. It is simply there to serve a lack of ideas and a lack of intellectual rigour that comes from over there because they have nothing else to offer except criticism, absolutely nothing except negativity, and on that, Mr. Speaker, I'll take my seat.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What an excellent segue for me to start my speech, but before I do, Mr. Speaker, I too would like to join my colleagues here in this House and recognize all of the fantastic volunteers of Newfoundland and Labrador. The volunteers who are the very fabric of our community's well-being, the volunteers who keep everything going, the volunteers who shape our children, who care for our seniors and who provide so many invaluable services to each and every one of us in our communities. We thank you for that. Certainly, I know from our side here in government, anything we can do to support your endeavours we're there to do it, and I believe every Member of this hon. House is there to support volunteers in any way we can.

My colleague, the Minister of Health and Community Services, ended by saying all we do is talk about negativity. Well, *Hansard* is a wonderful thing, Mr. Speaker, because *Hansard* is proof of everything that is said in this House of Assembly. For the first two years, from 2015 to – actually, we've only noticed the change in their messaging and their notes in the last few months, Mr. Speaker, because they're finally starting to realize that their message of doom

and gloom and the sky is falling is not working. It's actually making the situation worse.

You can look at any speech by any Member from government opposite and you can see the negativity that was entailed in all of their speeches for the first two years. You will also see that it was Members on this side, including myself, who stood up for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, who stood up and said we believe in you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PERRY: I think it works, because they're changing their message, Mr. Speaker, and they're finally talking about the positive things. That has had a positive impact, and I'm glad to hear you finally talk about the wonderful things, the wonderful potential and the wonderful people in Newfoundland and Labrador, that we here in this House of Assembly are put in place to try and do what we can to support their efforts to make Newfoundland and Labrador a place that we can live in, we can encourage our children to live in and that will be a place that offers a decent quality of life.

Over the last two years a lot of people I know have moved. They've left Newfoundland and Labrador because they can't afford to live here anymore. The tax burden is so high that they sized it all up and said if I'm going to have a decent future for myself where I'm able to afford a decent quality of living, than perhaps this is not the place for me.

I will say, Mr. Speaker, 2019 is only a year away, don't give up on Newfoundland and Labrador yet. We, the people, will decide the fate of this Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and we the people are the strength and fabric that will ensure this province continues to thrive.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to return back to speaking to some elements of the budget but, again, in terms of relevance, people will notice – anyone who's watching – relevance won't be called during a budget debate because the budget debate is actually what we call a money bill. For a money bill, any Member of the House of Assembly can get up and speak about anything. We can talk about issues in our district. We can

talk about issues in departments. We can talk about issues that affect us as politicians. We can talk about how the House of Assembly itself works. We can talk about anything we wish during a money bill that we feel is of importance to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

To that end, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a few minutes for the people of Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune and talk about the new school which has been promised for the people of Bay d'Espoir. I will say now, Members opposite can't bully me into voting for the budget because I have to vote for the budget as a whole. I will say that the residents of Bay d'Espoir, although we are absolutely thrilled, we are thrilled that we're finally getting a new school which is long overdue – we should have had one 20 years ago to be honest because –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MS. PERRY: We should have had a new school but the Liberal government back in 2001 put us back into a 60-year-old building, but that's okay, we're going to get our new school now which is good. Too bad it had to come by way of tragedy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. PERRY: It's very unfortunate that it had to come by way of tragedy, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The noise level in the House is too high. I'd ask Members to show some restraint to allow the Member to be heard.

Thank you.

MS. PERRY: Thank you for the protection, Mr. Speaker.

We certainly need a lot more of that in here.

I will say that we are delighted with the new school, and we do thank the Premier and the ministers for their support in a new school; however, no one was happy on budget day.

Everyone was devastated because it's going to take four years. Our children have no lab. How would you feel if you had a child in grade nine that you know has to go to university in three years and will never see inside of a lab, and your child wants to be a pharmacist? It's unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

But we're working on some solutions, so I do want the people of my district to know that certainly we are working with government to try and at least address the problem of the lack of science lab. We also don't have a computer lab, Mr. Speaker. We don't have a cafeteria.

The children are in a building that my father, who would be 100 if he were still alive, was the principal of back in the '60s, and that's when it was built. And that's the building they're in today.

So we do look forward to having a new school, but given that we lost our school by tragedy, everyone's very upset that it's taking actually five years. Because we've been a whole year waiting to find out what's going to happen with our school, and now we have to wait four years before it's built.

That is a stressful situation for parents, and they do expect me as their Member, and it is my responsibility as their Member to bring forward their concerns and ask that government do everything within its means to make sure this process can be expedited so that our children can be back into a decent school, a state-of-the-art school, one better than we've ever had before in the Bay d'Espoir area.

So we are looking forward to that, Mr. Speaker. But just for purposes of explaining to people how this works and why it's four years – and certainly the Minister of Education or the Minister of Transportation, if there's anything I explain inaccurately can get up and clarify how the process works.

From my understanding, the reason why it takes four years to build a new school is because in the first year there's a process – and anyone can log on to the Newfoundland and Labrador school district website and there's a manual there that talks about the process that has to be followed when there's a new school. That

process, Mr. Speaker, is in place because schools are built with taxpayers' money and it is a responsibility of government to ensure that it's done properly and in the best interests of the people. So that manual is in place and the school board will follow that manual.

The first process takes about a year or so, and a contract tender gets issued for a consultant to do the design work, Mr. Speaker. Throughout that process, the school council and the parents and the teachers in the community will be involved in talking about what they'd like to see in their school.

Mr. Speaker, I'm quite proud to say that the children of Bay d'Espoir are very incredibly talented. They're talented musically; they're talented drama-wise. In fact, we had a young girl, her name is Miranda Caley, who actually wrote the drama play that our drama class participated in this year. So, fantastic talent in the region. We would like to have a music room and a drama room, and a science room and a computer room in our new school. Those are the things that will happen during the consultation phase.

That process takes about a year or so. Then, once the design is done, that design has to go to tender for the build. From what I told, that build process can take anywhere from 24 to 36 months. So, hopefully, four years is the long end of the time frame and possibly, you never know, we might see it come on quicker. I certainly provide the guarantee to my constituents that at every opportunity I will encourage government to move as expeditiously as possible so our children can get the education that they deserve, along with each and every other Newfoundlander and Labradorian.

I'm going to talk a little bit now about aquaculture. Someone was asking me to talk about aquaculture. I see aquaculture as one of the bright lights of our potential for the future in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PERRY: I live in a part of the province that face some very hard times.

AN HON. MEMBER: We built it.

MS. PERRY: Yes, it was indeed the Progressive Conservative government that built the Newfoundland and Labrador aquaculture industry. It's actually the reason I ran for politics. I worked with the Community Economic Development Regional Board and we were so frustrated. We did four marine infrastructure studies before we finally got some movement on wharf infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, and it was a perpetual loop. Working in the economic development field, I felt that I needed to be on the inside of government to really make a difference in the understanding of the urgency of the investment.

What happened? We created the Loan Guarantee Program, Mr. Speaker. We invested in the aquaculture biosecurity wharfs. We invested in companies that created 1,000 jobs in rural Newfoundland and Labrador – 1,000 meaningful jobs, at that, where people – there's a community in my region where the majority of residents lived on income support prior to aquaculture.

With the advent of aquaculture, came wealth and prosperity unlike anything they've ever seen before. They have new cars. They have new homes. Their children are being able to go off to post-secondary education where they didn't have that opportunity before. So the difference aquaculture makes cannot be understated.

That being said of course, Mr. Speaker, it's still an industry that's in the growth stage. I know in my region alone there's still a need for tens of millions of dollars of investment to ensure that the industry is on stable footing, and to ensure that we have maximum employment in our plants.

To say that it's all good and there are no struggles would be inaccurate, Mr. Speaker, because there are struggles. Struggles do continue. It is a farming industry and, like any farming industry, there are challenges from time to time. At present, we're facing a problem of shortage of work in one of our plants that used to have work for 52 weeks a year.

These are challenges that we will encounter from time to time, and we certainly expect continued investment from government to ensure that the 2,000 jobs that are in place now

are protected and remain in place as we continue to grow the industry, Mr. Speaker.

I want to talk a little bit in terms of moving back to the budget as well. We spoke in Question Period this week, and we're going to be speaking this afternoon, about the changes that are coming with respect to the legalization of marijuana. In our to and fro of Question Period and our debate, we were raising the point that the Liberal government has given \$40 million to Canopy Growth. Now, they said well, we're not giving \$40 million; we're giving a tax credit. Okay, but a tax credit is money lost to the Treasury. So a \$40 million investment is a \$40 million investment either way.

It was interesting to note that the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation, when he got up and spoke about the wonderful impact of tourism and *Maudie*, he said the province was earning \$400,000 in taxes from *Maudie*. That's \$400,000 in revenue. It's \$40 million in revenue we're going to lose from Canopy Growth and we never even gave Newfoundland companies an opportunity to bid. We never gave Newfoundland and Labrador entrepreneurs the opportunity to become leaders in this industry. So that is very disappointing, especially in a time –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. PERRY: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, for your protection.

It's incredibly disappointing in a time where we need every job that we can get, and we need every entrepreneur that we can get. Because, at the end of the day, it's not government who create jobs. Government creates the environment to support the entrepreneurs, the risk takers, the people who are out there willing to risk everything to start a business and employ people, Mr. Speaker. They are the people who deserve our support each and every day.

Our job is to support them, not to create the jobs, but to support the leaders and the trailblazers who do. We have many of them here in his hon. House, Mr. Speaker, and I'm quite proud that we

have such fabulous entrepreneurs in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I'm running out of time. I only have about five minutes or so in this speech, but I will have more opportunities, Mr. Speaker. I want to talk a little bit, in my last five minutes, about the change that's starting to happen in the world with respect to women, and respect from women. I will say that I was incredibly pleased to be a part of the private Member's motion that was moved last week by the Member for Windsor Lake as we endeavour, as women who are few in number in politics overall, to change the culture that permeates politics.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be honest with you. As I started the speech, I could even feel my heart beating a little bit because it's tough, tough world, politics; it's even tougher for women. Politics is what it is and has been the way it is for quite some time. I came into politics in 2007 when the Green report was released, so I feel I was able to join politics at a time when there was more attention being paid to obeying the rules. I felt really good about that, Mr. Speaker.

But when it comes to issues like women, when it comes to issues like decorum, bullying and vindictiveness, they still exist in politics. For us as women to come forward and fight it, it is not easy. What holds us back, probably what holds men back too – I'm not saying it's just women who get bullied; I'm sure men do as well. But what holds us back is often fear, fear of repercussions, repercussions to yourself as a politician, repercussions to your constituents because you dared challenge someone who did something that you felt was wrong.

I think we all have a responsibility in this hon. House to raise that bar, to say no more – no more, None of us are going to tolerate it, not women, not men. It's unacceptable. If you have a male colleague that you see bullying a female colleague, you should stand up to that male colleague. Each and every one of us has that responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I was proud to stand with the women of this House and all the men as well who supported us last week as we endeavoured to address the issue of bullying. I will say again that I hope we go further than just a policy

change. I hope we go into legislation. I hope that we can find a way to hold the perpetrators of bullying accountable.

It's a struggle for us. We can't figure out how to do it without repercussions. We can't figure it out. We need the support of legislation. We need people as individuals to say we're not going to take it. We're going to support the person who says there's an issue and we're going to put a stop to the culture that has existed in politics of all stripes, of all colours, for all time, I would say, Mr. Speaker. Some are worse than others. I'm sure if politicians across this fine country ever really opened up about some of their experiences, the public would be probably shocked.

The day I hope will come when we don't ever have to talk about this again because it doesn't exist anymore. Mr. Speaker, it does still exist. It's not going to stop if we push it under the rug. It can't be pushed under the rug.

I'm going to finish my first budget speech, which kind of talked a little bit about everything. In the next two, I'm sure I'm going to have a whole lot more heckling because I'll probably be talking more about the budget itself and how this government has really let the people of Newfoundland and Labrador down. They promised them a better tomorrow and they delivered a nightmare to us for the last two years.

Certainly all of us on this side of the House, in our job, as Opposition, will stand up and raise issues that are of concern to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I thank the people of Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune for the opportunity to once again stand here in this House and represent them. I promise I will continue to try and do my very best to represent your interests and I also make this pledge to try and do what I can to support women in this province who enter politics, any colour, any stripe, we're all together in this. We want the House of Assembly, we want politics in general, the House of Commons, everywhere in this country, to be a place that's good for men and women to work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

It's a privilege to rise here this morning and give some comments about *Budget 2018* and some departmental issues and things that we're doing as a government as a result of our budget.

To start, Mr. Speaker, I want to reflect on Volunteer Week and some activities in my district. Just last night, myself, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment and MHA for Fogo Island - Cape Freels actually attended an event in Victoria in my district to help celebrate Volunteer Week.

Mr. Speaker, one part of that event last night – and I would remiss not to reflect on it – is a vigil that was held during the event for Parker Tobin. Parker's grandfather is from Victoria in my district and his grandmother is from Heart's Content in my district. It was very fitting last night that they started the event with a moment of silence and a reflection on the tragedy last week in Humboldt, Saskatchewan. It really shows the ties that many people in our province have with people who have moved away from the province with the fact of one of his grandparents being from Victoria and the other being from Heart's Content and our sincere condolences to the family.

Mr. Speaker, just last week as well – and it was referenced here in the House earlier this week – the Minister of Natural Resources did a Member's statement and reflected on the life of Mr. Al Chislett. Mr. Al Chislett is actually a former resident, born and bred in my hometown of Heart's Delight-Islington. He also made a very valuable contribution to this province with his work around Voisey's Bay and many other projects.

Mr. Speaker, also last night when we were in Victoria, the fire department took an opportunity to name their fire hall after their first fire chief, Mr. Vivian Hiscock. He was the first fire chief in that town back in 1975, a very fitting honour. They also took the opportunity to congratulate

and to make Ms. Effie Deering Victoria's volunteer of the year. That was a great event last night in Victoria.

To all the volunteers in our province and in my district and every district in this province: Congratulations on the great work you do. We'll continue to celebrate Volunteer Week in this province. Myself and the minister of child, youth and family services –

AN HON. MEMBER: Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MR. CROCKER: – Children, Seniors and Social Development will be in Carbonear tonight to celebrate with the local food bank and honour the volunteers in Carbonear that work and contribute to the food bank. That will be another important event in the district this week.

Just to reflect on volunteers and some of the different things that volunteers do in our province, just a few weeks ago in my hometown in a show of humanity, we seen a number of dolphins stranded in the Heart's Delight - Islington Harbour and they were pinned in by ice. What we seen was a group of volunteers from our fire department and other groups in the town come together and find a solution to get those animals or mammals out of the harbour. It just shows the extent that volunteers do in our province and some of the places they actually go.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, again, congratulations to all of our volunteers in my district and throughout the province. Enjoy the week of celebrations and take the opportunity, let somebody pat you on the back because the work you do is very important.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at my district, tourism is playing a much more increasing role year after year. Just recently, we seen the Heart's Content Cable Station be placed on the UNESCO nomination list. This would be a game changer for the Heart's Content Cable Station which celebrated its 150th anniversary back in 2016. I thank the Minister of Tourism for his commitment to this facility as we move forward with the nomination.

Mr. Speaker, we see tremendous support throughout the district, whether it's from different departments: Tourism; Children, Seniors and Social Development; Health and Community Services; Municipal Affairs.

Just recently, the Department of Health and Community Services continued its commitment to U-Turn. U-Turn is a drug addiction treatment program in Carbonear. Our government has maintained a strong commitment to U-Turn. U-Turn, as well, is based around volunteers. So no matter what sector we look at when it comes to funding through different government departments, volunteers are typically the people making out those applications. For us as MHAs, no matter what side of this House, I think it's one of the things that give us some of our best moments is when we work with volunteer organizations to get them some support, and supports they need and absolutely deserve.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I'll take some more time in my next remarks about budget to talk about my district but, right now, I sort of want to move on and change the channel and talk some more of departmental things and government.

The previous speaker made some comments around a piece of infrastructure that we announced. We announced a new school for Bay d'Espoir in *Budget 2018*. She referenced giving up and a Liberal government that cancelled that school in 2001. Mr. Speaker, what she was remiss to talk about was the government from 2003 to 2015, who had 12 years – her government had 12 years to replace that school in Bay d'Espoir and they failed to do so.

Mr. Speaker, you look at other schools in our province. They talked about building a school in Coley's Point for year after year after year and it dragged on. What's the difference? This government, we're going to build that school in Coley's Point.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROCKER: We're actually right now working with the architect, working with the designers to get the final tender package ready. We are preparing to go to tender early this fall with a tender for Coley's Point, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROCKER: It's interesting when you think back to the previous administration. They talked about Coley's Point, and there are lots of other Coley's Points. There's Corner Brook hospital. There's all this infrastructure that they talked about and talked about and talked about, but when we came to government what we found was what they did was talk about it. There were no tender documents. There was no consulting. There was no work done on these projects, Mr. Speaker.

For the Member opposite to say it's going to take us four years to build a school, the reality is we just can't go and pick a school off the shelf; it has to be built to fit those needs that she outlined. That's fair. There are needs. We want to make sure that we're building a school to fit the needs of those children. It's important no matter what part of the province you are to ensure education for our children, but we're committed to doing that. Yes, it will take some time to build it but, Mr. Speaker, again, the previous administration had 12 years to build it and they chose not to.

Mr. Speaker, in *Budget 2018* we announced a \$619 million infrastructure plan for this year. That infrastructure includes further work on the Corner Brook long-term care facility. We're actually getting ready to go to the RFP stage for the Corner Brook acute care facility. As a commitment, I think, of what we've done as a government in tough economic times, we've taken an infrastructure plan and we've planned.

Just a couple of weeks ago, we were able to go and announce a new mental health and addictions facility. I know the Minister of Health this morning talked about the recommendations coming out of the All-Party Committee on Mental Health. I guess for once we took a report and we didn't put it on the shelf, we put the report into action. That's something we've committed to doing in tough fiscal times, but we realize that this infrastructure is needed for our province.

If you look, Mr. Speaker, in Central Newfoundland, the Green Bay Health care centre in Springdale; we have a commitment to long-term care in Grand Falls-Windsor and in

Gander. Those are commitments that we haven't seen before.

I'll bring it a little bit closer to home again and speak of my own district. In *Budget 2018* we announced over \$3 million to start the construction and the redevelopment of the third floor of the Carbonear Hospital for a new ambulatory care unit, one that's been talked about for a long time but, again, Mr. Speaker, we're going to deliver on it.

Just last fall, we were at Private Josiah Squibb long-term care facility in Carbonear to announce – along with the Minister of Health and my colleague from Harbour Grace - Port de Grave – the opening of 28 more beds in the Carbonear long-term care facility. This facility not only benefits the people in my district, the people in the District of Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, the District of Harbour Main, the District of Placentia - St. Mary's. This is important infrastructure, and we see this infrastructure happening all over the province, and rightfully so, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, and I alluded to this earlier, but in this year's infrastructure plan we have school construction and planning starting in Paradise, Coley's Point; work being completed in Mobile this year, and Baie d'Espoir. We've also committed close to \$16 million for school maintenance to schools throughout the province. This has all been very important expenditures.

Mr. Speaker, the other infrastructure committee that I think this government is proud of, and so we should be proud of, is our transportation infrastructure. Do we have challenges in our roads in this province? We absolutely do.

One thing our Premier said long before he was Premier is that when it comes to road construction and paving in this province, when we form government we were going to do it with a plan. That's how we've changed how we do road construction in this province, is we're doing it with a plan. This is the second year of our five-year Roads Plan. We'll spend some-\$77 million this year in road infrastructure in our province on very important projects.

I realize everybody in this House has important road infrastructure projects in their districts, but,

Mr. Speaker, this is a way we look at it now that's criteria based. What we do – and I guess for people who haven't really looked at our Roads Plan. What we do is our local engineers feed into our regional engineers, who then feed into some of our senior engineers and they make the determination of where our Roads Plan goes, along with consultation from the general public. Mr. Speaker, there's tremendous infrastructure work happening on our roads and we're very proud of it.

To come back to the infrastructure needs and the infrastructure challenges in our province, the Leader of the NDP yesterday afternoon in her speech talked about there was nothing concrete in this budget. Mr. Speaker, I can assure you there was lots of concrete in this budget – tons and tons and tons of concrete in this budget. We're building hospitals, we're building schools, we're building bridges and we're building roads. So I can assure you the concrete industry in this province is alive and well.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss not to talk about, in my district, the effects of the fishery and the effect that has on not only my district but the entire province. If you look at my district, in Bay de Verde we have the world's largest snow crab plant. In Old Perlican, we have Royal Greenland. They're diversifying to more species. If you look in Winterton, we have Green Seafoods. It's a plant that actually, I think, could be a model for many processing operations in our province, employing between 70 and 80 people for 37- or 40-plus weeks a year and it's very diversified with species that once weren't seen as valuable –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Order, please!

MR. CROCKER: – but what happened, Mr. Speaker, is they diversified their product lines and it has been very, very, very successful.

Mr. Speaker, as my time starts to wind down, I do want to address as well some of the comments that would come from the Members opposite when they talk about fiscal planning and where we are in fiscal planning. There's one thing I've referenced I think almost every time I've spoken to a budget in this House over the

last four years, I guess. Yes, this is my fourth budget as being a Member of this House.

In 2015, the previous administration charted the course based on a \$2.7 billion deficit. That wasn't sustainable. There's nobody – and you can still find it, Mr. Speaker. If there's people out there today that are watching these proceedings, you can still go on government's website and find *Budget 2015: Balancing Choices for a Promising Future*. That document was built on a \$2.7 billion deficit.

Just think about it, when we came to power in December of 2015, we were faced with a \$2.7 billion deficit that was not sustainable. We had to take corrective measures. And yes, those corrective measures were tough and we realize that. It's not something that anybody would ever want to do as a government, but we had to set the course straight. We had to get back to that concrete; we had to put the province back on a solid foundation.

Mr. Speaker, the previous administration gets up and talks about out-migration. Well, the reality is that the previous speaker said that this mass exodus – it's false, absolutely, categorically false. My seatmate, the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, can share with you the numbers.

From 2012-2016, we had about 60 more people leave in 2016 than we did in 2012 when oil was \$100 a barrel or \$120 a barrel, Mr. Speaker. So they never fail and mix the numbers with the facts. Because if they wanted to talk about real numbers, they'd talk about the choices they made in 2015 when they issued this document. You know, when they issued this document in 2015 I can remember – I was a Member of the House – the former Finance minister standing in his place and saying I'm going to go out and knock on doors and this is going to be my campaign literature. That's what he said. The Finance minister of the day said this was going to be his campaign literature. Well, we all know where that went. He was Finance minister of the day and he moved on. He knew what he was leaving for us.

The Member for Mount Pearl North got up earlier this morning and actually said he saw it coming. He did. He stood in his place this

morning and he saw it coming. He knew; he saw it coming. And he's agreeing with me over there now, Mr. Speaker. He stood in his place this morning and said he saw it coming.

Well, unfortunately what you should have done was reached out your colleagues and told them about it, because then they might have seen it coming. Because I tell you, based on this document, they didn't see it coming. What they saw for this year, where we've budgeted oil at \$63 a barrel, they budgeted at \$80.

So the Member for Mount Pearl North, I wish he would have been around in 2014-2015 because he saw it coming. But, Mr. Speaker, as I can see, he was one of the only ones over there that saw it coming. The rest didn't see it coming. Again –

AN HON. MEMBER: They did not want to see it coming.

MR. CROCKER: Or I guess, yes, that could be the point actually; they didn't want to see it coming. The Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune said she was elected in 2007. I think that's eight years from 2007 to 2015. Eight years to build a school. They had eight years to build that new school back in 2007.

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

MS. PERRY: Point of order, Mr. Speaker, and number 49.

The Member is stating something that doesn't even make sense. Our school wasn't even on the list in 2015. Our school burnt in 2017. Stop misleading the public.

MR. SPEAKER: I'd like to still continue to hear from the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune. Please complete your remarks.

MS. PERRY: I think that's misleading the public and it's unfair, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, firstly, this would be what you would normally term a disagreement amongst Members, but in making

your point of order, the Member opposite used unparliamentary language to describe the remarks and said that the Member is misleading the public.

So I would ask that that Member withdraw her remarks and apologize and then you can make a decision on the original point of order.

Thank you.

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

MS. PERRY: I withdraw my comments, Mr. Speaker, and I can assure the people that if we were in government, that school would have been built by now.

MR. SPEAKER: I would ask that the Member make sure that is an unequivocal withdrawal, please.

MS. PERRY: I withdraw my remarks, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

There is no point of order. This is a matter of disagreement between Members.

Please continue.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I see through this; it consumed the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker. In the Member's previous comments, she clearly said that the previous Liberal government took the school off the books in 2001. They had 12 years to build a school. That failed the people of Bay d'Espoir. They failed them (inaudible) –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROCKER: No more than the failed the people of Coley's Point. They failed, Mr. Speaker. She failed; eight years in government, no new school. This government will build a new school.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Member for Conception Bay South, please, to continue the debate.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It was a lot more pleasant where I just left than where I am right now, but I'll adjust I'm sure. It's part of where we operate.

Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to get up and speak on –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. PETTEN: It's a pleasure to get up to speak on the budget, a sub-amendment I believe we're speaking on. It's always good to get up and speak any time. As in the budget debate, we can speak about anything we like, really, but I guess everything we speak about in our districts ties back to the budget, ties back to the financial situation of the province. Every decision government makes obviously affects our district, affects each and every one of our lives, which we've seen over the last several years, since 2015, the 2016 budget.

I hear Members opposite – I know I heard the Minister of AES yesterday say that 2016 was a tough year. It was tough and they didn't like the decisions they had to make. That's fair game. It's good to see them acknowledge that, but I don't know if there's anyone coming in and forgiving. There's not a lot of forgiveness out there. People will acknowledge that 2016 –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. PETTEN: People will acknowledge the 2016 budget was tough, no doubt, but I still don't see much change, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I still don't see a lot of change. We have an extension of the 2016 budget that really goes into 2017, now we're into 2018. You could not bear another budget like we had back then to go on. The province, the economy, the people couldn't sustain another budget of that nature so it stayed the course.

I believe the Premier had made a reference to the budget when it was upcoming: it's going to be pretty well a non-event, it's staying the course and steady as she goes, but there's no pullback from 2016, it's a continuation. People just grow accustomed; it becomes the white noise or whatever you want to call it. People acknowledge – they don't, they keep driving past it. People don't pay attention to stuff. It's like the 2016 –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: I will not tolerate any further interruptions.

Final warning.

Proceed.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's strange; I sit here most times and I'll be the first to say I make my scattered comments, I don't deny that. But for the most part, when Members up opposite speak; you try to be a bit respectful. I'm sure that for the rest of my time here I'm expecting I'll get that.

To go back to the 2016 budget, it's two years later. There's no doubt, this budget is boring next to 2016. Probably 2017 was too, but that doesn't take away what's in the budget. What still remains in the budget are taxes, Mr. Speaker – taxes, taxes, taxes.

It's not me propagandizing this stuff. I challenge, and I say this with sincerity, I say this

to my own colleagues: It's worthwhile to go to the Tim Hortons, to the McDonalds and to the coffee shops. There's a lot of interesting commentary that comes from that. These people are on the streets. They're retirees. They're educated people. They watch the news. They follow the news. They shop. They buy gas. They buy groceries. They talk to people. They are the people you have to listen to.

I can get in my bubble in the political world, we all can in here. It seems like we shelter ourselves from reality. If you go in to those places and you talk to those people – and I challenge any Member or welcome any Member to come with me and have a conversation with a lot of these people. It's very enlightening.

They're not always complimentary of this side either, Mr. Speaker. You got to take your knocks with that. I've stood there and took knocks because of what the PCs did, but I respect what they say because me, and I'm sure others in this House agree, if want to open up your mind and listen, you can learn. I actually listen to them and take advice from them. I'm not afraid. I've never been one to not take advice. That's my nature. I don't know everything and never will, I never profess to, but I'll tell you what, I'll always listen to rational arguments, whether I agree with them or not I listen.

When I say that, the people in this province are still struggling. Families are still struggling, Mr. Speaker. The gas tax is down to four cents but gas is still at a really high, high rate. It's still an extra four cents over. Gas is going up again tomorrow, I think. It's not going to break the bank. It's not going to make a huge difference, but psychologically it may help people.

Insurance tax; we stood in this House and debated a private Member's motion for the elimination of insurance tax. I've said it before and I don't mind saying it again. Me personally – and I'm not into the high echelon, I'm not a multi-millionaire or nothing – I pay \$1,100 extra a year because of the insurance tax. I got two daughters that drive, you have a home, you have your own vehicle, your wife's vehicle. That's just me. I'm one person in this province who pays that. Forget about the Liberal, PC, NDP, independent thing here, look at us as a group.

Others around this floor and on the opposite, they're paying the same thing.

You do your income tax; now, my background is accounting. I am an accountant by trade, so I do taxes. I don't get into the forms, Mr. Speaker, I do it, I cheat. I got my own program. That's something I do at home. I've done it for years.

I talked to someone yesterday; they actually do the form process. With the form process, they have to go down the line and find their income and match it up. When they do the forms they realize, I got to pay an \$800 levy. That hurts. When you see it on paper it hurts.

Now when I do taxes my way, like I said, us people who supposedly know what we're doing, we kind of cheat. We don't really look at that until you have to go into the forms, but when you're looking at the paper copy, you pick it up and you go down the line, you have to pay \$800. It's tearing the scab off the 2016 budget over and over and over, and that's what everyone is telling me. I can see that.

To say and to get up in this House, as the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills did yesterday, and: Oh, but we had to make tough decisions. We're sorry now. Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? People are not forgiving them. That's the reality. You'll never be forgiven for taxing the economy into the state it's in right now. I don't know if there are Members opposite who can argue with that point. It's obvious, all you have to do is go out on the street and talk to people.

As we get talking about budgetary things and whatnot, and I hear some of the antics going on. Like the Minister of Transportation was just up there then and he was on his soapbox about the Bay d'Espoir Academy and why we never done this, we never done that. The school burnt down, Mr. Speaker. The school burnt down. It was a very serious event. Criminal charges arose from that. The school burnt down. You have \$13 million in the budget for it.

My colleague from Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, rightfully so, representing her area: When are we getting our new school? The people want a new school. Forget that she's the Tory Member for out there, she wants a new school.

She should do it. No matter what Member, that's our job. Pointing fingers and blaming – you're asking questions.

You're doing your job as a Member, Mr. Speaker, to advocate for this stuff, but the school burnt down and she should stand up and speak up for her people. Whether you get that or not, you'll never go wrong by speaking for the people you represent – never. That's what you're put here for, Mr. Speaker. I continuously say that every time I get up, that's what we're here for and that's what we should all continue and strive to do. That's our job as elected officials.

On this note, again, as I say, of budgets, the five-year Roads Plan is something that I continually muse about, I talk about. The minister in Estimates the other day, we had a little bit of a – during Estimates, a back and forth on the issue. I'm the first to say, and I've said this publicly and I'll say it again. I support a five-year Roads Plan. I've said that here in this House and I'll continue to say it. The minister is well aware and the former minister is well aware that I never did oppose the five-year Roads Plan. It gives more certainty to contractors. Overall, everyone was very happy and seemed to be happy with that announcement.

There's one part of that announcement, part of that program that I struggle with personally. It's taking the politics out of paving. In theory, that sounds great. It does, it really does. If you're a person there thinking, great, the politics is coming out of paving. It doesn't matter what road, what district your roads fall in, you'll get paving based on the scores and the – your five-year Roads Plan is based on scoring. It's not about politics, it's based on scoring.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, the minister pointed out to me in Estimates, they don't have scores on the 10,000 kilometres. They don't have the scores on those 10,000. They have scores – people go out and assess roads. They pick roads in the area, basically, and then they assess them. They score them and they go on the list.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know there was a lot of criticism by the former minister that the former administration and the former previous Liberal administrations always just did it by politics.

They went out: this road got to be done, that road got to be done, this road got to be done.

Well, when they drove those roads day after day in their districts and realized these roads are in bad shape and their constituents were calling them about it, they would reference this road should be paved. But guess who'd go out and do the scoring then, Mr. Speaker? It would be an engineer. As the minister has so rightly pointed out, engineers did it – after you referenced to them that that road needed to be done.

We have 10,000 kilometres of road, a lot of Transportation and Works staff, who are great by the way, don't get the opportunity to travel those roads to see what really needs to be done in a lot of our areas, especially in a lot of rural areas because it's so much to look at. But if you have people out reporting and complaining and coming to their Members and advocating for it, you can call it politics in or out of paving, but the bottom line is the roads were still done on a needs basis.

No doubt, there may have been some that probably could have been skipped, no problem, but my point is you got to pick a case here now where you're taking the politics out of paving. And I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I don't really get it.

I can tell you – I'll use a road in my own district and the minister can argue this with me and we'd debate it, as an example. My colleague from Ferryland out there, he's arguing constantly on the roads. I have other colleagues here: Cape St. Francis got issues, Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune. We all have issues in our districts. That's normal. That won't go away, Mr. Speaker.

I'll just reference Route 60. I can give you numerous emails, times I've spoken publicly, questions I've asked here in the House: Where does Route 60 land on the list? Mr. Speaker, in all sincerity and all due respect to the minister, I don't think that's a hard question.

Route 60 is the fifth busiest –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. PETTEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd wish he'd answer those questions in Question Period

instead of here trying to heckle me now in my time up on the budget. It's so sad. This is really terrible.

That is the fifth busiest road in the province – 20,000 vehicles per day. The minister will tell us all the time: It's a local road and the town should take this over. We got Peacekeepers Way, Route 1, and that's our responsibility, Route 2.

Fine, go talk to the town. There are a lot of repairs got to be done to that road for anybody who's taking over the road. This conversation has gone on forever and we are making strides towards fixing it. But I'll remind the minister of one thing right now, as we speak here right now, Route 60 is a provincial road. It's under the province's responsibility.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. PETTEN: Yes, and when he fixes that overnight, he can fix a lot of other things, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm asking: Why can't I get the scores for Route 60? Why can't I get the scores? I'll continue on that challenge, Mr. Speaker, because I think it's a fair question. Why can't I get the scores for Route 60?

If you have the fifth busiest road in the province, the most travelled road that really has a depot – the Foxtrap depot is in the district, these people travel this road every day, why can't engineers assess that road? What are the scores for Route 60, Mr. Speaker?

What about Witless Bay Line? What's the scores for that? Why don't he come and tell us – why don't he go and fix Mutton Bay Bridge? That was supposed to be done three years ago, now it's almost falling out into the river, and he's over there heckling and telling me everything he has figured out.

I'm asking a simple question: What are the scores for those roads? If you're going to say the former minister heralded it on the five-year roads plan; we are taking the politics about of paving; we have a comprehensive roads list; no more will you be at that; this is the way it's going to be; we have a list – no one complained about that, Mr. Speaker.

I stood up in this House – you can look back in *Hansard*, you can check – I complimented the government and the minister when they came out with the Roads Plan, but I don't compliment them on saying one thing and doing another. I don't think they took the politics out of paving. It may appear that way. I do not think they took the politics out of paving.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PETTEN: Sorry, Minister. When you get an opportunity in Question Period one of these days, you might provide the House with some decent answers.

Right now I have a few minutes left and I'll speak. You can get up whenever you want and rebut what I have to say but I have a few minutes left there to speak.

AN HON. MEMBER: Maybe he didn't score the road.

MR. PETTEN: Yeah, I don't think the road has been scored because if you don't take the politics out of paving, you go red, blue, orange, red, blue. That's the way it's done. We were criticized for that. At least they can be a bit genuine –

AN HON. MEMBER: That's politics.

MR. PETTEN: That's politics. So the politics is in the paving, Mr. Speaker.

The minister just confirmed for the House politics is still in our paving. Thank you very much, you finally assured – Minister, you finally told me.

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

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 49. The Member opposite just referenced that the minister said. I said I did not open my mouth.

The Member should start listening. At no point, Mr. Speaker, did I utter what the Member just stated that I spoke. I did not. It may have been a Member on this side of the House, but I can assure the Member opposite that I did not say

what he has just said I said, absolutely, unequivocally and I expect an apology.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Mr. Speaker, I don't know if cameras don't catch all this at home. Right now, I think I'm on camera. He has not stopped, in the 15 minutes I've been on my feet, heckling me.

I'll tell the residents of Conception Bay South and the town council: He just said with a stroke of a pen he can put Route 60 with the town. He could do it. He said that, Mr. Speaker, not me. I said about the politics in paving. He said that's politics.

MR. CROCKER: Point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Folks, I would suggest that this is a disagreement between honorary Members. I would say that it's not a point of order. I'll allow the Member to please continue his remarks.

I've asked the Member for Conception Bay South to please continue his remarks.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll move on now to a couple of other things that's very important to me. In my last few minutes I want to go to carbon pricing.

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

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to speak to a new point of order, Mr. Speaker, under section 49; the Member got up again and referenced comments back and forth across this House. He stands up today and talks information about meet with the town – we've met with the Town of CBS recently as last week.

MR. SPEAKER: Please get to your point.

MR. CROCKER: It's unfortunate that he wants to get up and continue to play politics, Mr. Speaker, with this. We're willing to work with the Town of CBS.

MR. SPEAKER: There is no point of order, please.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I'd ask the Member for Conception Bay South, please continue his remarks.

This is a debate, please continue.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunately more time's gone, but I got a couple of minutes left and I want to talk about carbon pricing.

We stand up in the House here day after day after day and people might say what are you getting on with again, or some people may not be even attuned. I know a lot of Members opposite are not clued in to carbon pricing. But it's not only them, Mr. Speaker, a lot of people in this province aren't. When I referenced tonight the initial comments about taxes people got to realize, that's another tax. Either way you cut it, it's another tax.

I guess one of the good examples, it was only recently, it was there last week – during the Easter break, actually, I was meeting someone up in my district and this other guy came in. It was a very knowledgeable business guy and he was there talking, referencing about this and that, basically day-to-day stuff. He mentioned about carbon pricing, carbon tax. And he referenced it to the big industries.

I said – I'll use his first name – Paul, just a second there now. It's not just the big industries; it's every single one of us, every resident in this province will have to pay some form or another of an extra cost on your fuel, on your home heating fuel. I go back to last year. In Alberta, the crematorium had a line item and the carbon tax was on the cremation. There was a lot of uproar over it. It was changed. It was amalgamated in – this is a true story, so this is not concocted by no stretch; I would never do that on something like that. But that just shows you how much this affects the general public. I've talked to people in Alberta, actually. I've talked to residents of Alberta living with the

carbon pricing. Some have adjusted, some haven't.

That's no different than here, Mr. Speaker. Three hundred taxes, there are people in this province that had kind of a little bump in the road and they've moved on, they can bear the burden, but it's another tax. And I just started off by saying families are struggling. This will affect the food we buy in the stores, to the gas we buy, to our clothing. Everything that crosses the Gulf will be affected by this. Municipalities will have increased costs with their operations. It's right across the board.

The Minister of Transportation, in Estimates, we had talked about his department will be affected more by carbon tax than most any other government department, based on the operations of that department. The vehicle fleets and the buildings and you name it.

So we keep asking these questions. We don't ask them to get on the evening news. I could care less about that. I feel that as a critic for Environment it's our job, as any of us who have critic roles here, to bring these issues out because they're important to the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. They are real issues.

There was a time probably a year or so ago we used to get great answers on questions, on carbon pricing. It was a former minister at the time and I thought his answers were phenomenal. I give full marks to the former minister because I thought –

AN HON. MEMBER: You want him back.

MR. PETTEN: Yeah, we wouldn't mind having him back.

I thought he was great in his responses. As a critic, sometimes you get up and you try to get a bit of fire back and forth. Actually, he was very level in his response. His response was so good that it took all the steam out of me as the critic. I couldn't really come back with anything. When the man answered my question, I said okay very good and move on to the next.

I'll have other times to speak, as the time winds down, but carbon pricing is a huge issue for this province, for the residents of this province, and

it's another tax. I just think that a lot of people still haven't really zoned in on what it's going to mean to that family of four with two children, what it's going to mean to the cost in their home. I'll chat further on that later, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

In accordance with paragraph 9(1)(b) of the Standing Orders, this House is in recess until 2 o'clock this afternoon –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, I'm sorry, so he was standing.

I am sorry; I didn't recognize the hon. Member for Stephenville - Port au Port.

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

I understand we are nearing what is normally our recess for the day. I do have to rise just for a quick moment and I will adjourn debate. I'll use my time to speak to the budget perhaps at a later date, but I take great exception to the comments from the Member for Conception Bay South. The Auditor General of this province released a report on roadwork in June of 2017 and in that report the Auditor General specifically stated that 46 per cent of the roadwork completed in the year 2015, that's an election year under the PC government, 46 per cent of the roadwork was made up from MHA priorities.

You want to talk about politics in pavement. Now, the Minister of Transportation and Works has been very clear. He has responded, and the former minister of Transportation and Works had responded to the Auditor General's remarks as well and we have been making great progress to ensure that this does not happen. To suggest that there is no rankings released, I'll have to tell the Member he can refer to the five-year roads plan where all the rankings are noted based on quality, based on safety, based on reliability and the rankings are noted there.

Just for the Member's reference, I'll refer him to page 13 of the Auditor General's report where it specifically states: "The Department was not performing roadwork based on an objective evaluation process.

"MHA priorities may have resulted in lower priority roadwork being performed ahead of higher priority roadwork."

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. FINN: Essentials projects for roadwork in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador made up 23 per cent that year, Mr. Speaker.

"Projects that were selected were not always based on the regional priority list from each of the Department's five regions. There was no clear relationship between a project's rating on the regional priority list and its placement on the Provincial listing.

"The Regional priority lists and the Provincial listings were often missing key ranking information ..." – you want to talk about rankings. They had no classification errors. "Rankings between regions may not be consistent because there was no guidance given to regions on how to allocate points within different categories, and each region was ranking projects independently."

Mr. Speaker, 46 per cent of the roadwork – that's just about half of the roadwork that was completed in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in 2015 into 2016, based on the PC government – had direct MHA interference. The Auditor General has pointed that out. I'll refer the Member to the Auditor General's report.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll adjourn debate for this afternoon.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Given the hour of the day, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, we recess until 2 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: In accordance with the Standing Orders, we will recess until 2 o'clock.

Thank you.

Recess

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

In the public gallery today, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to several guests with us. First of all, we have Ms. Anna Ross from Vanier Elementary School's Breakfast Program. Ms. Ross will be mentioned in a Member's statement this afternoon.

A very big welcome to you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Also joining us, we have Joaquin Acevedo from Rennie's River Elementary School. Joaquin won the school's Heritage Fair this year and will be competing at the regionals in Bay Roberts next month. He is accompanied by his sister, Isobella, and his mother, Carey Majid, who is the executive director of the Human Rights Commission.

Congratulations, Joaquin.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I'd also like to welcome in the public gallery a very important organization. We have representatives from the Canadian Cancer Society and the Dr. H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Care Foundation.

A very important welcome to you as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today, we will hear Members' statements from the hon. Members for the Districts of St. George's - Humber, Virginia Waters - Pleasantville, Topsail - Paradise, Exploits and Torngat Mountains.

The hon. the Member for St. George's - Humber.

MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to pay tribute to Calvin Cormier, a well-known Southwest Coast businessman and talented musician who recently passed away.

Calvin enjoyed meeting people and worked as an independent businessman for over 40 years. He and his wife, Patricia, owned and operated Crabbes River Irving in Bay St. George South. His love of wildlife and nature was evident in another of his businesses, the Codroy Valley Wildlife Museum.

He will also be remembered by many for his love of music. He performed many times at both the Codroy Valley Folk Festival and the Codroy Valley Winter Carnival, which he played at just a few months ago. He also enjoyed hunting, fishing, golfing, playing cards, cooking and cheering for the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Calvin was devoted to and very proud of his family, especially his two grandsons. At the age of only 62, he was taken all too soon and all too suddenly.

I ask all Members of this House of Assembly to join with me in sending our condolences to Calvin Cormier's family and to his many friends throughout the province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Virginia Waters - Pleasantville.

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

I rise in this hon. House during Volunteer Week to recognize the Vanier breakfast program and their superb performance under coordinator Anna Ross.

I've had the pleasure of volunteering with the Vanier breakfast program for years and never failed to be impressed by Anna's dedication to the students and her infectious positivity.

Nothing is too much work for Anna. She spends her evenings making homemade muffins and always ensures that a gluten-free option is available so no student is left out. Every morning a fantastic spread of fruit, grains and drinks are available. There is never any difficulty in finding something good to eat.

A dedicated group of over 30 volunteers including parents, students and community members rotate through the week like a well-oiled machine. The sounds of blenders can be heard many mornings offering smoothies as well as the smell of pancakes and muffins filling the hallways of the school drawing students to the program.

It is easy to see that Anna Ross is the glue that keeps the breakfast program together. There is no task too hard or time consuming. She has a positive attitude that starts each student's day with a smile and a solid breakfast. Every school deserves an Anna Ross.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Topsail - Paradise.

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

Canada's Outstanding Principals recognizes outstanding contributions of principals in publicly funded schools. It honours principals from every province and territory in Canada who demonstrate innovation, entrepreneurial spirit and who have done something truly remarkable in public education. Mr. Speaker, another principal in my area won this in 2017.

This year, Michael Tobin, who has been principal of Paradise Elementary for two years, was named as one of Canada's Most Outstanding Principals. He was recognized by The Learning Partnership, a national charity that chooses recipients via a selection committee after educators are nominated by parents, colleagues and community members.

The committee considers applicants on the basis of their exceptional contributions that positively

impact student achievement and success. The Learning Partnership singled out Michael's focus on innovation and technology-facilitated learning.

The Learning Partnership noted Mr. Tobin's focus on new, innovative learning technology as one of the reasons he was selected. Mr. Tobin said: new learning technologies like interactive whiteboards, iPads and Chromebooks are available to students in an effort to create a positive, fun learning environment. When you have students that are motivated, engaged and having fun, we get improvements in student achievements.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of this House to join me in congratulating Mr. Tobin for his outstanding contribution to the students and for achievements

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. DEAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this hon. House today to acknowledge the role played by the community of Norris Arm in response to the horrific terrorist attack against the United States on September 11, 2001. At 9:45 a.m., Eastern Time, one hour after the first passenger airplane flew into the North Tower of the World Trade Centre, both the US and Canada closed their airspace. Over 500 airplanes from around the world were ordered to return to their airports of origin or were diverted to airports across Canada.

The resulting landings at Gander saw the homes and hearts of residents of Appleton, Gander, Gambo, Glenwood, Lewisporte and Norris Arm opened up to our stranded American friends. Last year the Town of Norris Arm in the District of Exploits, along with neighbouring communities previously noted, were presented with the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award at the Newfoundland and Labrador Volunteer Hall of Fame as a testament of what was an exemplary embracing of the core values of this prestigious award being service to others.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. Members to join with me in congratulating the Town of Norris Arm, as well as the aforementioned neighbouring towns, for being shining examples of humanitarian champions.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. EDMUNDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House today to recognize Mr. Barry Sheppard and Ms. Natalie Anderson of Rigolet whose heroic efforts and quick thinking saved the lives of two people this past December.

On December 29, 2017, Barry, Natalie, and Stanley and Judy Wolfrey were on the way to their cabin in Valley's Bight when Natalie noticed that the light from the snowmobile behind her had disappeared. She quickly realized the snowmobile belonging to Stanley and Judy Wolfrey had gone through the ice. So Natalie rushed to get help from Barry.

Barry immediately returned to the sinking snowmobile where he found Judy and Stanley fighting for their lives to stay above the ice. Thanks to his quick thinking, Barry was able to get a line out and pull the two people ashore.

Both Stanley and Judy agree that if it wasn't for the efforts of Natalie and Barry, they would not have made it out of the situation alive.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members to join me in thanking Mr. Barry Sheppard and Ms. Natalie Anderson for their quick thinking and heroic efforts in what could have been a very tragic situation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest automobile insurance rates in Atlantic Canada – rates which have steadily increased over the past 13 years since the last review of the insurance industry in the province.

Last July, our government provided the Terms of Reference to the Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities to conduct public consultations, as well as two independent closed claims studies: one on the rising insurance claims costs, and a second focused on claims related to taxi operations. We have now launched the government's portion of the consultations process which will complement the review currently underway by the PUB.

Mr. Speaker, government's consultations will explore issues outside the scope of the PUB's mandate, such as the rate setting process itself. There are also opportunities for the public to share their ideas about measures to improve highway safety and accident prevention in the province.

The goal of the review is to identify opportunities to lower rates that will benefit consumers and help bring stability to the industry. Feedback will help inform potential future changes to the *Automobile Insurance Act* and the *Insurance Companies Act* in the fall of 2018.

Mr. Speaker, our survey is available on the main page of Service NL's website or can be completed online at www.EngageNL.ca. Feedback can also be shared via email at autoinsurance@gov.nl.ca, or through regular mail to Service NL. Consultations will continue until May 31, 2018.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I want to thank the minister for an advance copy of her statement and for the update on the auto

insurance. There has been a lot of discussion about insurance rates in our province and I know a lot of people are concerned about the high rates they pay. I know they are very anxious to voice their opinions and concerns on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, public opinion is a very important part of the review and government must make sure people are aware that they have an opportunity to participate in the process. I look forward to future updates on this very important issue and I hope government will listen to the people of the province and recognize that the 15 per cent on insurance should be removed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I, too, thank the minister for the advance copy of her statement. This whole thing is good news for everyone in the province but especially the people who live in the rural parts of the province. We all know we pay the highest auto insurance rates in Canada but people in rural Newfoundland and Labrador have no public transit options and have no choice but to pay high insurance rates in order to get around.

I hope the result of this work will be a relief from the rates the motoring public has had to bear for the last decade.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Health and Community Services.

MR. HAGGIE: Thank you.

Cancer is a disease that knows no boundaries. Its impacts are multiple and far-reaching, affecting people of all ages.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize April as Cancer Awareness Month. The provincial government recently joined with its partners to light the Confederation Building yellow.

The lighting ceremony held on April 2 highlighted the significant efforts of community groups and agencies in this province that support the many people affected by cancer every year.

Through their hard work and dedication, they are making a very real difference in the lives of so many. For this, we thank you.

April also means it is Daffodil Month. I encourage everyone to wear a daffodil pin or purchase a bunch of daffodils – a symbol of hope, strength and courage.

Through our participation in the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance, we've been able to allocate \$3.4 million for new cancer drugs in this year's budget. This reflects our government's commitment to be innovative in how it supports the health needs of residents.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members of the House of Assembly to stand with me as we work to raise awareness, support those facing this disease and find a cure.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement today. I've been looking forward to this one, knowing it would come, no doubt, in the month of April.

It's an important month to recognize April as Cancer Awareness Month. I, too, want to join with the minister to acknowledge some of the great work that happens here in Newfoundland and Labrador, work by organizations such as the Canadian Cancer Society and the Dr. H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Care Foundation who are represented here today, but other organizations,

such as: Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Canada, Lymphoma Canada, the motorcycle Ride for Dad, and organizations such as those who raise money to improve the quality of life for patients and families who have to deal with cancer in their lives.

We know, Mr. Speaker, every community and every family has been touched by cancer. This is a month to not only reflect on that but also to celebrate in the great efforts that are made to add to that comfort for patients and families.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister. A diagnosis of cancer can change the lives of many, the person directly affected and those who love them.

When I was diagnosed with breast cancer 19 years ago my life certainly changed. Because of organizations like the Canadian Cancer Society, cancer survivor support groups, the Bliss Murphy Centre, the brilliant health care providers who have dedicated their lives to cancer prevention, treatment and research, the families and community at large who rise to the challenge of cancer, I learned that the world is a much kinder place than I could ever have imagined.

Bravo to all those who push on in hope, strength and courage. Together we can.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, this morning I had the pleasure to join the Chief of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, Joe Boland, and the Mayor of the Town of Conception Bay South, Terry French, to announce a new Royal

Newfoundland Constabulary detachment for the Town of Conception Bay South.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. A. PARSONS: I'd also like to acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, colleagues from both sides of the House that attended this morning's announcement.

The RNC plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety and security of residents. This police agency patrols the Northeast Avalon, Corner Brook and parts of Labrador. Mr. Speaker, Conception Bay South is the second largest municipality in Newfoundland and Labrador with more than 26,000 residents and RNC officers spend a significant amount of time responding to calls in that community. Currently, the closest detachment is 26 kilometres away. This new detachment will ensure timely police response and will better serve the growing population in that area.

Mr. Speaker, public trust and community co-operation are crucial in effective law enforcement. Having dedicated resources in the Town of CBS will help further build that trust and ensure public safety. This new detachment will include an inspector, administrative staff, community services, a criminal investigation division, operational patrol services, a police service dog unit, telephone reporting centre and traffic services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. A. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, we have heard the concerns of the people of this area and we are happy to work with Chief Boland and the town to move these RNC resources where they are most needed.

I would like to thank the town council of CBS also for their hard work and their co-operation in making this initiative possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

I thank the minister, first of all, for an advance copy of his statement today. It was a pleasure for myself and the Member for Conception Bay South to attend this morning. I can tell you it was a very, very good day and a great day for the citizens, not only of Conception Bay South but also of Paradise and surrounding areas who will benefit greatly from having a permanent RNC detachment located right in the community.

Mr. Speaker, the minister mentioned the 26,000 residents that live in Conception Bay South. It is, by far, the largest town in the province, and second only to St. John's. Over 500 kilometres of road was referenced this morning. I can tell you in the 2015 election this was heard many times by my colleague from Conception Bay South; and, in 2017, municipal councillors told me they heard it predominantly in the Town of Conception Bay South when they campaigned in the municipal elections.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention my colleague specifically. He has advocated for this since he got elected in 2015; he took the ball and ran with it. The minister worked with him, and the chief referenced it today as well, but I thank him for his advocacy, I thank the government for making the decision and we thank the RNC as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the minister. Congratulations to the leadership of the Town of Conception Bay South for identifying the need for their people for more police service and successfully securing it. Congratulations to the department for listening to those concerns and acting on them. And thank you to the good people of the RNC for the considerable work it will take to get this new detachment up and running. We wish them well

in their new home, and bravo to the people of Conception Bay South.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

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

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

In Question Period on Monday, the Minister of Finance said that he's not aware of any funding directly from the federal government for cannabis. He later said that he knows that the federal government are giving \$1.9 million in training, and he said I think \$500,000 ticketing, for a total of \$2.4 million.

Minister, could you clarify the statements from Monday, please?

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

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

Again, this is certainly a very significant topic and one that's been talked about in this province, basically since the federal election when it was first promised. What I can say – and this was communicated during the Justice Estimates that occurred just before Easter – is that we are indeed going to receive funding from the federal government as it relates to the cannabis initiative.

Right now, we are still in the process of finalizing the agreements. It looks like there will be a five-year funding agreement reached with the federal government. But since that agreement has not been signed off yet, it's too early for us to say exactly what the amounts will be or how the allocations will go.

The feds have been made very much aware by all provinces, including this one, that since this is their initiative and we have to make this legislation here in this province, they're going to have to do their role and play their part.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

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

The Minister of Finance also said that revenues this year of \$5.8 million as a result of cannabis – he said the costs associated with implementation of cannabis are going to be about \$4 million, so it will be a net revenue to the province of about \$1.8 million. That's his words, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the minister to explain how this matches up with the \$2.2 million which is contained in Schedule 1 of *Budget 2018* under Cannabis Tax.

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

MR. OSBORNE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the remainder of that \$2.2 million is from NLC. That's the revenue from NLC. The remainder is the sales tax and excise tax.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

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

The budget documents actually say \$2.2 million is specifically cannabis tax. The minister said on Monday that it was \$5.8 million in revenue from cannabis tax.

I'm asking him: Can he explain the difference in those two numbers?

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

MR. OSBORNE: I don't believe I said \$5.8 million from cannabis tax. I don't accept the

Member opposite putting words in my mouth. I said the revenue would be \$5.8 million. There's money from NLC, there's money from sales tax and there's money from excise tax, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

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

On Monday, the minister indicated that he would table a list of how the \$1.9 million in training will be utilized. I ask the minister if he's able yet to provide that documentation.

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

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

As I've said earlier in Question Period, and as we discussed during the Estimates section of the budget before Easter, right now we know we are going to be receiving federal funding. It was made quite clear during this process that right now we're allocating the money to different spots under the budget headings. But we also said, depending on how this goes, the money may go to different sections. We don't exactly know, nor does any province.

At the end of the day, it's hard to talk about exactly how this is going to play out because we have not received the funding yet. We know we will receive the funding.

The main thing for people to remember here is that we will do everything within our power as a government to ensure the safety of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians when it comes to this huge policy shift.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

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

I appreciate the Minister of Justice's response here today and acknowledging that they don't know exactly how this is going to go.

My question was the Minister of Finance on Monday promised to table a list of how the training was going to be utilized. Am I to understand now that you do not know that – if I understand correctly from the Minister of Justice you do not know at this point in time how that funding will be allocated. Is that what the minister is saying?

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

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

Again, I can't recall exactly what was going to be tabled or not tabled on Monday's Question Period, but what I can say here today, and what was echoed in this House on this floor back when we did the budget Estimates, is that we will be receiving federal funding. We're finalizing those agreements.

Right now, we expect that it will be allocated to various sections, whether that would be ticketing, whether that would be courts, whether that would be law enforcement. But we do know when we come to the budget process for next year and the budget Estimates in that process, that money may change around. But during that process, we will be better able and in a better position than right now to explain exactly what is received, how it's allocated and how it is distributed.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

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

My colleague received documents from the Minister of Finance and they indicated that the total revenue from marijuana will be between \$28 million and \$40 million annually once it's fully implemented, once sales are fully implemented.

I ask the minister: Can you provide us with the analysis that reached these conclusions?

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, this is uncharted territory. We have no concrete ability at this point to tell you what the sales are going to be, but I can tell you that for 2018-2019, it's \$5.8 million; for 2019-20, we're expecting roughly \$17 million; and it grows from there by 2022-23, which is what we're forecasting out in our budget, that it's going to be somewhere between \$34 million and \$40 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

So they've reached some conclusions based on some information. So I'll ask the minister: Can he supply us with the analysis that led them to the conclusion of the numbers he just stated?

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

MR. OSBORNE: These numbers were derived by officials within the Department of Finance, Mr. Speaker. I'll certainly endeavour to get the information.

For this year, the \$5.8 million that we're projecting this year, Mr. Speaker, is one quarter of the year because we're anticipating sales in the final sales in the final quarter of this year. Obviously, there will be four quarters next year, so we would anticipate that we would have revenue in four of the quarters.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

In Estimates that were referred to by the minister that happened just before the Easter break, there was a discussion around \$500,000 in federal funding that is going to be used to assist in the additional cost of court processing, fines, administration, court processing, prosecutions, those type of things.

We heard the minister today again saying that they really don't know at this point in time. There was a lot of anticipation and appears to be guesswork gone into what's going to happen in the future.

I ask the minister: We're only a few months away from the legalization of marijuana, what assurance can you give the people of the province that policing services will be fully prepared?

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

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

Certainly, I'd be happy to have my department provide a briefing on the work that we're doing. The first thing we would tell the Opposition is that it's not three months away, it's six months away. That's the first thing we would get clear.

The second part is that we are doing everything we can in our power to be ready for this initiative that's been imposed on us by the federal government. What I can tell you is that we are far ahead of many other provinces when it comes to this. I have full confidence in our law enforcement, our Crown attorneys. When it comes to our victim services, when it comes to our ticketing, we will be ready.

I want to bring up one other point that I think is worth mentioning when we talk about the revenue. This Minister of Finance made a deal and he reached a consensus with the federal government that benefited every province in this country when he made sure that there was a cap put on this that more money would be coming back to this province.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. P. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, that's the first thing he's sure about today when it comes to marijuana because they don't seem to be sure about much of anything else over there. As a matter of fact, the Minister of Finance confirmed yesterday that the legislation he requires for the legalization of marijuana just simply isn't ready yet. It is not ready to come to the House.

The minister said just a couple of days ago this week when asked about aspects of legalization of marijuana, he said there are a lot of grey areas – was his public commentary. Now with legalization a few months away, we just learned for the first time it's six months away.

How can the minister responsible for Public Safety confirm and have faith that all of the necessary legislation, rules and education for the public will be in place before legalization actually takes place?

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

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

Obviously, it doesn't matter what I say here because I just corrected the Member opposite on the timeline for this and he said we're finding out today. This was on *The National* news weeks ago – weeks ago. So I would suggest maybe you should concentrate on your research is the first thing.

What I can tell you, on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker – the Member opposite is trying to create a panic and a fear. He reminds me of – there was a Reefer mania or *Reefer Madness* from back in the '40s.

The fact is this is going to affect every province in this country. We are going to be ready, and it's not going to be the fear and craze that he's putting out there. We're going to be ready here in this province I can guarantee him that, and that I am sure of.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I was going by the information provided by Members opposite who didn't know when it was going to be legalized, Mr. Speaker. They didn't know, and today he said six months. The first time I –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Please proceed.

I remind all Members, I only want to hear from the person identified.

Please proceed.

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

It's the first time I heard six months come from the minister. Maybe he said it before but it's certainly the first time I heard it from him. We've heard it repeatedly here today: We don't know. We're not exactly sure. We know they don't have the legal authority yet and the proper legislation. They don't know how much funding they're going to receive but the minister is sure we're going to be ready.

Don't tell me, Minister, tell the people of the province: How can you ensure that schoolyards are going to be protected? How are you going to ensure that workplaces will be protected? How are you going to ensure that there's a good way to make sure that people are safe on the highways? How are you going to make sure that our province doesn't change? Once it's out of the box, Minister, you'll never be able to put it back.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

The first thing I would say to the Member opposite is he's talking as if there's no cannabis out there in the world right now and all of a sudden there's going to be a sudden

skyrocketing rate of cannabis usage. The second thing I would say is that the Member opposite just went to an announcement on the RNC today and at the same time he's saying he doesn't have faith in them, they're not going to be ready to handle this.

One thing I would point out since the Member seems to be sadly misinformed – again, we've said it, it's been quite clear in this province and in this country when the legalization is going to be happening. We don't make that decision. It's the federal government.

The second part, I'm going to inform him: This bill is currently in the Senate. It's working its way through. Maybe you can talk to your Conservative senators about when it's going to come through.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Minister of Justice that our Leader has all the confidence in the world of the RNC. I can guarantee you that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, the funding forecast outlined in the actual Atlantic Fisheries Fund agreement states that your government was supposed to be committed to \$4 million in the fund in 2017-2018, yet we spent \$1.5 million.

Why is that, and can this fund be carried over in 2018?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

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

The question is excellent because it allows me an opportunity to highlight that the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, our harvesters, our fishing industry, has actually submitted 200-plus applications for the Atlantic Fisheries Fund. Do you know how many have been submitted within the entire Province of Nova Scotia, 22; for the entire Province of Prince Edward Island, 21; less than that in New Brunswick?

We are rising to the challenge of our expanding fishery, our new fishery, Mr. Speaker. We have a seven-year agreement. It's worth \$100 million. We will spend that money. We'll spend it well and it will be for the benefit of our fishing industry and our aquaculture industry here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that statement because that proves the full amount should have been here. The full \$400 million of the Fisheries Fund should have been here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, he's right. We did learn in Estimates that 200 applications have been received for funding for this program; yet, only 30 of these applications have been approved.

Are the majority of these ineligible requirements or is there a delay on processing the applications?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, we do have 200-plus applications, more than any other province in Atlantic Canada. In fact, more than all provinces combined. That is quite signification.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, \$100 million is worth far more than their phantom fund, which they were never able to achieve; 100 million reasons why the fishing industry of Newfoundland and Labrador should feel very confident of its future

because we are investing in, not only innovative gear technology but better systems for improved quality, for better systems for marketing.

We are advancing in our fishing industry. Mr. Speaker, all of that \$100 million will be spent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, the minister has a great way of not answering questions.

There were 200 applications; there were 30 people who got awarded in these grants.

My question was: Why were they not awarded? Was there something wrong with what their applications were doing, or was it the amount of money or was it delayed? But he didn't answer that.

The Atlantic Fisheries Fund agreement is structured a little bit different between the federal and provincial government. It's structured in a way that the federal government set it up so that we transfer our money to the federal government.

Why did you agree to this program and the way it's set up?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, we have a system in place whereby we can get the money out. Yes, there are 200 applications in the system that will be processed and all eligible applications that meet the criteria will be accepted. Some of those applications came in as early as three weeks ago.

I'm sure the hon. Member would not suggest that we should have an application turnover time of three weeks. The program itself did not start until August of 2017. They were four years trying to establish a program and had zero success. We, however, established a \$100 million program and it will meet with great success.

The program itself, where it's Atlantic wide, we work co-operatively with the federal government but we both have an equal say in the actual selection of the projects. There will be no projects that are denied here in Newfoundland and Labrador that (inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, I'll remind the minister, the opportunity was to spend \$5 million this year and you only spent \$1.5 million on the program. I just remind you of that.

We also learned that you sign off and do recommendations approval as minister here, but the final decision on applications to get approval lies with the federal minister.

Has he turned down any of your recommended projects yet?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: Not one.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: Mr. Speaker, in February of last year, the minister announced approximately 64,000 hectares of land for additional agricultural development. It's been over a year since that was announced.

Can the minister tell us how much of that land was allocated?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, applications are up. In fact, in Western Newfoundland applications for farmland are exceeding 100 per cent what

they were in the past – in Central Newfoundland as well. We're seeing a little bit of a bump in the Avalon, but we're expecting – we're quite confident that will go up.

Maybe the hon. Member knows of some people who might want to put in some applications for land. But what I do know is that when the spring comes and when there's an opportunity to actually survey those lands, that's 62,000 hectares of land, I suspect when the snow melts, that's when you'll really see a rise in the number of applications for that agricultural land.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: I do appreciate the uptake and the increase in applications, but if we have one application and all of a sudden it goes to two applications, those are still only two applications. We need to hear some numbers.

On March 26 the committee concerned with clear-cutting requested a meeting with the Minister of Tourism to discuss tourism-related matters as it pertains to Port Blandford area. Over two weeks later, the minister's office finally replied and stated he was unwilling to meet.

Will the minister fulfill his responsibility to meet with this group?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, what happened under the Progressive Conservative watch from 2006-2011 and then beyond, the number of farms in Newfoundland and Labrador, according to Statistics Canada, dropped by 25 per cent. They presided over a reduction in the number of family farms in our province.

Now, let's talk about forestry, Mr. Speaker, because what I'd like to hear from the hon. Member, if he'd stand on his feet and say, there is a person within the ranks of the Progressive Conservative advisors who have met with the community of Port Blandford and said the

Progressive Conservative Party's position is that they are categorically against clear-cutting.

There are 244 commercial forestry permit holders in Newfoundland and Labrador that depend on their income from our forestry practices. Does he –?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Member's time is expired.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: I believe – I'm not sure if I spoke loud enough but I did ask the Minister of Tourism and I still have yet to receive a response for my question.

Do I have leave to ask that question once again?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. LESTER: On March 26, the committee concerned with clear-cutting requested a meeting with the Minister of Tourism to discuss tourism-related matters as it pertains to Port Blandford area. Over two weeks later, the minister's office replied and stated he was unwilling to meet.

Will the minister fulfill his responsibility and meet with this group?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: Mr. Speaker, what the hon. Member has an opportunity to do right here, right now is to state clearly for this House –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BYRNE: – Mr. Sandy Collins has told this group that the Progressive Conservative Party is

categorically against clear-cutting, the form of forest harvesting that we practise in Newfoundland and Labrador and the 244 commercial forestry permit holders practise.

Does the Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador disagree with the forestry practices that have been practised for generations in Newfoundland and Labrador?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: I would really like to thank the minister for acknowledging the work that Mr. Sandy Collins is doing on behalf of Port Blandford.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LESTER: Once again, I will ask this question. This question, Mr. Speaker, was posed to me by the residents of Port Blandford. I am at a loss as to why I cannot get an answer to this question.

Please, on behalf of the people of this province and the people of Port Blandford, will the minister fulfill his responsibility and meet with this group?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: This is getting serious. This is getting very, very serious because, as we all know, in the cut and thrust of the floor of the House of Assembly there are certain things that get said; there are certain opportunities to clarify.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. BYRNE: I have stated three times now that the Progressive Conservative Party has stated through their henchman, Sandy Collins, that they do not agree with the forestry practices of the forest industry of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the hon. Member opposite does not want to dispute that.

We are sending a message to everyone in this province that the Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador fundamentally disagrees with the harvesting practices that are enacted in Newfoundland and Labrador and now we have that position made perfectly clear for the (inaudible) –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: Once again, I would like to ask the relevance of his response. I still don't have an answer to my question, so I'll move on to my second one.

The committee and members of the council have met with their MHA, as well as the minister of forestry, to discuss their serious concerns, achieving little progress. Given the communities reliance on the tourism industry and the potential negative impact that clear-cutting will have, they rightfully want to discuss this matter with the Minister of Tourism.

Will the Premier direct his minister to engage with concerned citizens and industry stakeholders in the Port Blandford region?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. BYRNE: Again, Mr. Speaker, it's not what he says; it's what he does not say.

There are 5,000 jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador that depend on our forest industry to able to supply our families and our communities with employment. We have some of the best harvesting practices anywhere in North America that have been recognized.

The hon. Member had an opportunity to stand up and celebrate our forest industry and the 300 million-plus a year that it generates, and what does he do? He denigrates it, Mr. Speaker. I am confident that the minister responsible for Tourism, as he has done on every occasion, will meet with tourism stakeholders, whenever he's available.

And yes, Port Blandford does have an important tourism industry, but it also has an important resource industry, and this hon. Member has failed to stand up for Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. LESTER: Mr. Speaker, once again, I would implore the Minister of Tourism to please get up and reply to this question. I'm speaking on the industry of tourism at this point. I'm not speaking on the industry of forestry. We're looking at an industry that also contributes huge amounts of money to our province.

Please, Minister of Tourism, can you answer this question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm very proud to be the Minister of Tourism for Newfoundland and Labrador. There are 20,000 jobs that are employed in the tourism and hospitality sector – very, very important. As minister, I've been throughout the province talking and engaging with stakeholders and I've been in the community of Port Blandford.

When it comes to forestry harvesting practices and when it comes to sustainable forestry management, there is a consultative process, there's input by all stakeholders, input is provided through departments and there is a great balance when it comes to looking at tourism development, looking at forestry development and looking at all other economic components as well.

There are also some people who are concerned about cottage development and how lifestyle development is obtained as well.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Twice our Labour Relations Board has found US-owned D-J Composites in Gander guilty of bargaining in bad faith. In contempt, the company continues to lock out their workers 16 months with no settlement in sight. This unfair lockout could be solved with an amendment to the *Labour Relations Act* imposing binding arbitration when a company is found to be bargaining in bad faith.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier once again: Can he explain to the locked out workers how this US company has more rights under our labour laws than the workers in Gander, and why his minister still has done nothing to address this injustice? Feigning neutrality and balance amounts to siding with the company.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's certainly a pleasure for me to answer the question from the Leader of the Third Party. Obviously, there are some statements there that she's not really fully aware of. If she looked at the *Labour Relations Act* and looked at some of the parameters in which they could work, that's already there.

Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that we've had a prolonged strike from D-J Composites. I've stated here before – and the Member should be obviously aware of that – this is an independent quasi-judicial relations board. No different than the Minister of Justice and Attorney General does not get involved in decisions of the court. Nor would I, as a minister, be responsible for

getting involved in a collective agreement or collective bargaining which is our given right for unions and employers in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Third Party.

MS. ROGERS: Mr. Speaker, we know that our *Labour Relations Act* must be amended. The minister is still sitting idly by under the guise of neutrality while this American company violates Canadian collective bargaining standards and workers' rights, doing what it can to break the union.

Recommendation 5 of the 2010 Industrial Inquiry Commission calls for amending the *Labour Relations Act* to impose binding arbitration in cases when a company has bargained in bad faith, collective bargaining has failed or when it is in the public interest to do so. The situation in Gander fits all these criteria.

I ask the Premier again: When will he take action on behalf of these workers and do the right thing and amend our *Labour Relations Act*?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, as I repeated on a number of occasions now, the best solution to any decision is collective bargaining. Basically, Mr. Speaker, as we work through – I'm assuming that the Leader of the Third Party would like for legislation or some ability to be put in there for all when it comes to a legislative option to have arbitration put in.

I don't think our unions within this province would be agreeable to that either, Mr. Speaker, because we all know that the best solution to any negotiation is we go through collective bargaining in good faith. That's why we have that within our democratic country of Canada

that we have worked for years to get collective bargaining.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, sometimes these happen. We will work (inaudible) –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

The government has described its budget as a stay-the-course approach. I say it is not stay the course for seniors who will be worse off in a year's time because of lack of dental care and inadequate home care and who are paying higher consumer taxes and fees since the draconian budget of 2016.

I ask the Minister of Finance if their supposedly gender-based process included an analysis of the impact on seniors, especially women of their budget measures.

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have 155,000 seniors in this province that are receiving the Seniors' Benefit to the tune of \$125 million. I can't say that we've ignored those individuals who require and rely on that benefit. That benefit is something that this government is very proud of to be able to help a vulnerable population who need that assistance.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi for a very short question, please.

MS. MICHAEL: I ask the minister: What is his evidence that proves seniors are wrong when they tell us – and they're doing it – hardships have increased for them under the austerity

fiscal policy of this government? What is his evidence?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board for a short response, please.

MR. OSBORNE: Mr. Speaker, we've got long-term care buildings and units that we're building across the province. We're the government that put in place the Seniors' Advocate. We've got the Seniors' Benefit that we put in place, Mr. Speaker.

We, on this side, value our seniors in this province. I can tell you one thing, Mr. Speaker, we didn't create the mess we're in, but we are definitely cleaning it up and we are going to do everything we can to help seniors in this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The time for Oral Question has ended.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

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

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

WHEREAS Route 60 is the main highway that runs through the Town of Conception Bay South, and is a vital artery in the provincial road network; and

WHEREAS Route 60 is one of the most heavily travelled roads in the province; and

WHEREAS Route 60 has been deteriorating and requires major upgrades;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to allocate funds to upgrade Route 60.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is one of a lot of petitions I've presented on Route 60. I've spoken about this in the House on numerous occasions as a lot of Members and the minister, I'm sure, would realize.

This road is the fifth busiest road in the province. It is in bad need of repairs right now. It's something that I advocate and I speak on. I speak to residents on a daily basis. They come to me; they express their dismay and their frustration with driving this road.

One instance in particular, a petition I presented a while back, in a 24-hour period I had 20 people contact me. There were 20 blowouts on one pothole. That's just one of many, Mr. Speaker. It's tough as an MHA to try and explain that and you're trying to contact staff to come out. They're doing pothole repairs as best they can in most cases because the cold patch doesn't last. You are trying to get asphalt recyclers out there, which have helped a bit. The bottom line is the road is in need of upgrades.

My issue has been – and I mentioned it earlier today and I'll reiterate again – the five-year Roads Plan calls for rating of roads. This is the fifth busiest road in the province in the second largest municipality in the province and I cannot get the score for that road. The people of CBS deserve to know where that road ranks on that list, as all other Members in this House deserve to know where roads in their particular districts rank.

It was promised, it was allocated and it was proudly – by the former minister who was very proud to say he took the politics out of paving. I just simply, being very straightforward, am

asking the question: If the politics is out of paving, if you're rating your roads, let me know, let the residents of CBS know – forget about me, let the residents of CBS know – where this road places on that list.

I'd gladly like to tell them, and the minister could tell him himself, where it places. They would like to know along with me. We'd like to see some upgrades done to that road sooner rather than later, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works for a response, please.

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

Indeed to stand here and respond to this petition today, Mr. Speaker, we've met in the recent four to six weeks twice with the Town of CBS to discuss Route 60.

The Member gets up and talks about it being the fourth busiest road in the province or the fifth busiest road in the province. Mr. Speaker, what we've seen – where we've built bypass roads as a province previously, what ends up happening is we built the Harbour Arterial; Mount Pearl took over responsibility for its portion of Route 60. We built the first part of Route 2, Peacekeepers Way; the Town of Paradise took over their responsibility for its portion of Route 60.

Mr. Speaker, major towns, I understand, they want control of these roads so they can do sidewalks, they can do lighting projects. They take control of these roads. Large towns, I can understand why they want to take control of these roads. We're willing to have this conversation with the Town of CBS. Mr. Speaker, we met with them just last week again, and we'll continue to meet about the future of Route 60.

Mr. Speaker, he talks about the Roads Plan and taking the politics out of paving. The hon. Member, my colleague, who brought in the Roads Plan last year. Mr. Speaker, obviously we

leave 25 per cent space in the following year for emerging priorities, but he asks about the five-year Roads Plan. The good thing with agreements like this one is it takes the politics out of this because we can know what's going to happen from year to year within reason.

Mr. Speaker, nobody on this side of the House said that (inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further petitions?

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

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

WHEREAS Route 60 is the main highway that runs through the Town of Conception Bay South and is a vital artery in the provincial road network; and

WHEREAS Route 60 is one of the most heavily travelled roads in the province; and

WHEREAS Route 60 has been deteriorating and requires major upgrades;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon our House of Assembly to urge government to allocate funds to upgrade Route 60.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I rise on this petition as well today, an opportunity to respond to the Member opposite, the Minister of Transportation who just responded to a previous petition on this very matter.

Mr. Speaker, we talked here in the House today on both sides about the Town of Conception Bay South being the largest town in the province, second only to the City of St. John's, 26,000 residents. We have a road that runs through, Route 60, which runs through the centre of the town, a provincial government owned road that on many days is simply just not fit to drive on. That's what this petition is about. The deterioration of Route 60 is simply unacceptable.

I had a resident contact me last week – the minister talks about the work they've done on Route 2 – who was driving on Peacekeepers Way on Route 2 and a piece of asphalt from the road flew up, from a damaged piece of road, and damaged her car. She can't get any satisfaction whatsoever from the government to repair her car. She's simply on her own because it flew up from a different vehicle. It came from the road. It was a piece of asphalt out of the road. I saw the video from her own dash cam to see where that came from, Mr. Speaker.

Route 60 in Conception Bay South is what this petition is about. Route 60 is in significant deterioration. It requires upgrading. It requires a significant amount of work. The residents of Conception Bay South are looking for that work. They're looking for government to act on this. This problem is not going to go away. It's going to continue to get worse and the government has a responsibility to fix the road, Mr. Speaker. That's what this is about.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works for a response, please.

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

MR. HUTCHINGS: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Point of order, the Member for Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: (Inaudible) the same – no, different delivery.

MR. SPEAKER: I believe it was two different, separate petitions.

MR. HUTCHINGS: It was, yes.

MR. P. DAVIS: The same petition.

MR. HUTCHINGS: The same petition.

MR. SPEAKER: Presented by two different Members.

I'm looking to my Clerk.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, I believe when we were changing the rules of the House to this that we did allow for a minister to respond in a short duration to whoever is presenting a petition. This is maybe a similar petition but it is a different member who is presenting it and I would think that would be considered under the Standing Orders.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: And I agree with the Member.

The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works for a response, please.

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

I appreciate the opportunity again. I would guess that it's different people signing a petition. So I appreciate the opportunity again.

Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous comment, and the hon. Member makes it sound like these issues on Route 60 happened in the last 20 months. Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Topsail - Paradise was an actual former Transportation minister. So I'm not sure what happened on Route 60 at that time.

Mr. Speaker, back in 2015 –

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. CROCKER: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. Member had an opportunity to respond –

MR. SPEAKER: Please proceed.

MR. CROCKER: – I'd appreciate mine now, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there's a reason why. If you look at that road, the section in Paradise has been taken over by the town, They've made it into an urban road and that's a great piece of work.

Mr. Speaker, we're not going to take a whole pile of lessons from the Members opposite about roads. You only got to go back to the Auditor General's report where they talk about MHA priorities forming 46 per cent of the Roads Plan.

Mr. Speaker, he talks about Route 2. We are making a significant investment again this construction season in Route 2. That is our primary road in this area. Mr. Speaker, we have a great investment coming in Route 2 again this year and we'll continue to provide quality roads for the people of the Conception Bay area.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Orders of the Day

Private Members' Day

MR. SPEAKER: This being Wednesday, I now call on the Member for Topsail - Paradise to introduce the resolution standing in his place. Motion 8.

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

I'd like to move the following resolution, seconded by my colleague the Member for Ferryland.

WHEREAS the Trudeau government intends to legalize marijuana in 2018 even though many important questions about the impact of legalization have still not been answered; and

WHEREAS Newfoundlanders and Labradorians deserve answers to such questions prior to legalization;

BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House calls on the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to promptly release its analyses on the impacts of legalization on Newfoundland and Labrador,

including the social, medical, fiscal, economic, legal, penal, educational, residential and cross-jurisdictional impacts;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this hon. House calls upon the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to urge the Government of Canada to delay marijuana legalization unless both levels of government can assure Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that effective measures are in place to: inform people of the impacts of legalization; monitor, evaluate and respond to the impacts in real time; address any social and medical consequences as they arise; protect people from the marijuana-impaired drivers; protect people from second-hand exposure to marijuana products; and compensate our province promptly and fully for any negative fiscal impacts of legalization.

So moved.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

This private Member's resolution basically says four things. It basically says there are many questions, very important and significant questions that are still not answered even though the legalization is about to happen just a few short months away.

Mr. Speaker, people of the province ask Members on this side of this House regularly about the rules, the regulations, expectations, what limits will exist, what practices will be acceptable, and people want to know. They want to know what's going to happen and get those answers prior to legalization. They want to know what the impact will be on their children, on school activities. What will be around schools or allowed near schools. They want to know what risk will exist for their own family members.

Mr. Speaker, what this matter is about is two things. One is about also the release of information that the government has. We've asked questions in the last few days about analysis. I asked some today about, what analysis did they use to reach the financial projections that were outlined by ministers

during Question Period today. It doesn't appear that they have such an analysis.

The minister himself said today it was work done by officials in his department. When I asked if he would table it, he didn't commit to do that. Usually when a minister won't commit to table an analysis it means one of a couple of things. One is there is no analysis or at least it's not conclusive enough to support the information provided. I hope they do have it and I hope they do present it because that's part of what this resolution is about today.

Furthermore, if all of the unknowns that are – all the questions that are happening can't be answered then government should slow down the bus, Mr. Speaker. It's as simple as that. Slow it down until all the analysis, all the information has been done. Delay the implementation. At least advocate to the Government of Canada to delay the implementation until these answers can be answered so they know and government knows exactly what's happening.

Recently, I read a piece out of an article out of the Colorado Springs Gazette talking about Colorado. It was an opinion piece. So I'm sure there's a level of bias, but I'm sure there's a level of bias maybe in a lot of reporting that you can read, and sometimes it's hard to avoid that. But what this piece talks about here, this opinion piece dated November of 2017, it was the fifth anniversary since Colorado's decision to sanction the world's first anything-goes kind of commercial pot trade. They've legalized marijuana in a big way in Colorado, and it doesn't necessarily match what's going on here in Canada, other than the fact there's a level of legalization.

The writer here notes that visitors to Colorado remark about the new agricultural smell that exists within the area and it also talks about residential neighbourhoods and the smell of marijuana that you can smell everywhere. I've heard other commentary in other states of a similar kind of nature. In certain neighbourhoods, in certain areas, you have the stench and the smell of marijuana. Some people like it, a lot of people don't like it but it's there all the time. It changes the overall scape, the overall cut of a neighbourhood, the overall feel of a neighbourhood when you have that smell,

that odour that will become very familiar to people, when you have that odour that constantly exists within the neighbourhood.

My comments earlier today, my comments earlier before today have been that once this is out of the box, there's no putting it back. Once the legalization happens, with a long list of unknowns, there's no way to put that back in the box. Mr. Speaker, that's the fear I have. We want to see the analysis done. We want to make sure that the considerations are made.

I talked about nine different areas. I talked about social impacts. What's the potential impact on people's employment or jobs, especially if they have an addiction or have struggled with addiction in the past? What's the potential impact on people who are addicts, who are currently clean? Is there a risk for them? What about what the policies will be for Child, Youth and Family Services and how they implement policies? Or what will their policies and response be to homes who have parents who are avid users? Is it simply going to be to say well, that's okay to use that in your home if you have children in your home – will it not?

What will be the rules and the expectations around usage and before a person operates a motor vehicle or heavy equipment or goes to their workplace as well? Will a risk of – we, right now, have a risk in our society. We have from time to time, and far too often, hear of armed robberies that occur in corner stores and retail outlets. Quite often, armed robberies for cigarettes and tobacco, and we know that cannabis quite often is a smoked substance. Will this turn into armed robberies for people trying to rob stores and looking for marijuana? Has there been any analysis done on that?

What about use in public parks and campgrounds? So if a family is camping in a campground – right now you can use alcohol, primarily, in a campsite. You can't take it from your campsite is generally the principle and practice we see in campgrounds. You can have a drink or you can drink a beer while you're cooking your supper or having an evening with your family or friends, and you can smoke your cigarettes. Can you also smoke your marijuana? Will you be able to smoke and use your marijuana in public campgrounds and family

campgrounds? What about in bars and concerts and so on?

We also raised the issue about medical impacts. And there's a lot of discussion, Mr. Speaker, about medical impacts and development of children, development of their brains and so on. Will there be any consequences for patients or for individuals from the use from approved marijuana? Will there be issues around the overuse of weed or hash oil or other products that will be derived from this legalization?

Will we see consequences or is there a medical health concern for second-hand smoke, as there has been for tobacco smoke? Will we see people that – now will there be a new market for edibles and homemade edibles? How will that be controlled?

We don't know here what those impacts will be, what's happened in other jurisdictions, what has the analysis been. What about fiscal updates? How will new costs be tallied? How will we actually know?

The minister, on Monday, when asked about a contest that's being run currently by a downtown business here in St. John's, in his own words, he said publically there are a lot of grey areas. He talked about legislation being needed, but it's not ready yet.

Mr. Speaker, so the fiscal impacts, we don't know. In our Estimates in Justice before the Easter break – the Minister of Justice and Public Safety referred to it today – there was a reference to \$500,000. They really don't know what they're going to get from the federal government. They actually have something put in their Estimates book for line items when they really don't know how much is actually going to come from the federal government.

What about economic impacts? What about the province bringing in a large firm? What does that do to other companies and start-ups? We know in our beer industry there's protection that you can't import – the large breweries can't import beer into Newfoundland and Labrador to protect the businesses that exist here, the two big breweries in our province. There's legislation so that Labatt or Molson can't import tractor-trailer loads full of beer into our province with the two

breweries that are acting here. However, we do have start-ups and we do have some smaller imports that happen. We have start-ups, people here trying to compete with what are established brands.

Once you have a large, established brand, it becomes difficult to be a start-up, to work your way into what's already been an established market.

Legal impacts, we've heard testing – I've talked about this in the House before. We've heard challenges now with what's known as DRE, Drug Recognition Experts. I know Drug Recognition Experts, worked alongside with them, I see how they do their work but, as time goes on, there's a higher level of concern about the process used. It's seen as subjective rather than objective. From what I know, right now, it's the best tool they have available to determine someone's ability to operate while impaired, in this case by marijuana.

It's the same with field sobriety testing; there has been concerns raised about that. What are our implications on our penitentiaries or our institutions? We don't even smoke in them anymore. I'm not sure if that still happens. Will people be allowed to use marijuana within those institutions, or will there now become a new level of competition within the walls of our institutions?

There are educational impacts. What happens if a child seems to have changed habits – because that's quite often an indicator of a child is change in performance in school, a change in the crowd that the child socializes with, a change in sports activities are quite often attached to a change in other activities such as use of alcohol or drugs. What's going to happen if there's people selling marijuana in the area of schools? What will happen then? Will there be an education campaign so people are on the same page and understand exactly what's going to take place?

What about landlord-tenant relationships and legislation to protect landlords from any damage or from people who want to grow marijuana in rental properties? In Colorado, that became an issue where people were renting properties just for the sole reason of setting it up as a grow

operation and an ability to grow op. What about condos and bed-sitting rooms and dorms, apartment buildings? What will the rules be in those cases?

Also, I reference cross-jurisdictional impacts. If prices on taxes are lower elsewhere, then what are the impacts when it comes to areas such as Labrador West who have issues in the past with people travelling to Quebec buying goods and services and bringing them back? Will there be a need for an adjustment for Labrador West or for Labrador South? What about online purchasing and ordering and so on? These are all matters that, so far, we've not got answers on and we haven't heard any educational efforts for the public.

We know there was an RFP went out recently, and I know the response from the RFP from people who were interested in it, it was interesting to say the least. There were some people who had identified – well, hang on now. There was one person who said: I'm going to be able to sell marijuana for maybe \$10 a gram. If I sell it – I think he used the words: Unless you're a Tim Hortons, then I'll probably make \$360 off that in a day – is what the person referred to in one particular article.

We know there are concerns around the RFP that's gone out. I'm sure there will be applicants. I'm sure people are waiting to set up and there will be a competition. Of course, there are some concerns being raised on that as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, as well as what I've said here, we're going to break this down into three lots. One is about justice and public safety. The other aspect, if I can put (inaudible) to be health and social, and the other one is the fiscal and business. I've outlined in a very high level some of those concerns and issues that have been brought to our attention. These are not ones that we sat around and just dreamt up ourselves. These are things that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are bringing to our attention and asking us to have a look at.

The minister asked in Question Period today, referenced I should talk to some of the Conservative Party of Canada senators – where the bill is right now in the Senate. Well, actually, I had a look at what hon. Judith Seidman had

said, who is a Conservative Party senator. I'm going to wrap up my comments with just quoting from her.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. P. DAVIS: She talked about a number of things. I only have time to pick out a couple of excerpts from what she said. She said, "As public health experts have pointed out, the government's approach to regulating cannabis promotion has far more in common with how we regulate alcohol."

That's exactly what's happening in this province. It's actually NLC which are organizing the sales, and the regulations are in parallel to the sales of liquor. What this senator points out, that the approach to alcohol "has failed to protect underage users." The exact same population they're trying to protect when it comes to cannabis, and that's one of the big concerns.

The province, NLC has a problem right now. Underage drinking is common, yet the government thinks: no, underage use is not going to be an increased problem because it's readily available for youth in our society. What the senator points out here is she believes that's one of the issues that is going to happen in our country.

I look forward to closing debate and listening to what Members have to say this afternoon.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is a product that it's the first time it's being sold legally in Canada. It's probably the largest public policy shift in Canada since we joined Confederation in 1949.

The Member who just introduced this private Member's resolution seemed surprised that I had indicated that officials in the department had put together the financial forecast. That probably

explains a lot, Mr. Speaker. It probably explains why they were so off on their budget, if they're surprised that officials in the department would put together a fiscal forecast, but that's the way it works.

That's the way it works. You provide information to the department officials and they determine the economic indicators, they determine possible revenue, they determine possible sales tax. They do that, Mr. Speaker, because they're good at it. They do a good job at it. They determine the numbers and we rely on that piece of work. I'm not surprised that we asked the department officials to determine the work available.

Now one thing that Members on this side have made a habit of, Mr. Speaker, and that's being honest in the House. I'd like to think that all Members are honest, Mr. Speaker, but I can assure you that Members on this side are honest. We don't put forward fudgy budgets. We don't mess with numbers. We don't create a situation where we blow out of proportion or put forward numbers that are not realistic or numbers that you can rely on.

The numbers we put forward in the budget, Mr. Speaker, for the sale of cannabis, I would say are realistic numbers. Probably conservative, but certainly realistic numbers. They're based on what we anticipate will be the sales.

Now I don't know who the Members opposite hang out with and who they rely on for their information but I haven't been able yet to get information from Vinnie or Guido on the corner on how much they sell. So really, Mr. Speaker, we're taking a best effort to determine sales volumes in this province and that's the best we can do.

The Member opposite also seems a bit surprised that we haven't figured out all the answers to this yet. It is the largest public policy shift that this country has seen in decades.

Mr. Speaker, they seem to want to indicate to the general public and people who are listening and people in the House that this is a brand new product, never ever been sold. Well, it's the first time it's been sold legally. The first time it's been regulated by government. Mr. Speaker, the

benefits of that is people can rely on a product that they know is not laced with other products, that they know is not laced with other drugs. We know from media reports and health reports that oftentimes elicit marijuana or cannabis products are laced with other ingredients.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen fentanyl, for example, which has caused deaths. So people across Canada have been asking for a regulated product, because it's there. Whether we want to believe it or not people are buying it, and whether we want to believe it or not people are using it, and whether we want to believe it or not there is a market there for cannabis.

Now the shock the Members opposite have is that we don't know what the sales volumes are. Well, we're being honest. We don't know what the sales volumes are. So we're giving a best estimate on what the fiscal forecasts will be for this product as we sell it.

What we are able to do, and the reason the federal government – we didn't choose to sell this product. We didn't choose to legalize cannabis in this province. We didn't choose to make this product legal. It's a federal decision. We understand the merits of the federal decision. We're not arguing that. We understand the merits, but we have to be ready.

The federal government has said whether we are ready or not to sell cannabis, whether we're able to supply cannabis in this province or not, they will make the supply available. So we either allow it to be sold legally and we don't collect revenue, or we regulate and retail cannabis through the Newfoundland Liquor Corporation and at least get some revenue for it, because if we don't get the revenue the federal government will.

Now, back to the fact that by regulating this product, you're providing a product to people that at least they know it's not laced with something like fentanyl. At least they know it's not laced with a heavier drug that will get them hooked on a different drug.

The Member opposite said the big concern or one of the big concerns is that it might cause addictions issues. Well, the argument to that is we might stop or at least reduce product being

sold that's laced with other products which does cause a greater addictions issue than cannabis itself.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons, as I said, is to ensure that the product is not laced with other illicit products. The other is that people buying cannabis now don't always know whether or not it's grown with fertilizers or pesticides or other products that may create additional health concerns. At least by regulating it we have some control, and we can control the strength of the product that's being sold as well. That's something else – when you're buying it you don't always know the potency of the product you're buying.

Is it ideal that it's going to be legalized? You know, there are grey areas. The reality is until we actually legalize it and start dealing with the product that's legalized and regulating it, which may create some advantages in reducing what's being – products that are being laced or products grown with fertilizer or pesticides that may create other issues.

Part of it here, Mr. Speaker, is that it's already being sold. We have people driving who are using it. That's probably not going to change a great deal when it's legalized. What will change is we know the product is regulated. We know what is being sold, at least through the retail outlet. Some people will choose to buy it through the Newfoundland Liquor Corporation because it's a product they can have more confidence in as opposed to buying it on a street corner.

When we say there are grey areas – because this is the largest public policy shift that Canada has seen in many decades, there are grey areas. The Member opposite who introduced this said he was looking at Colorado and they're still learning. Well, it is five years later and they are still learning and there are still issues that Colorado have to deal with. Do we put it off five years?

Well, no matter when you introduce the legalization of cannabis, which is not our decision, it is not our policy, whether we choose to accept it or not, it will be legalized by the federal government. So we're either on board and we're a part of it and we put additional

funding into education using the revenue that's made, to put money into the education and to put additional money into law enforcement from the revenue that's made, there's not going to be a lot of money made from this. We've been upfront about that. We've been upfront about that from the very beginning.

There's not a lot of revenue from this product but at least we can use the revenue as opposed to it going into the hands of organized crime or criminals. We can use the revenue to put it into law enforcement to help deal with the issues that already exist, because people are using cannabis today. They're already using it. We can put money into education from the profits.

Mr. Speaker, if we don't provide this product, a safer product because it is regulated, people are buying it anyway and that is the reality. Now, I don't know why that comes as such a surprise to Members opposite, but this product is being sold and it's been sold for many decades. The product that was sold many decades ago was perhaps much safer than the product that's sold today.

That's part of the reason the federal government has indicated they have a desire to legalize cannabis because it is not always safe today. People can't always have confidence in what they're buying on the illegal market today but they're using it, and you're not going to stop the usage of cannabis by not legalizing it. You're not going to stop people from purchasing or using the product simply because you don't legalize it.

So the benefits are we can put the proceeds from the sale of a regulated product that is more reliable to the people who have a desire to purchase and use. We can take the funding, the proceeds from that and put it into legalization, put it into law enforcement, put it into ticketing, put it into education.

Mr. Speaker, we don't yet know, because we haven't been in the market, all of the details of what this product is going to bring when it's legalized. We know many of the issues that are out there now. There are social issues, there are addictions issues, there are issues with product that's not safe.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if we can take some of the profits out of the hands of criminals, that's a good thing. If we can reduce the element of organized crime, well that's a good thing. If we can provide a product that people are going to use anyway but it's a regulated product where there's no fear of having fentanyl in the product, or no fear of having it laced with other drugs, well then that's a good thing.

Am I excited about this, Mr. Speaker? We've got to deal with it. I'm not excited. I'm not excited that it's being legalized, but I do see the benefit that the federal government has outlined in the legalization, and I've just outlined some of those benefits. I know my colleagues, the Minister of Justice is going to speak to this and outline some of the benefits.

I'd rather a world, Mr. Speaker, where there was no drugs. I would rather a world where there was no cannabis, but whether we legalize it or not, it is being sold and many times what's being sold is simply not safe.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Warr): The Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to this private Member's resolution.

I looked at and certainly listened to the commentary from the Minister of Finance in regard to this particular resolution. He sort of alluded to the fact that this is about being for or against legalization of cannabis and what this resolution is about. In fact, it's not. It's about the preparatory work that's required. He has indicated, and others have indicated, significant public policy change in Canada. That's what we're talking about here. Any time you have a significant public policy change, that ripple effect goes throughout society, all relevant areas of society and all elements of the regulatory framework within that society.

What the concern has been and what we've heard is that preparatory work that needs to be

done to answer those questions and to prepare for, as he says, a significant public policy change in Canada is available to the extent it can be, recognizing there are areas that need to be discovered as we roll it out. Some of the things we're talking about here and what we've talked about in the past number of months have not been available and still not are available in regard to particular answers to questions on how this is going to work. That's the issue we're debating today in this resolution and talking about answers to good questions prior to legalization so the public in general has that information, has that understanding of how this is going to work.

One of the parts of this actual resolution was to look specifically at the information that's been collected and gathered by the current administration to date in bringing this significant public policy change to the province. One of the parts of this was asking for analysis. Obviously, government would have done some analysis in regard to the impacts of legalization on Newfoundland and Labrador looking at the social aspect of it, the medical side of it and the fiscal side of it.

We've had discussions with the minister and I wrote him and asked for information in regard to the expected forecast for the sale of cannabis, looked at the implementation costs. We had discussions today in regard to what the federal government input would be as this is an agenda that's been driven by the federal government and the decisions by the Trudeau government to legalize cannabis.

I understand there are discussions between the minister and his federal colleagues in regard to what that help would be for the federal government. That needs to be defined. What are the implications on Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, specifically to a cost? There should be no costs burdened by the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador for this public policy change.

So as we go through the resolution too, it talks about the impacts of legalization; monitor, evaluate and respond to the impacts in real time; address any social and medical consequences as they arise; talk about protecting people from marijuana-impaired drivers and how that would

work, what are the protocols in place for that to make sure people are aware of it and the public is protected; and also protect people from second-hand exposure to marijuana products. As we know, we went through that over the years in regard to cigarette smoke and those types of things in public places and how that was dealt with. And the important one: Compensate our province promptly and fully for any net negative fiscal impacts of legalization.

When the minister spoke, he talked about it was a federal initiative. It was brought on by the federal government. Other jurisdictions in Canada have certainly looked at it differently in regard to how they factor in because of the unknowns and because of all the questions – I look at someone like Saskatchewan in regard to what they've projected in their budget, and even some of the things they've talked about and how they wanted to move forward with it.

There is ability to dialogue with the federal government and look at the fact that it is a significant public policy change. Is the timeline sufficient to make sure we are where we need to be in regard to making those changes and the people in our society being fully informed to the best that they possibly can be? Government has provided those regulatory frameworks in a whole list of areas that are indicated in this resolution to the best of their ability to make sure that people have a comfort level with it.

That's all that this is about, and it's all what the debate and discussion is about. As the minister said, it's not about being for or against; it's about this is coming. Is the timeline allotted to do it appropriate? It is a federal government direction. How's it going to be done? Can people have a level of comfort?

These areas that have been identified are those areas that we believe, and I guess we've heard from other individuals in society and certainly in our districts and across the province in regard to items and questions that they're still waiting to hear about. That's what this is about, to make that information available, show the analysis, show the work that has been done so we can give somewhat of a comfort level to the people of the province in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, another component of it as well is related to small business opportunity that exists with the legalization of cannabis. I've known – probably many people here in the House have had questions or inquiries from people in their districts in regard to small business, entrepreneurs, people that want to be entrepreneurs, people that currently have business and want to expand into possible retail sale in regard to cannabis.

There has been some frustration I know in regard to some that I've dealt with in questions related to setting up small business and getting into the industry. I had one gentleman that I spoke to from my district I know that was very frustrated in regard to Health Canada. He went and wanted to put an application in. The application he was told to put in was related to medicinal marijuana or medical marijuana that's used today and to be a retailer from that perspective, yet he was looking at the commercial side of things when it's legalized in a commercial operator related to cannabis. That was the application that he put in, so he went down a long road of trying to get distinguished away from that and to the point of being a commercial operator when actual legalization occurs.

Again, he talked about Canopy Growth. There was a deal done with that national producer and what they were doing here in the province and how that would impact the ability of a local grower to do what they need to do, and the volume that they would need to produce to make a small business profitable. If you have a large supplier coming in, it can take most of the market. Obviously the ability of that smaller operator or smaller producer to produce enough to be self-sufficient and to grow causes some concern.

Those were issues that were identified from that small business owner, as well as looking at the fee that needs to be charged in regard to Health Canada, the amount, the start-up costs, those types of things. The question was: Why is one large outside firm coming in and we're providing significant benefits – now, some will say we're not paying out cash. No, we're not paying out cash but we are giving remittance in regard to taxes they would pay if there was anybody else coming into the province or

someone locally that was setting up to pay. That's money that's not going into the Treasury.

If someone was coming in, starting that type of operation that's supposedly going to hire X amount of employees, was going to buy materials, was going to build their infrastructure, build their premises, have expenditures, all of that would be taxed and, obviously, that would remit back into general revenue. What this does is saying there's \$40 million that's not going to go into that Treasury comparable to anybody else that would come in and set up. That was another issue from the business perspective that we heard from in regard to looking at it.

As I mentioned before, some other jurisdictions and what they're looking at: Saskatchewan's budget 2018 doesn't include a figure because they were concerned that no one knows what the cost and revenues will be. They took a different approach.

Just the budget from Saskatchewan and their documents, they stated: "In part because it remains unclear exactly when legalization will occur, and because the size of the cannabis market and the anticipated retail price are difficult to predict, making it challenging to accurately forecast potential revenue." That was some of the concern in that jurisdiction in regard to budgeting and putting together a 2018 budget.

The internal cost benefits here are not clear in regard to – we passed legislation here a little while ago in regard to the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation in regard to this would be parallel, the current situation with the sale of alcohol in the province. The intent was that would be parallel to that, but that was only very – not a lot of detail as you expand out from that, of how that would work and the regulatory framework for all of that.

Even in the last couple of days, we've had questions here in the House and media stories in regard to different campaigns that are being run by retail sales now or different venues that are set up in downtown St. John's and what they're offering, and whether what they're offering in regard to doing promotions right now before it's legalized is even legal, should they be doing it. There was reference from the minister yesterday in regard to there are grey areas, we're not sure,

we're not sure if it's legal or not. All of these questions continue to be out there in the general public.

Again, it gets back to when I started about what this resolution is about. It is about taking the time to make sure a significant shift in public policy in Canada that's being directed by the federal government in our jurisdiction, and we can make that call, it's done and it's done properly. So that all our, have some – obviously, all the questions can't be answered, but have a much better understanding than we do today in some of those variables I talked about.

From the business side; again, there are other areas we need to look at in regard to the impacts of online sales, cross-jurisdictional trade. How would that work in regard to, we have a new Canada free trade agreement in regard to the exchange of different product across our lines and across our jurisdictions, in two-fold based on production and, as well, based on retail sales. How does that work and how is that monitored?

It's extremely important in terms of if we're going to do this from the business perspective of the small business operators, all of those have the benefits and opportunity to either expand a current business or, in fact, to – a young entrepreneur who wants to start a company like I referenced earlier, how does that work, and they're not getting frustrated, can't invest and can't do what they need to do.

Just a week or two ago I had a discussion, had a call from an entrepreneur in downtown St. John's who talked about the fact there were three or four medical marijuana outlets set up. They were functioning now. He had questions in regard to, do these automatically roll over into commercial sites? Once it's legalized, what are the implications of that? Do they have to reapply? What are the rules around them in terms of their operations and all those sorts of things? So there are a large number of questions in regard to that. If we revert to the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation and how they operate with the sale of alcohol, it's very clear today if you go in and look to set up an outlet or wanted to apply for an outlet for alcohol in a retail set-up, what the parameters are, even the branding and packaging and the

marketing, all of that is very clear on what you need to do.

Yet, with this here, there are some concerns in regard to how that would roll out. Even talking to people, trying to get those answers is difficult and to get fully versed in what it means.

The other area – and I think my colleague may have spoken to it earlier, who brought in the resolution – is related to the whole social side and I guess the work environment and particular pieces of legislation. I know the minister yesterday suggested that there was legislation that hasn't even come to the floor of the House yet. But we're moving forward with legalizing it and some of the areas are areas like occupational health and safety in regard to people in the workplace, how is it monitored, what's the liability in terms of what happens in the workplace; the human resources side of it, in regard to the use of it in the workplace; all of those things are extremely important as we look at it.

Obviously the *Highway Traffic Act*, I think my colleague mentioned that as well, in regard to knowing if someone's under the influence of cannabis. There are many discussions about the actual testing and if there's any legitimate testing out there today to actually demonstrate that someone is under the influence. Most would concur that there is not. So that's a concern and we need to work through that.

In terms of the age and accessibility to cannabis certainly from an educational point of view, certainly thinking about our youth at a young age, junior and high school in regard to educating, in regard to the age of accessing cannabis and the effects it can have on our youth and the growing youth and the effects that it have biologically are all important aspects of this.

This resolution, as I said when I started, is about a number of factors that are outlined in the actual resolution document in regard to analysis and information and taking the time to make sure, when we do this, we do it right; we have the best information we possibly can have, recognizing not all information will be available. But the very scarce pieces of information that we have today is not good enough, and that's

what this resolution is all about. If you don't have the analysis, if you don't have the work done, let's slow this down. Lobby the federal government to slow it down so we can get this done and get it done right.

The decision has been made on it, but let's do it right and make sure we do the best job we can for the benefit of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, not just today but for the next generation as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MITCHELMORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to the private Member's motion today.

As the Minister of Finance has already pointed out, this is a major policy shift when it comes to Canadian decisions. The federal government has decided to legalize cannabis.

Our government has been working very diligently, since the date has been announced and the legislation federally has been moved to legalize cannabis for recreational purposes in all provinces and territories of Canada. We had an interdepartmental committee that was established.

One of the responsibilities of my department, being the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation, was to ensure from an industry point of view that we had a supply and distribution system for cannabis here in Newfoundland and Labrador. If you look across Canada there are 97 current licensed producers. Every other province currently has a licensed producer. We do not.

What we did – and it was an agreement that was entered into in December of 2017 – we entered into a supply agreement with Canopy Growth Corporation. That would ensure that we would have a world-leading diversified cannabis company operating a collection of diverse brands, supported by over 3 million square feet of indoor and greenhouse production capacity in use under our province. As a result, we have secured up to 8,000 kilograms of cannabis and

cannabis-related products annually for a two-year period, with an option to extend to a third year.

In return as well for this agreement, Canopy has committed to build a production facility here. They are going to create 145 jobs. With no licensed producer of cannabis in Newfoundland and Labrador, it was important to ensure that we had a secure and safe supply in advance of the implementation from the federal government.

We've guaranteed supply, but this doesn't preclude buying cannabis from any of the other licensed producers across Canada. Actually, the NLC has gone out for a request for information, an RFI, making sure that if there are gaps that need to be filled or consumer or a different variety of choice in terms of oil, flowers or seeds of cannabis, that opportunity is there. There is no obligation to purchase, but the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation is certainly doing its due diligence to make sure that Newfoundland and Labrador is amply prepared.

Since we've entered into a supply agreement with Canopy Growth Corporation in December last year, we've had multiple inquiries from a number of other licenced producers or people that are interested, some would be locally owned, some would be a joint venture or other initiatives with current licenced producers across Canada throughout this whole process. So we're dealing with that process of multiple inquires as well.

What we've done here in Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure that we're really building an industry here by entering into an agreement with such a world leading company that is going to invest in research and development, there's a cost-shared agreement of a million dollars over five years.

We can work with some of our academic institutions, such as Memorial University and their berry labs on the West Coast, as well as the Botanical Gardens at MUN here, the College of the North Atlantic. There could be health research that would be happening as well through our health authorities or at the School of Medicine with Memorial University.

There are a number of things that can build that skillset and focus on the intellectual property. Importantly, it is to have raw product here in Newfoundland and Labrador that's going to be growing the cannabis but also the oils that will be done here, because currently it's not. If it's not being produced here then it would be imported, and we would not have those jobs. We would not be able to build the industry we have set forward.

There's going to be a \$55 million investment and Canopy has the opportunity to recoup up to \$40 million through reduced sales remittances. There are no tax dollars that will be going into that.

They also have a craft grower program, where they could support smaller producers as well. That's a very important initiative when you're looking at the safety side. Currently, cannabis is illegal. People who are purchasing cannabis right now are purchasing it from individuals. They don't know the quality of the product. They don't know if there are chemicals, if there's fentanyl, if it's laced with harder drugs, if it's leading to higher level of addictions or creating further problems.

We do know in other jurisdictions that have legalized cannabis, such as in the Netherlands, there is a lower usage of cannabis amongst teenagers. It is a legal product that is regulated. Once you regulate a product, you can ensure the quality and that it is safe. It is safe for consumer use and public consumption.

Newfoundland and Labrador is in a very strategic location, given we're only five, five-and-a-half hours from the UK. We're four hours to Ireland, direct flights. The ability to get into the EU with CETA, and the comprehensive economic trade agreement with the EU, to get product, we're the closest to a consumer market of hundreds of millions of consumers.

When I was in the Czech Republic just in Christmas, Mr. Speaker, you could actually purchase cannabis-related products, edibles in the form of chocolate, gummy bears, lollipops, alcohol infused cannabis as well, purchased at duty-free stores, purchased at retail outlets. It's a product that is being found in many retail outlets across Europe.

The current stage, step one, is around the production and the legalization of the flowers, the seeds and the oils; but, no question, the edible market is also going to be a long-term growth market for Newfoundland and Labrador. First you build supply and production, create those 145 jobs, plus there will likely be other cannabis operators that are going to produce and supply and create jobs here.

You'll see craft operators. You're also going to see where we use the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation through a retail model through an RFP where upwards of 41 stores initially would be operating throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, creating private sector job growth and going through a well-regulated process. You will see the research and development side of things from an industry development for safety and for the opportunities.

The Leader of the Official Opposition talked about, a couple of times here in this House, around PTSD. The Minister of Service NL, who's responsible for WorkplaceNL, has previously committed to and they've been taking initiatives through WorkplaceNL to advance PTSD in the workplace and other initiatives. There are studies that have linked cannabis and PTSD. There is research and development that can take place here in Newfoundland and Labrador around that or other initiatives, whether it's soils, nutrients and all types of components.

When you're looking at further economic development beyond the shipping and the raw products, I wanted to talk something about secondary processing for the edible market because there's a significant amount – being the minister responsible for small business, there are a number of local companies that produce products right here in Newfoundland and Labrador that would be interested in cannabis, secondary processing and the edible market that would have Newfoundland brand and products that would be interested for the world market to do further exports.

So we see where the supply chain can really be benefited, companies in food and beverage, around cannabis in a controlled way. It's a planned approach. Every step that we do as a government is a plan, it's very systematic, it's

thoughtful, it's evidence-based and this why we have an inter-departmental committee that's working very closely. This is why we're getting so much work done in such a short time frame with – I have to give kudos and accolades to the small team of people at TCII and across the Departments of Finance, Health and Community Services, Children, Seniors and Social Development, Justice, the interdepartmental committee members, the NLC and the work that they have been doing to make sure that we've gotten this far.

We've already seen that in the fall we introduced legislation, that's been passed, it's been advanced to allow for the retail model to come into place. We'll see legislation in the spring sitting of this House that will deal with the other regulatory matters that I'm sure the Minister of Justice will get into as he adds to the debate and discussion. Because there is concern around making sure – by the Opposition, they've been putting forward a lot of fear out there that this government won't be ready. Well, this government certainly will be ready.

We have been taking initiatives and steps to ensure that we are ready. We've had our counterparts across other provinces reach out to us because we have a very robust, a very progressive way of which we've been moving forward and making sure that we are an open market, that we do have opportunity for business and economic development. But we also make sure that we have the safety as top of mind when it comes to making sure that people are trained here for enforcement and making sure that people who are actually going to be selling the product will be trained, will be knowledgeable, and will be able to ensure that from a consumer point of view they will have a positive experience. That is certainly important.

When we look at training opportunities, there will be a requirement for engineers. There will be very specific food specialists, quality control. There are a variety of high-level jobs that will come when you're looking at manufacturing and growing a product. There are a number of initiatives that we can do. But if you don't take those first steps – because this is a product that will become legal, and we can either be behind the times or we can be champions and we can actually lead in a way that ensures that

Newfoundland and Labrador has economic opportunities for this product within our borders and outside our borders. We are most strategically located to capitalize and tap into the European marketplace. If you look at the fact that Toronto is three, 3½ hours by plane then we are so much closer when it comes to looking at Europe and getting to that marketplace.

I wanted to point out that we've done a number of things very methodically, in a way that looks after the people of the province, that ensures that there are jobs, that's there's investment, that there's production, that can help benefit small business as well throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. We really see where production, job creation, supply chain development and research and development in this province will be a significant benefit, and that this is something that needs to be led by the private sector.

It is the private sector that is the significant job creators here in Newfoundland and Labrador. We are certainly very pleased that currently with the agreement that we have with Canopy, that they're on track with its timelines, that the company has been advancing its initiatives. As well, like I said, and the Minister of Finance has noted, that everything is being done in order to meet the market demand for cannabis for consumers in the province; the NLC, through their request for information, if they're aware of any other licensed cannabis producers who are interested in supplying our partner. We're continuing to have those discussions. They want to make sure that there are suppliers that have been linked and listed with Health Canada, and will have a supply of non-medical cannabis upon the legalization date.

It's all about making sure that we are ready and that are prepared. We have not been dragging our heels, Mr. Speaker. We've actually been working very hard. We've been working closely with all the other departments that are linked with this major policy shift, and we've been taking actions.

We've been also getting all the other work that's needed to get the economy on track. We were left with an incredible mess by the Members opposite, a \$2.7 billion deficit that's now been reduced, in this year's budget, to just under \$700 million, and that's quite significant, by steps

taken by the current Minister of Finance, the past minister of Finance to make sure that we have a seven-year plan and our team.

We're on track, we're meeting our targets, we're meeting our deadlines and we see that Newfoundland and Labrador sees an opportunity here when it comes to cannabis, cannabis production and supply, but it must be done in a safe and a way of which is responsible. That's something that this government will be – we will be responsible as the implementation rolls out.

Thank you for the time to speak to this private Member's motion, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

I'm happy to stand and speak to this private Member's motion. We will not be supporting this motion. Not only should there be no delay, the legalization of cannabis is long overdue. We all know that. We know that across the province. We know that across the country. People across the world know that as well. Many lives have been destroyed because of the criminalization of the use of cannabis and it's time to end that.

We know that already the date for legalization has been pushed, it's still in the hands of the Senate. We don't know when that will come down, the decision and recommendations from the Senate. Then there will be an adaptation time, a readying time after that Senate decision comes down as well. So it's already been delayed. We do not have to formally ask for this kind of delay.

For too long, Mr. Speaker, for far too long Canadians have been unfairly persecuted by law enforcement for possessing and consuming cannabis, something that people have been doing for decades. We have seen many lives ruined. We've seen the incarceration of young people. We've seen how the incarceration has affected their future employment, has affected the lives of their families. It has to stop. It's crucial that it has to stop.

Once we do see – it was July 1, and we don't know now. No one quite knows what that date will be. We assume it will be beyond July 1, but we're in a time of uncertainty. I do not believe we are going to see a sudden explosion of cannabis usage. For the most part, already because of the underground economy, people who want to use cannabis are finding a source of cannabis. It becomes trickier because at times they don't know exactly what they're getting and there are safety factors involved in that.

It is important that this be a regulated substance, like our foods are regulated, like our water is regulated, like our alcohol products are regulated. It is important that this, too – this is about the safety of the people of our province. I support that. I certainly support that; however, I don't want to dwell on that. What I would like to speak to this afternoon are the missed opportunities that the legalization of cannabis may have presented to our province and that we may be missing.

Government loves to speak of viable, innovative and entrepreneurial industries. They love these buzzwords, and perhaps cannabis could have fit into this. It certainly isn't in their plan right now, and that could be very much a missed opportunity for the people of our province.

Government is touting their support for the agricultural industry. This is agricultural. They're talking about their support for innovative technology and we know cannabis is not about putting a few seeds in a pot and putting a few seeds in the ground, that it's a high-tech industry.

This was an opportunity for our own people in Newfoundland and Labrador, for businesses that are embedded in Newfoundland and Labrador, that are owned by people in Newfoundland and Labrador to have been able to get into this on the ground floor. Instead, what this government has done is given a break – albeit through remittance – to a multinational company that is growing. This multinational company is growing much like InBev is growing. InBev owns Labatt; InBev owns Anheuser-Busch Hauser. They own a number of beverage companies all over the world, and that's what Canopy Growth is doing.

Canopy Growth certainly is growing. They are buying up cannabis producers, both recreational and medical, all around North America and probably also doing business offshore as well. Why the government has chosen to go in that direction rather than investing in local companies who could also do the same thing – it would take them longer to get set up and to operate, absolutely; however, what government could have done is they could have secured a supply from Canopy Growth, from a number of suppliers on an interim basis until our own folks who should be able to access government support to be able to get into this new area of growth, but they chose not to do that.

Instead, what they have done – and we know they're not getting tax money, we know they're not getting grants – they have reduced remittances. So this becomes just an issue of semantics. It's still public money; public money that's being invested into this multinational company. Again, it's a missed opportunity.

There were possibilities. We have excellent chemists and people in Grenfell who are doing great work in the area of agricultural advances, also chemistry folks and engineers within our educational system, within MUN. This was an opportunity.

Why did government choose instead – why did they not open this up to local entrepreneurs to say we will support you to help you get these companies off the ground? So you know what they did? Instead, they've engaged a multinational company, giving them a break with public money of \$40 million. They will create some jobs, but so would our local entrepreneurs.

But what happens with the profits from this multi-national company? They don't stay in our province. Those profits leave our province. We know what happens when there are local businesses; those profits stay in the province. They're used in the province. This is a missed opportunity.

So, in fact, what government has done is that they are giving a financial break to the equivalent to 'weed Walmart.' Would government give Walmart the equivalent of \$40 million of public money to set up shop here in Newfoundland and Labrador? I think not.

But let's take a look at this. Again, this is a multi-national company who's going to get the benefit of \$40 million directly from government, who will be almost the sole supplier of their product in Newfoundland and Labrador. So they will also get the profits from those sales. And you can be darn sure, Mr. Speaker, that every cent of profit is going to leave this province. It's not going to stay in Labrador and it's not going to stay on the Island. It will be flying out the door.

So we can't imagine government giving a break of public money to Walmart to sell weed, to grow weed and to sell weed, but that's what this is equivalent to. I believe it's shocking and it's shameful and it's so short-sighted, Mr. Speaker. This was an opportunity to support local entrepreneurs in a high-tech industry that's also linked with the agricultural industry. Again, we know that it would have taken longer to get set up. However, there were opportunities to secure safe supplies, because I believe that it's important to ensure that we have a safe supply for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador once cannabis does become legalized. And they gave it away. They gave that opportunity away.

The number of jobs that could have been generated within this province by a local company who then also could export, not only serving the needs of Newfoundland and Labrador but they also could be a point of exporting. They could actually develop product and export it on the international market – missed opportunity. They were asleep at the wheel at this. I don't know what they did. Maybe they panicked. Maybe that's what it was; they panicked and ignored the opportunities that were before the people of the province.

So who controls the supply? Who's going to get the benefits of the profits of the sales? Because again, most of the product in Newfoundland and Labrador will come from Canopy Growth, so that's a missed opportunity. 'Weed Walmart,' that's what we're going to get, Mr. Speaker.

We thought, here in our caucus, that the best way to sell the product would be through a model we already have. A model that is secure, that is dependable, that provides good people good jobs for the people of Newfoundland and

Labrador, and that's through our Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor commission.

We already have people who are well trained in the retailing of regulated substances. They do that through the sale of alcohol. They know what they're doing. They're well trained, they're proud, they know their products and they know what it means to make sure that products are not sold to minors.

We already have an infrastructure in place right across the province in a number of different approaches, whether it be the liquor expresses, whether it be a full Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Commission outlet. That infrastructure is there, the staffing is there – we might have to increase the staffing, but those are good jobs with good benefits that are sustainable jobs embedded within communities right across the province. But they missed that opportunity as well.

Instead, now, they put out a request for proposal, and the ideal model they want was they had four tiers, examples of four different tiers to sell cannabis in the province. Tier one was their ideal tier and that was a retail outlet dedicated solely to the sale of cannabis. That's what they were hoping for. Now, we know their request for proposals closed at the end of last month.

We've asked the minister's department, we've also asked the liquor corporation how many applications they got for tier one, how many applications they got for tier two, and they're not telling us. I'm not sure why there's being secretive. It reminds me of the secretive behind the scenes deal that this government made with Canopy Growth. It was a secret behind the doors, late at night deal. We were asking about it in the House for weeks before the deal was announced and they said, no, there's no deal happening; but, in fact there was, Mr. Speaker.

We also don't know how many proposals were submitted for this request for proposal because we know their tier one model doesn't work. If a gram of cannabis is sold the retail price is \$10, and if the retailer gets an 8 per cent commission, they would have to sell almost 500 grams of cannabis a day just to cover their costs. It's not possible. It's not possible for retailers across the province to be able to do that.

Now they're saying they want to support independent and local retailers and entrepreneurs to be part of the sale of cannabis but it's not possible on the business model they are presenting. I know because I'm an owner of two small retail operations, and many of us here in this House know that and we've spoken. I've spoken to a number of people who were getting their businesses ready to be able to respond to the request for the proposal and they've all folded. They said it's not economically possible. It simply isn't possible. The model does not work.

Now the liquor commission may say that's the commission we take for the sale of alcohol, but the sale of alcohol is happening in that case when there's a commission of 8 per cent in stores that are selling all kinds of things, convenience stores. Buying a \$35 bottle of rum and getting an 8 per cent commission is very different than someone coming in and buying a \$10 gram of cannabis; 80 cents, that's what the retailer will get.

Mr. Speaker, this government has ignored best approaches. This government has missed opportunities on behalf of the people of the province. They are giving the people's money away and they are preventing entrepreneurs from –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: – really having economic opportunities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

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

I'm happy to stand and speak to this private Member's resolution from the Official Opposition.

Just for those people that may choose to be tuning into this right now, basically, in a nutshell

without reading through the full thing, what we're dealing with today, April 18, 2018, is the Progressive Conservative Official Opposition has asked the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to urge the Government of Canada to delay marijuana legalization unless we can make assurances. They listed a number of assurances here.

Now what I guess I can say here – I have a number of things to say to this. The first thing will be that I certainly will not be supporting the PMR from the Official Opposition.

Sidebar for just a second, I'm not going to speak about the – again, this is an Opposition PMR. I'm not going to speak to the Leader of the NDP who just made a number of comments. Her biggest issue, I think, was talking about government won't even tell how many applications were made to NLC as it relates for cannabis retailers. What I'll do is I'll inform the Member opposite; this is a public document that was put out today that says there were over 80. So I would direct her to that.

Again, that wasn't from government. That's from Cannabis Newfoundland and Labrador which is the off shooter subsidiary of the NLC. My advice to the Leader of the NDP is before you criticize somebody get your facts straight. That's the first thing, okay. She's saying we're misrepresenting, the comments themselves made there were misrepresentation. That's a public document. Anyway, I digress; I go back to the PMR by the Official Opposition.

I want to lead off, Mr. Speaker, with just the premise. We are here April 18, 2018, three months or so before what was intended to be the legalization date, July 2018, that was imposed by the federal government and the Leader of the Official Opposition is saying delay it.

Just so people aren't wondering, in case there's somebody that hasn't listened to *Open Line* or any form of news show for the last two-and-a-half years or so, the federal government has been talking about this since 2015 – 2015. Now in 2018 the Opposition shows up a day late and a dollar short and says: we think you should delay this. So the first question I would say to them is where have you been? What have you been doing? Have you not been watching the news?

Again, I've answered my own question because, no, they haven't been watching the news according to the questions they ask. That's the first thing I would say. I just don't know what they're doing. They're had multiple sessions of the House to discuss this. They haven't talked about it. They've missed the fact – they talk about, what are we doing? There's a press release here published July 2017 that talks about what the premiers are doing on this. Where was he then? What is he doing?

Hopefully, the new Leader of the Official Opposition will be a little more on the ball and will hopefully ask questions on a topic a little less than two years after it was discussed publicly. That's what I'm hoping. I hope that works out for them. Keep in mind, the Leader of Official Opposition talks as if this is a provincial government decision. It's been known for some time this is federally mandated. They've made quite clear, you will comply. You will come up with your own regime and structure on how to address this huge public policy shift, but if you don't, we're going to do it for you.

What we've done here in our province is since that time we've been working diligently to be ready for when that time comes. What he should also know, but clearly doesn't, is a lot of the decisions we will make are based on federal government decisions. The federal legislation has not even passed yet. What he would know is if he talked to his federal colleagues, like Mike Duffy, Dave Wells, Fabian Manning, they are the ones that are holding this up.

Do they talk? I don't know. Maybe they can have a little chat and talk about what the Conservative senators have been doing as it relates to this legislation up in the Senate. I don't know if they meet. Maybe the relationship with them is the same as they had with the previous federal government, which is when they go for a meeting they end up out on the street corner after out in the snow and never had a chat. I don't know.

Again, I digress; I come back to the point here. Going by the tone of the questions asked by the Leader of the Official Opposition, and going by his comments just a couple of days ago when he spoke to the budget, the Member suffers from – and I spoke to this in Question Period – he's

putting out a *Reefer Madness* mentality about this topic. Okay, I'm going to – as I've done on many occasions, I don't need to say what I thought he said. I'm going to use what he said.

He said this just two days ago: "I was reading on some of the jurisdictions ... where they've legalized" it. "Colorado was the first one that legalized marijuana. Their state has changed. There's no changing it back. Once it's changed, once they legalize it, life, the focus of life and quality of life and all that stuff is changed and it's never going to change back."

That's fear mongering type of stuff, Mr. Speaker. You're talking as if this is the end of the world. These states changed years ago, and from what I recall they still exist. They may have a new president that's caused some issues, but from what I gather there has not been any kind of collapse in the State of Colorado, Washington, DC, Oregon. It's not like all of a sudden – I've got to use one of the comments here. I don't need to use the Member's words: "If we have a small community and it has a skyrocketing usage of marijuana, what's the potential impact?"

All of a sudden the legalization date comes and everybody starts using cannabis, but I don't need to just speculate on this. What I can do is rely on the best data we have, because I rely on those things – what are they called – facts. That's what I rely on.

I'm going to use a little fact here. I'm going to rely on a little fact here. The University of Calgary published a cannabis evidence series in 2017. The study looked at the experience of other jurisdictions, and what they said is Canada can expect negligible or modest increases in cannabis use. They also looked at four different jurisdictions in the States: Colorado, Washington, DC, Oregon and Washington State, talking about prevalence of use.

Colorado and Washington, the prevalence did go up. Now one would say, well, here it is. Here's the evidence. It went up, skyrocketed. Well, Colorado went from 26.4 per cent usage to 31.2 per cent, and Washington, DC – that did actually go up a little bit more – 11.7 per cent to 24.44 per cent.

Let's look at Washington State and Oregon, both states upon the legalization, the prevalence, the usage decreased. Washington State went from 26 per cent down to 23 per cent, and Oregon went from 24.7 per cent down to 24.5 per cent. So contrary to the belief that the numbers will be skyrocketing, the evidence shows, from looking at other jurisdictions, it won't.

I can tell you, I personally met with the regulator from Oregon. This was a gentleman that was involved in this process for the entire time. I sat down with him and talked, and you know what? He looked all right. The state didn't seem to be collapsing. He looked like things were all right.

The other thing I'm going to do is I'm going to rely on another stat, and this is a really interesting one because it's right here from Statistics Canada. It's a survey that just coincidentally came out this morning. In the study it asks people about current use of cannabis and their plans for use post-legalization. Seventy-nine per cent of respondents said legalization would have no impact on whether they would try it or increase it. So the assertion, the fear mongering that all of a sudden we're just going to see a state of people, a province of people that are intoxicated, impaired, is just not borne out by the evidence.

I would still say – I'm not going to worry about evidence I guess. What I would say is you know what? I still understand the concerns that are expressed by some out in the community as it relates to road safety, as it relates to usage amongst kids. There are concerns, and I appreciate that because I share concerns. That's why I've spent the last two years working on this with my colleagues, with bureaucracy, outside jurisdictions, my federal colleagues, the federal Minister of Justice, the federal Minister of Public Safety and individuals in the States.

The fact is when the feds talked about the legalization they had some main areas they wanted – this is why they did it. It was still to ensure that it was kept out of the hands of kids. But, this is a newsflash here, kids use marijuana, kids use cannabis. It's being done right now. It's being done across the province. We have, unfortunately, a higher percentage of usage right now than in other provinces. So that is a concern.

The concern was keeping the profits out of the hands of the black market, out of the hands of criminals. The longer this is held off the more profit that goes to that. Is that what the Member of the Opposition wants, for us to keep money going in that area? I say, no. I prefer for us to continue on with legalization plans.

The other thing here is we wanted to talk about the reduction in criminalization. The PMR talks about, what is the impact on corrections? What is the impact on courts? We want less people going into our courts and going into our correctional institutions for the usage of cannabis. Does he think there's going to be more people going in? There's not. There are going to be less. That's the whole purpose of it.

I went out on a drive along with some RNC officers, and I saw them stop somebody with marijuana, and the amount of time that went into that stop was ridiculous. They even said it. It's just no need. It's absolutely no need. I understand there are concerns, and we are going to do everything in our power to alleviate that. I don't –

MR. K. PARSONS: (Inaudible.)

MR. A. PARSONS: Now, if the Member for Cape St. Francis wants to ask me a question, I say get up and ask it, but I can't hear you. I'll sit down, get up and ask.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes –
Order, please!

MR. K. PARSONS: (Inaudible) smoking marijuana? That's what you just said.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

MR. A. PARSONS: I refer the Member opposite to every interview I've done for two years. No. The answer is no. It's not what I said. My God, listen. Please, for the love of God, listen.

MR. K. PARSONS: Obviously, you didn't listen; driving along with the RNC (inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Order, please!

MR. A. PARSONS: I didn't say he was driving. My God!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. A. PARSONS: My God, I can't –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. A. PARSONS: There's the problem. It's the mentality of Members on the other side that's from the 1940s. Sorry, I don't refer to the NDP; I don't refer to the independent Member.

The Member opposite, what he's doing – there's prevalence in fear mongering. The Member opposite has done zero research on this, zero. He hasn't done a tap. If he did some of you would have spoken to this today, but he didn't speak to this today.

MR. K. PARSONS: (Inaudible.)

MR. A. PARSONS: He didn't say a word, and he's over there heckling about it now. Do you know what? He's attributing quotes that were not there. Again, what I'll do is I'll continue to rely on those things that scare them: facts and evidence – facts and evidence.

Now, we have concerns but they are the concerns that are felt –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. A. PARSONS: The Members on the other side, Mr. Speaker, they're chirping over there and talking, but they're not obviously listening to the news or any public outlets. They've obviously not heard a single word I've ever said about this topic. They've never said it, but they like to put out falsehoods. That's what they're doing.

I'm going to continue doing what we have to do, which is preparing this province for the legalization of cannabis which is being imposed by the federal government. We're going to take

the money that comes in and we're going to put it into education, into safety and into ensuring that this system rolls out in as smooth a fashion as possible. I'll work with my colleagues in every other province who are going through the same process right now.

The Members opposite were so concerned that they wait until three months before they say anything. It's amazing, it's amazing. They wait until three months before. Talk about, you know, we're going to bar the door after – this is absolutely amazing.

Again, I say to the Member for Cape St. Francis, when you get a chance I'll send you over a briefing book with everything I said so you can educate yourself on this topic.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to get up and speak on this PMR today. I'll try to be a bit more calm and more relaxed than our last speaker, because it's a serious issue and it's one that's worthy of debate.

I just want to dispel a couple of misquotes that have been said this afternoon. We are not opposed to the legalization of marijuana. We have never stated that, ever. We want to make sure it's done right. Make sure we're ready. It's not just – they think they're ready. Okay. Right now to date, every time we ask a question, we can't get answer.

Yesterday it was the win free weed for a year contest. My colleague from out in Mount Pearl North had brought up: Minister, that's a grey area. He said to the Minister of Finance: that's a grey area; we're not sure about that. That's fair. I'm not criticizing that. That's a fair statement. I take him to being honest, but every question asked by my colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, that's the answers we get back; very vague, not certain.

That's not a matter of criticism, Mr. Speaker. We are saying do it right. How you can turn that into being – like getting all out of sorts like we just seen. That's not what we're saying. We've never felt that. We think this is a very serious issue. It affects the people of this province.

Psychologically, the legalization of marijuana, it's not going to fill the prison, no, but it's going to create unknown – unknown, and this is the problem. A lot of unknown situations we're not really prepared for, or maybe we are and we're not realizing we're prepared.

How about the roadside test? We were just talking about policing today and it's great news in my district, but if a police officer hauls someone in today and they suspect they're under the influence of drugs, right now, as far as I know, they have to go to a hospital to get a blood test. It's no easy task. It's hard enough now if you pick up someone impaired you have to go to the breathalyzer. You have to go get a blood test. There may be more or better products elsewhere we are unaware of. There may be other training required.

The Minister of Tourism was talking about educating ourselves, using our facilities, like MUN and that, for more awareness. Education is key to a lot of this, Mr. Speaker. I feel a lot of the general public are really uncertain about what the impacts will be.

There are lots of impacts that you can associate with. Do I think it's going to lead to other drug uses? I don't know, I'm not an expert in that regard. I know people feel that way. Some people go to the other end of the spectrum. That's not where we're to – that's not where I'm to, anyway. I really feel it's important enough, and in the PMR, to make sure we're ready.

All we said when we did the PMR is we want to make sure; slow down, pause and reflect. It's taking a six-month break, according to what we heard today, but take time to make sure – and these were like one of the lines: “inform people of the impacts of legalization; monitor, evaluate and respond to the impacts in real time; address any social and medical consequences as they arise; protect people from marijuana-impaired drivers.”

I think that's one of the more important lines of all this stuff, because that's going to be out there. We're legalizing it, we have to make sure we protect the public. We say it's all about the people. That's a big one. If you're marijuana-impaired, you shouldn't be driving. Just like being alcohol-impaired, it's the same thing.

“Protect people from second-hand exposure to marijuana products.” You got a smoking entrance, what's the regulation on marijuana? I've travelled outside of this province. I've gone to places where marijuana's legalized. It's kind of loosey-goosey on the regulations. It's pretty much everywhere you go, you see it around. When you're not familiar with that and you're not used to that, Mr. Speaker, it kind of intimidates you a bit and you're kind of uncertain it fits in.

I'm going to just, on a personal note – it was last week, I told my colleagues. I hauled into the parking lot of this store, a fast-food outlet, actually. As I got out of the vehicle, there was a man and his daughter walking in. I could smell the smell of marijuana coming, and it was no – they were sat in the car, two people, windows down. Now it's still illegal. What they were doing was illegal. I get that, but it just shows – I don't think a couple of years ago I would have seen them that bold in a parking lot. I know I wouldn't.

We know everything changes in our community. That's getting pretty bold. They would have gone elsewhere; they would have tucked away somewhere away from the public eye, but it's becoming normalized. Now we're normalizing something that's been illegal forever and we're saying, fair enough.

Justin Trudeau got a lot of votes for announcing this, a lot of support. A lot of people in my own district in this province support that. We're not saying we don't support it, but what's wrong – would we be irresponsible? I don't think we're one bit irresponsible. We've been criticized from the other side on whatever, and that's fair enough, that's politics, but how can you criticize us for wanting to make sure this is done right? I really think that's the crux of the issue.

My colleague, the Leader of the Third Party, gets up and they're against our PMR. She's in

favour of legalization of marijuana. Well, thank you, so are we.

If you read this closely, I don't think a lot of people would disagree with what is written on this PMR. It makes a lot of sense. You can get up in antics back and forth, and that's part of the House. I get that, that's fine. We all do it, and I do it like the rest, but on this one we need to get it right. It's as simple as that, Mr. Speaker, we need to get it right. We have all kinds of time. There's no rush on it. I don't know where the rush is with this.

Members opposite mention like the black market I'll call it. You go in a corner – that's still going to exist. You won't stop that. You may reduce it; it's still going to be there. There are still going to be dangers involved with black market marijuana, what's in the product. That's still going to be an issue. You're still going to have it affecting through society and through our youth. There's a lot of uncertainty. A lot of people don't want their child or they don't want their teen to be around marijuana. Now there's a barrier being removed. That's fine.

Whether I personally, me personally agree with this, I got my issues. I'll be the first to say it, but I respect it's the federal government that's bringing this down. It's brought in all provinces. It's a federal regulation. So, okay, that's it. We'll live with it, but do it right. I don't see why we get up and we get a lot of the antics and a lot of the back and forth. We're asking to do this right.

On that note, there are a few other comments I'll make along the way, Mr. Speaker. I felt it very important; that's where we stand. It seems like a lot of people in this Chamber today are not getting where we're to with this. It's a simple thing. We're not opposed to it but we want to make sure we're ready and take our time and get it all right. At the end of the day, in five years' time, whether it be in 10 years' time, we can look back and say at least we had the i's dotted and t's crossed. We did it right.

I've heard Members opposite say about some legislation over the time since I've been elected, since 2015: you rushed it, you never got it right, you made mistakes. Had you taken your time –

what was the rush? It's simply the same thing I'm asking them now, what's the rush?

Right now, the federal government already pushed it back six months. So we're saying take that time, get more if you need to and get it right. Now that could mean having to oppose Justin, but I'm sure some over there probably would like – you don't mind that, but not everyone. I encourage them to have a talk to him.

Mr. Speaker, in order to measure the impacts of marijuana legalization you need to gather in a great deal of data right now before the legalization kicks in. How can you measure change without a good baseline data? This sees something and we come back, what's the analysis? For a split second there I'll move off. Like we say about carbon prices, what's the analysis? It's the same thing with marijuana, what's the analysis?

If we don't get anything as an Opposition it's important, it's incumbent upon us to ask for those details. We have a job to do. As I say in this House, and we stand up in our place all the time in Opposition, we have a job to do. We have to oppose government. We have to ask questions. We have to make sure we get the best legislation. We have to make sure our money is being spent properly. That's our responsibility, not only to our districts, but to our roles, to government and to the people of this province. This here is the same thing, Mr. Speaker.

Have all baseline studies been done in the province on marijuana use, smoking prevalence, health impacts and so forth? What studies will the province do to determine the impact of marijuana use on smoking prevalence, for example? A great point. Will the general behaviour of smoke be renormalized? Will progress we made in anti-smoking campaigns be undone? We need to study that.

Will you be gathering data on marijuana use, second-hand exposure in order to measure the impact of the legalization of smoking related illnesses, lung disease, cardiovascular disease, cancer and so forth? How will you determine the impact of legalization on mental health and addictions?

We're told today's marijuana is more potent than stains in the past, and some users have mental health issues. Will our emergency rooms and mental health system be ready to deal with that? Are we going to see first-time users showing up in hospitals worried about what they are experiencing? Are we going to see accidental overdoses? Will there be an educational campaign to warn people about the possible impacts?

On that note, Mr. Speaker, in the budget, I know it's the federal budget. I don't have the numbers but I remember in the budget the cost to deal with the addictions and education almost outweighed the revenues. That's fine, I guess it wasn't about creating income and revenue for the province, even though I think deep down that was the plan or behind the scenes there was some anticipation or hope that it would be an extra source of revenue for all governments in all provinces.

In the line item, I noticed it was a moot point. I'm thinking like, we're creating another layer of issues within our society. Again, I'll say that's the federal government and we're accepting of that, but they're putting these numbers in there in anticipation. They have not done the analysis to know what the real results will be. So they need to slow down too, because I don't get the rush to get this done other than a 2019 election to make sure you tick the box and that was one of your election mandates you got completed, because there's a couple that they never and they've gotten grief over it. I'm assuming this will be another.

Right off the bat, there's a delay in that. The carbon pricing that was coming in is delayed. So there are a lot of things that I think they're going back to the drawing board and rethinking to make sure we're not missing something. I certainly hope it's the same thing with this one, Mr. Speaker, because as the Minister of Finance said yesterday, there are a lot of grey areas, and we agree. Absolutely, totally agree, there are a lot of grey areas as evidenced by his commentary yesterday, and as evidenced a lot of days in this House by a lot of comments he makes.

Mr. Speaker, federal Bill C-45 is supposed to be about protecting young people from exposure but avoid criminalizing youth. It will allow them

to carry and presumably use up to five grams of weed at a time. Where are they getting this weed to? Will the penalties for supplying youth become so severe they will likely have to turn to suppliers who are less afraid of penalties? Which means organized criminals will be dealing with all sorts of other drugs? This is the preverbal tip of the iceberg that sometimes I kind of personally sit back and wonder – and I know probably you could go to the extreme on thinking this, but that's very good.

When you look at our youth, and I think the youth is one of the biggest factors that I see with us in our province and our people is the youth. If we fail everywhere else, we can't fail our youth. Our youth and our seniors cannot be failed. We have to protect our youth. We're bringing in this legalization and it's been heralded by a lot of youth across the country. I've talked to a lot of young people who thought this was a great thing. I certainly hope it works its way out, but do it right.

Mr. Speaker, if a dealer offers many drugs they might choose a dangerous option under marijuana when I reference youth. They might end up also with marijuana that's contaminated with who knows what, an unknown potency. How at risk are they?

The minister stated earlier that this streamlining and having a supply of marijuana – Canopy Growth are supposed to be coming here and whatnot – will eliminate that issue. If they don't buy it from them and they go off to the other market, well nothing is going to change. Then their argument is it's legal, you're allowed to do it. You're not supposed to buy it off a supplier, but they're going to probably do that.

There are some other issues, too, Mr. Speaker. This is an issue when you look at it socially. You have a youth, a group of youths, the local marijuana store – picture this – is in your district, community. They know the people who work in that marijuana store. They aren't going in to buy marijuana. They won't do it. Even though it's going to be legal, there's going to still be that taboo thing. It's like going and buying a pack of cigarettes when you're not supposed to.

For youth, I'm talking teens, it will still be a socially awkward thing for a long time. They are still going to go to the supposed black market. That's not fear mongering, that's fact, Mr. Speaker. I think that's a very good point and it's something that – among other things.

Mr. Speaker, *The Globe and Mail* story talked about certain chemicals and whatnot. In my last minute, I just want to point this out. They purchased several hundred grams of dried cannabis from nine dispensaries across the city, most of it marketed as medicinal. When they tested this product for harmful contaminants, chemicals, mould and bacteria in a federally certified laboratory using the same guidelines prescribed for Health Canada for licenced marijuana growers and retailers, of the nine samples *The Globe* tested, one-third of them would not pass the safety standards set up by Health Canada for the regulated medical medicinal industry. Three samples tested positive for bacteria with numbers that exceeded federal standards, and one of those also tested positive for potentially harmful mould. That's in a regulated facility, Mr. Speaker. It's not a perfect science, I get that, and there are going to be mistakes. That's one of many issues.

I'll finish up with what has been my theme throughout this: We, as an Opposition, are not opposed to the legalization of marijuana, but we want to make sure the regulations are in place, we want to make sure people are safe. We want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, we get it right and we do it right when we have the opportunity.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise to close the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

It's been an interesting afternoon. I'd like to begin my remarks, on speaking on closing of debate first of all, in thanking Members of the House who participated in the debate today.

Some of the commentary you hear sometimes is beneficial, sometimes it's not, but there was some of that as well, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to thank the Member for Ferryland for his comments, the Member for Conception Bay South who we just heard from now, the Leader of the NDP this afternoon, also the Minister of Finance who spoke directly after I first entered debate this afternoon and the Minister of Justice. While I don't agree with what everyone has said here today the fact about debate is it leads to a discussion. It creates a discussion and an opportunity for an exchange of views.

What this motion is about, Mr. Speaker, to get down to the actual basics of the motion, the resolution asks that the House call upon the government to release all the analysis on the impacts of the legalization of marijuana, including social, medical, physical, economic, legal, penal, educational, residential, and cross-jurisdiction impacts. Also, for the government to urge the Government of Canada to delay the legalization until such time that all of this is known, and that effective measures are in place to inform the people of the impacts; to monitor, evaluate and respond to the impacts; address any social and medical consequences as they arise; protect people from marijuana-impaired drivers; protect people from second-hand exposure to marijuana products; and compensate our province promptly and fully for any net negative fiscal impacts of legalization.

Mr. Speaker, when the marijuana debate started in the earlier days on the federal level, one of the key aspects that we always heard – we always heard from the federal government saying we want to take the marijuana out of organized crime. That was one of the areas they wanted to do. They want to make sure there was a solid product and that people knew exactly what they were buying.

I understand those efforts, Mr. Speaker. I understand those goals, but the fact of it is with that comes a risk. It's not fear mongering, as the minister said. Our job is to ask questions in the Opposition. The minister stood up and wants to quote me from Question Period. I'm fine, I'm okay with that. I don't have any issue with that.

It gets a little bit frustrating on this side, Mr. Speaker, when we ask questions of the government about give us the facts, give us the analysis and tell us how you're prepared for the impacts. What do you anticipate the impacts will be? They don't have any of that. They haven't offered to table or give us any of those items.

I referred in debate earlier today to a senator in the Senate of Canada, the hon. Judith Seidman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

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

When she rose to speak to Bill C-45, she talked about how 38 different countries – the minister referenced to me in Question Period about go look at the senate and see what some of the people in the senate are saying and I've done that. I'll read the paragraph, Mr. Speaker: "And a cross-national peer-reviewed study published in the journal of the Public Library of Science conducted to understand the effects of cannabis legalization on adolescents found that cannabis liberalization in 38 different countries" – it's supposed be legalization, I'm sure – "was associated with higher levels of more frequent"

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: I count six separate conversations. I just want to hear this gentleman speak. Please respect that. We have a few minutes left for the debate.

The hon. the Member for Topsail - Paradise.

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

I had a job to follow what I was trying to read here myself. I'm reading from an excerpt of the hon. Judith Seidman, who is a senator, when she rose to speak to Bill C-45. I'll read the paragraph again: "And a cross-national peer-reviewed study published in the journal of the Public Library of Science conducted to understand the effects of cannabis legalization on adolescents found that cannabis liberalization" – it says liberalization but I'm sure it's supposed to be legalization – "in 38

different countries was associated with higher levels of more frequent cannabis use among teenagers."

Mr. Speaker, I think that's a pretty important factor. We've asked the government: What is your analysis or study or impacts? What are you going to do to educate the public? How are you going to protect our children and our youth? This study referred to by the senator – which was a peer review published in the journal the *Public Library of Science* – identifies 38 different countries that saw an increase in use on legalization. What are we going to do as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to ensure that we don't have an increase in use in Newfoundland and Labrador?

One of the comments the senator made is that she talked about "public health experts have pointed out, the government's approach to regulating cannabis promotion has far more in common with how to regulate alcohol" Mr. Speaker, the approach to alcohol has failed to protect underage users. That's only one aspect that was referred to. It's a lengthy commentary by the senator. I don't have time to go through all of what she said today but I pulled it out. It was sent to me as an interesting commentary.

I'll tell you who sent it to me, actually, it was sent to me by an MLA in Nova Scotia, John Lohr. I met John last year at a parliamentarian's conference. Mr. Speaker, you yourself were there and probably met Mr. Lohr as well. Mr. Lohr has been very outspoken about marijuana. He spoke to it in second reading in debate in Nova Scotia.

When he spoke to it he talked about his own personal experience and his own family experience having had a son who had psychosis due to marijuana usage. MLA Lohr lost his son to what they believe was psychosis from marijuana usage. I think that makes him a bit of an authority on experience with a young person and the usage of marijuana.

He has spoken extensively in Nova Scotia on his own personal experience. I've spoken to him myself and we've had discussion about marijuana because we know marijuana is used in our communities throughout – not only Newfoundland and Labrador, in Canada today.

When you look at the aspect that legalization could increase usage, especially for young people, then the authorities who are going to legalize it have a responsibility to ensure they take steps to protect young people before its legalized. That's a key factor because as my colleague here said, we're not standing up here pounding our chests saying don't legalize marijuana. We're just saying do it right because once it's done, it can't be undone.

I'll refer to a jurisdiction in the United States and the minister referred to it as well. In Colorado, there was an opinion piece – it's clear to say it was an opinion piece that felt that Colorado is different today than it was five years ago, being one of the first United States jurisdictions to follow a legalization plan. Once those aspects of communities and so on change, it's virtually impossible to change them back.

Mr. Speaker, what we're looking for and what we're suggesting by this very bill this afternoon is to say to the government: There's no rush, there's no panic, there's no race to the finish line on this. The Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation has said here in the House of Assembly we had to ensure we had a supply. That's why they ran out and did the sole source with Canopy Growth. In other provinces, they've had competitive processes that have great outcomes that don't include \$40 million gifts or offsets and supports to a company to come in and set up.

AN HON. MEMBER: Tax breaks.

MR. P. DAVIS: Tax breaks, yeah. It's going to be recovered through tax, I get all that, but it's the \$40 million to say come in here and operate when there was a competitive process they could have followed. The minister takes the position: We had to find a source. I say to the minister – I say to all ministers – you also have a responsibility to protect people and protect Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. You have a responsibility to protect our youth and to protect our communities. You have a responsibility to protect our health care system. What needs will come from the legalization of marijuana? What happens to communities, families and workplaces?

What are the rules going to be in workplaces? What's the rule going to be for a taxi driver or for a person who operates heavy equipment? We don't know, Mr. Speaker. We've asked for the analysis, we've asked for what the government has done to ensure – and what we get back from them is, oh, but you guys did this and you guys did that, you guys are fear mongering and you guys are something else, but we don't get those answers.

Even their own financial documents on the budget, they can't speak specifically to what the sales are going to generate, what the cost is going to be and how much money the federal government is going to pitch in so it doesn't cost Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to legalize marijuana. They can't give us a solid answer. They're essentially making guesstimates. We think this is what we're going to receive but we're really not sure. We think this is what potential sales are going to be but we're really not sure. We think this is what the costs are going to be but no one can give us an analysis to show us.

I know the minister took some comments against my comments today about officials. I have the fullest respect for officials in their department. I'm sure the officials just didn't sit in a room and say: By the way, we came up with \$28 million to \$40 million is the cost or the revenue that's going to be generated. I'm sure there was some documentation to say here's what we think and here's how we've evaluated that.

We're just asking for it. That's what we're asking for. Show us what you've done to consider the potential implications of legalizing marijuana because once it's legalized, you're not going to be able to un-legalize it again in the future. It's just not going to happen. It just can't happen.

What's being done to make advancements in the DRE program? What's being done for training? Not only for training, but what's being done to educate the public so they understand if you decide for the first time in your life you're going to try marijuana, here are some things you should and shouldn't do. What kind of development is happening for training programs and education programs?

Is it going to be sold more akin to how alcohol is sold because NLC is doing it? Or is it going to be more to tobacco products where they discourage people from smoking and we hide it away now in store shelves. If you want to ask for cigarettes you have to ask for it and someone has to open the secret compartment to take it out. Right on the package it talks about the dangers to your health. Is that what is going to happen with marijuana?

What about second-hand smoke? I talked about public parks today and playgrounds. What about in a campground when someone is allowed to have a beer on their campground today. The person at the campground down the road, they can't smell that, but they can certainly smell marijuana if you light up a joint.

What's going to happen with edibles? Is there going to be a new market started for edibles? Under the counter we're going to provide a special kind of edibles. How is that going to be regulated?

AN HON. MEMBER: Hash brownies.

MR. P. DAVIS: Yes, hash brownies. I remember asking the minister one day about hash oil because hash oil is a derivative of marijuana. Hash oil is a part of this conversation. They don't like to use it. You'll notice they'll always use cannabis. They'll never use marijuana or weed or hooch or hash or hash oil. They'll never use those terms, they'll always talk about them as cannabis because that's the official term. They get all antsy when we use anything different.

They got all upset with my colleague from Mount Pearl North yesterday when he was using the term "weed" in his questions. Everything went all sideways then because they don't like to do that. That's the facts of it, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about weed. We're talking about hash and hash oil. We're talking about people who roll it up in cigarettes and smoke for entertainment. Some people smoke it for medicinal purposes and for medical purposes. Some people smoke it because it puts them in a better feeling, makes them more comfortable for one reason or another. Some of these reasons are very bona fide, good reasons to do so.

One of the other problems in our province, Mr. Speaker, is I don't believe today that marijuana is the drug that is causing organized crime to operate. There are so many other drugs out there that drive the industries of organized crime. Marijuana is only a small part of that. Marijuana is a problem for some people because it stays in your system so long. Cocaine is in and out.

Cocaine was seen as the rich man's drug at one point in time but it's not today. It's not. Cocaine is prevalent in our communities. I hope we don't go down the road of legalizing that because we want to take it out of the hands of organized crime. What about other chemicals, prescription drugs that are being abused? There are all kinds of complex issues when it comes to drugs.

Marijuana is on the lower end – there are no two ways about it – of how people feel about it on the impacts, but it can still be an addictive drug and it can create psychosis. It can cause people to do things they normally wouldn't do. People become addicted and it can create all kinds of issues in their lives. It can happen and it does happen. Probably not the same for some of the other drugs, on a scale of numbers and relative amounts, but it does happen. What we're asking is, as an Opposition, and what people ask us all the time is: What if, what about and tell me about this because there are a ton of unknowns.

I understand the Minister of Justice did a scrum this afternoon. I wasn't out there, but we had people out listening to what he had to say. In the House he was saying it's six months – that's what he said in the House – and out in the scrum he was talking about July again, which is only, what, 70 days away.

The minister is not even clear when it's going to be implemented, but they don't have the legislation in place. And not only the legislation, they don't have the policies, the education and the plan to roll it out. We don't have the plan to make sure that people are going to be safe from a health perspective either.

That's why we're asking, Mr. Speaker, give us the information that you have; encourage the government to slow it down. It's not a race to the finish line here, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: Do it right.

MR. P. DAVIS: That's right; do it right. Take the time and do it right.

There's no reason and no rush why they can't do it. And if they're not ready and if the government says I'm going to stand by the people of the province and I'm going to go back to the federal government and say we're not ready, we need more programs – and it can be driven by the federal government – we need more education, we need to roll out safety protocols, people need to understand the implications and then slow it down. That's what we're asking for, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question?

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.'

In my opinion –

AN HON. MEMBER: Division.

MR. SPEAKER: Division has been called.

Division

MR. SPEAKER: Please call in the Members, House leaders and Whips.

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

All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

CLERK (Barnes): Mr. Paul Davis, Mr. Hutchings, Ms. Perry, Mr. Kevin Parsons, Mr. Petten and Mr. Lester.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against the motion, please rise.

CLERK: Mr. Andrew Parsons, Ms. Coady, Mr. Byrne, Mr. Haggie, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Crocker, Mr. Osborne, Mr. Kirby, Mr. Mitchelmore, Mr. Warr, Mr. Bernard Davis, Ms. Gambin-Walsh, Mr. Edmunds, Ms. Dempster, Mr. Letto, Mr. Browne, Mr. Bragg, Ms. Haley, Mr. Derek Bennett, Ms. Cathy Bennett, Mr. Finn, Mr. Reid, Mr. King, Mr. Dean, Ms. Pam Parsons, Mr. Holloway, Ms. Michael and Mr. Lane.

Mr. Speaker, the ayes: six; and the nays: 28.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is lost, defeated.

I remind all Members of the Management Commission that we will be meeting at 5:15 in this room right after the proceedings.

As it is Wednesday, and in accordance with Standing Order 9, this House is adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 o'clock.